

**RELIGIOUS REGULATIONS AND PERSECUTION IN
CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA:
A CASE STUDY OF THE AHMADIYAH COMMUNITY**

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this thesis is my own work and contains no material which has been submitted for the award or any other degree or diploma at any university or other institution. Where information has been obtained from other publications aside from my own, referencing has been given in the text of the thesis. I have acknowledged all the assistance received in preparing this thesis.

Cerdikwan
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This thesis is dedicated to my late mother,
Prof. Dr. Hj. Pien Supinah,
in honor of her last wish for me
to become the 'gong' of the family
by earning this PhD

ABSTRACT

Most research on minority rights and religious conflict emphasises national inter-religious tensions. This study shifts the focus to intra-religious conflict at the local level, examining why Ahmadiyah followers, a Muslim minority in Indonesia, face persecution. Despite 568 recorded cases across 56 districts and cities, not all regions with restrictive religious regulations experience significant persecution, suggesting that other factors are at play.

This study employs a comparative case study design, focusing on Depok, Bogor, and Bandung City, and draws on 70 in-depth interviews with stakeholders including mayoral candidates, religious leaders, Ahmadiyah followers, Islamic vigilante group leaders, and Muslim civil society organisations. The findings reveal a strong link between local political dynamics, particularly during mayoral elections, and the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. Nearly 80% of these incidents occurred around elections, as candidates exploited Ahmadiyah issues to appeal to conservative Muslim voters.

Three primary factors contribute to this persecution: (1) intense political competition, (2) the influence of conservative religious leaders, and (3) the weak impact of Muslim civil society organisations advocating for religious pluralism. This means that the persecution of the Ahmadiyah community is driven by local political dynamics, particularly during mayoral elections and intense political competition. Persecution escalates when there is fierce political rivalry, as candidates exploit the Ahmadiyah issue to enhance their Islamic credentials, gain votes from conservative Muslims, and secure support from Islamic hardliners and conservative local religious leaders. Additionally, the weak influence of Muslim civil society organisations supporting religious pluralism contributes to this persecution. This research underscores how electoral strategies at the local level can intensify religious persecution, offering insights into how such conflicts might be mitigated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Religious violence presents a significant global challenge, transcending national borders and political systems. This troubling phenomenon persists even in nations recognised for their democratic capital, as seen in countries like India, the United States, and Indonesia (Brathwaite and Park, 2019). In Indonesia, religious persecution manifests in various ways, reflecting the nation's diverse religious landscape. A key distinction lies between inter-religious conflicts, such as those between Muslims and Christians, and intra-religious conflicts within the Muslim community. Within this intra-religious context, the Ahmadiyah and Shia communities are particularly notable for the persecution they face.

The persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Indonesia exemplifies the complex and often contentious nature of intra-religious conflicts within Muslim-majority societies. As a minority Muslim group, Ahmadiyah has faced various forms of persecution, especially since Indonesia's transition to democracy in 1998 (Hefner, 2013). Data from 2007 to 2023 highlights a disturbing trend, with 568 recorded incidents of persecution against Ahmadiyah followers in 56 districts/cities, categorised by the nature of the offence. These offences include intimidation, physical assaults, hate speech, destruction of homes, vandalism of worship sites, discrimination, and the sealing of worship places. Such acts of aggression not only violate the fundamental rights of Ahmadiyah adherents but also threaten the cohesion of Indonesia's pluralistic society.

The conflicts involving Ahmadiyah are deeply rooted in theological differences and the unwillingness of mainstream Muslim groups to recognise Ahmadiyah as part of Islam (Bagir, 2014). Key theological differences, such as Ahmadiyah's belief in the prophethood of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, contradict mainstream Islamic teachings, leading to tensions and hostilities within the Muslim community. Although Ahmadiyah followers consider themselves Muslims and follow Islamic practices, their differing beliefs have often been met with intolerance and persecution.

Grim and Finke's (2007) theory on religious regulation and persecution is a key theoretical framework explaining the occurrence of religious persecution. They found a direct correlation

between government regulation and religious persecution, with social regulation of religion indirectly influencing persecution through its impact on government regulation by using data from the 2003 U.S. State Department report on International Religious Freedom, covering 147 countries (Grim and Finke, 2007). This theory is relevant to the Ahmadiyah persecution in Indonesia, where religious persecution is linked to the enforcement of religious regulations. In practical terms, the operational definition of government regulation is based on Grim and Finke's (2007) framework, which defines government regulation of religion as restrictions imposed by the state's administrative actions on the profession, selection, or practice of religion. Accordingly, a region is considered to have government regulation of religion if it explicitly enforces rules prohibiting the dissemination of Ahmadiyah beliefs—whether through oral or written means—bans the use of Ahmadiyah symbols, or restricts Ahmadiyah activities of its followers. On the other hand, if a region's regulations do not explicitly enforce such prohibitions, it is not classified as having government regulation of religion.

As illustrated in Table 1, 17 districts/cities have local regulations concerning Ahmadiyah and recorded persecution instances (category 1). However, the theory does not fully account for the phenomenon in categories 2 and 3, where ten districts/cities have local regulations but no persecution occurs, and 39 districts/cities lack local regulations yet still experience persecution. This discrepancy highlights the complexity of religious persecution, showing that the presence of regulations does not always prevent persecution.

Table 1
Districts/cities' categories with local religious regulations and religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers from 2007–2017

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2	CATEGORY 3	CATEGORY 4
Local Regulation (Yes) Persecution (Yes)	Local Regulation (Yes) Persecution (No)	Local Regulation (No) Persecution (Yes)	Local Regulation (No) Persecution (No)
1. Serang 2. Pandeglang 3. Tasikmalaya (District) 4. Sukabumi 5. Bogor (District) 6. Cianjur 7. Cimahi 8. Bekasi 9. Depok 10. Kuningan 11. Pekanbaru 12. Sorolangun 13. Padang	1. Bogor (City) 2. Kampar 3. Sintang 4. Meulaboh 5. Sunagipenuh 6. Tarakan 7. Kerinci 8. Sidenreng Rappang 9. Selong 10. Subang	1. Jakarta 2. South Tangerang 3. Tangerang 4. Bandung (City) 5. Bandung (District) 6. Tasikmalaya (City) 7. Majalengka 8. Banjar 9. Ciamis 10. Garut 11. Banjar 12. Sumedang 13. Yogyakarta 14. Semarang	1. Purwakarta 2. Pinrang 3. Manado 4. Wonosobo

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2	CATEGORY 3	CATEGORY 4
Local Regulation (Yes) Persecution (Yes)	Local Regulation (Yes) Persecution (No)	Local Regulation (No) Persecution (Yes)	Local Regulation (No) Persecution (No)
14. Mataram 15. West Lombok 16. East Lombok 17. Samarinda		15. Kendal 16. Karanganyar 17. Surabaya 18. Blitar 19. Malang 20. Tulungagung 21. Batam 22. Bengkalis 23. Rokan Hilir 24. Bengkulu 25. Medan 26. Bukittinggi 27. Payakumbuh 28. Bukit Tinggi 29. Solok 30. Padang Pariaman 31. Palembang 32. Musiwaras 33. Bangka 34. Bima 35. Banjarmasin 36. Tanahbambu 37. Palangkaraya 38. Barito Timur 39. Makassar	

Source: Data compiled by the author from the Setara Institute (2017)

The discrepancy in the enforcement of religious regulations and the occurrence of persecution raises a critical question: why are these regulations invoked to justify persecution in specific locations and not others? This leads to further inquiry: what are the underlying conditions that lead religious regulations to culminate in violent persecution? Despite the presence of Islamist hardliners in various regions, Ahmadiyah followers do not universally experience violent persecution. This variation prompts an investigation into the origins of pressure for anti-Ahmadiyah actions and the motivations of key actors involved.

1.2 Research question

The Ahmadiyah case presents a complex situation where the enforcement of regulations is not the only factor contributing to persecution. Although Ahmadiyah followers are dispersed throughout the archipelago, they experience varying regulatory environments and patterns of

persecution. Therefore, this study aims to uncover the origins of the pressure for anti-Ahmadiyah action, and the motivations of key actors involved in perpetrating persecution.

The main question of this research is: **What are the actual conditions that underpin the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers?** This involves delving into the local dynamics of communities where persecution occurs and examining the contributing factors that lead to the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers.

Understanding the complex interplay between religious regulations, political dynamics, and local factors is crucial for elucidating the mechanisms behind Ahmadiyah persecution. By identifying these conditions, the study aims to provide insights into effective strategies for safeguarding the rights of religious minorities and promoting social cohesion. Ultimately, the research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of religious persecution dynamics and inform policy interventions to address these challenges.

1.3 Conceptual Framework: Local politics and religious persecution

The study of religious persecution and its measurement has been a complex and multifaceted topic in scholarly discussions. Researchers have employed various methodologies to uncover the causes, dynamics, and outcomes of religiously driven conflicts. A significant line of inquiry in the literature centres on examining organised armed conflicts and religious violence within the framework of civil wars. Toft (2007) contributes to this field by analysing religious civil wars between 1940 and 2000, exploring the concept of religious outbidding and its effects on civil war dynamics, and offering key insights into the relationship between religious identity and armed conflict. Similarly, Svensson (2007) takes a dyadic approach to studying religious violence within armed conflicts, with a particular focus on regional differences, especially in the North Africa – Middle East region. The introduction of the Religion and Armed Conflict (RELAC) dataset by Svensson and Nilsson (2018) provides researchers with a comprehensive tool to study the causes and resolutions of religious conflicts from 1975 to 2015.

A novel approach within the literature involves using media reports to study religiously motivated violence. This method provides detailed insights into the dynamics of religious violence, capturing aspects that traditional datasets may miss (King and Lowe, 2003).

Additionally, Natural Language Processing (NLP) enables the identification of victims and

perpetrators and the disaggregation of violent acts, thereby enhancing the understanding of varying intensity levels (Schrodt and Analytics, 2016).

While these methodological approaches provide valuable insights into religious persecution and its measurement, they often focus on broad patterns of religious violence or armed conflict. Researchers have employed various methodologies to uncover the causes, dynamics, and outcomes of religiously driven conflicts. Scholars like Jonathan Fox and Jessica Soedirgo have explored these issues, helping to explain why certain religious minorities, like Ahmadiyah, become targets of persecution.

Fox's research on religious discrimination (2017) highlights how governments often impose restrictions on minority religious groups to consolidate power, maintain social order, and appease dominant religious factions. In the case of Indonesia, where Sunni Islam holds a dominant position, state actors have accommodated Islamist hardliners by enforcing religious regulations that marginalize heterodox sects such as Ahmadiyah and Shia. These regulations serve both as a tool for political legitimacy and as a means to manage religious contestation within the country.

In addition, Soedirgo (2020) provides another critical perspective by explaining why small religious groups like Ahmadiyah are often perceived as existential threats despite their limited numbers. She argues that these groups challenge dominant religious narratives and disrupt existing power structures within the Muslim community, prompting conservative religious leaders to mobilize opposition against them. In Indonesia, the theological divergence of Ahmadiyah—particularly their belief in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood—contradicts mainstream Sunni doctrine, leading to their exclusion and persecution. Similarly, the Shia minority, with its distinct theological interpretations and historical narratives, is often viewed with suspicion by Sunni hardliners.

Beyond theological disputes, political motivations drive religious persecution, and rational choice theory offers valuable insight into this phenomenon, as it explains how religious groups, institutions, and political actors strategically pursue religious monopolies to maximize their power. Religious elites may support persecution to eliminate competitors, reinforce doctrinal authority, and secure state-sanctioned legitimacy. Fox (2017) and Grim and Finke (2007, 2010) argue that state-imposed religious regulations can either suppress or exacerbate religious violence, depending on how leaders enforce or tolerate persecution to maintain stability or gain electoral advantage. The persecution of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia exemplifies this dynamic,

where both state and non-state actors either passively enable or actively engage in religious repression.

In addition, a growing body of scholarship highlights the need to contextualize religious persecution within localized political dynamics. Understanding how religious identity is instrumentalized for political purposes, particularly in electoral settings, is crucial for explaining variations in religious violence and discrimination. In this context, religious persecution is not merely a byproduct of sectarian tensions or state policies but is actively shaped by political elites, social movements, and grassroots mobilization. This perspective is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers reflects the intersection of religious conservatism, state regulation, and electoral strategies.

Building on this, one of the most critical dimensions of religious persecution is the role of political elites in mobilizing religious sentiment for electoral gains. The works of Varshney (1993, 2003), Ludden (1996), and Wilkinson (2006) illustrate how religious tensions have been deliberately exacerbated for political purposes, leading to large-scale violence. These historical events highlight the calculated use of religious identity in political mobilization, a strategy that closely mirrors the persecution of Ahmadiyah communities in Indonesia. Research by Djupe and Grant (2001), Wilcox and Sigelman (2001), and Chhibber and Shastri (2014) further reinforce the argument that political elites use religious appeals to reinforce sectarian identity, eliminate internal divisions within their support base, and mobilize voters—often leading to intensified religious persecution. This pattern suggests that religious persecution is not simply a spontaneous expression of intolerance but a deliberate and strategic political maneuver aimed at securing electoral dominance and consolidating power.

On the other hand, scholars such as Fish (2002), and Kedourie (2013) have explored religious violence through the lens of sectarian beliefs, attributing pacifying or aggressive tendencies to specific religious traditions. These perspectives provide an important foundation but fail to account for how religious identity is politically instrumentalized in diverse socio-political settings. Meanwhile, scholars like Inglehart and Welzel (2005), McBride (2008), and Casanova (2012) have emphasized the role of modernization and secularization in generating social tensions that lead to religious violence. Juergensmeyer (2008) further argues that religious violence is often a reaction against secular nationalism rather than merely a resurgence of religious fundamentalism. These frameworks are particularly relevant in the Indonesian context,

where the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers reflects broader anxieties over Islamic identity, the role of the state in religious affairs, and the contested space between religious conservatism and secular governance.

Local politicians actively exploit religious intolerance to strengthen their electoral standing, often forming alliances with conservative Islamic organizations to mobilize grassroots networks. Persecution does not occur naturally due to theological differences; rather, it is politically constructed. However, it remains localized unless politicians see an opportunity to escalate it for broader political gain.

Ultimately, religious persecution in Indonesia is not simply a result of sectarian intolerance or doctrinal disputes. It is deeply rooted in political structures and electoral strategies that prioritize short-term gains over religious freedom and pluralism. The Ahmadiyah case illustrates how political interests, state policies, and religious mobilization intersect to produce systemic discrimination. Addressing this issue requires not only stronger legal protections for religious minorities but also broader political reforms that limit the use of religion as a tool for electoral advantage.

Moreover, to address the main question of this research – What are the actual conditions that underpin the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers? – the study **employs the conceptual framework developed by Baldersheim and Wollmann (2006), using local politics as a guiding tool to explore the factors contributing to the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers.** This framework provides a systematic approach to analysing the complex interaction between political dynamics and religious tensions, offering valuable insights into the root causes of religious persecution.

Local politics, encompassing governance, decision-making, and political activities at the municipal or regional level, plays a crucial role in shaping the social fabric of a community. Robert Dahl, in his seminal work *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, describes local politics as 'the process by which citizens in a community govern themselves and make collective decisions that shape the direction of their local society' (Dahl, 1961). This process involves a range of political actors, including elected officials, local government agencies, community organisations, and citizens, all working to address their community's specific needs and concerns.

The significance of local politics extends beyond the community, influencing the broader political system. Baldersheim and Wollmann, in their comparative analysis, emphasise that 'local government serves as the foundation for democratic governance, providing a space where citizens can engage in the political process and where future political leaders can gain experience and build their reputations' (Baldersheim & Wollmann, 2006). To maintain and enhance their reputations, political leaders sometimes leverage religious issues to raise their profiles and gain a favourable reputation for electoral advantage.

However, the intersection of local politics and religious issues can have profound implications, mainly when political leaders exploit religious tensions for electoral gain. Political leaders may leverage religious identities and conflicts to bolster their political profiles in communities where religious diversity exists. This exploitation can lead to the marginalisation or persecution of religious minorities, as leaders seek to align themselves with dominant religious groups to secure votes and strengthen their political standing.

The correlation between local politics and religious persecution becomes evident in such scenarios. When political leaders prioritise electoral success over social harmony, they may contribute to an environment where religious persecution is not only tolerated but, in some cases, actively encouraged. By using religious issues as tools for political gain, local politicians can exacerbate existing tensions, leading to increased discrimination, violence, and persecution against religious minorities. This dynamic underscores the complex and sometimes dangerous interplay between local political ambitions and the rights and freedoms of religious communities.

To further enhance the understanding of this phenomenon, this research introduces mediator themes aimed at expanding upon the existing framework and uncovering the specific conditions that drive religious persecution within the Indonesian context. These mediator themes include **political competition (including patronage networks), local religious leaders, and Muslim civic organisation ties.**

By looking at these factors, the research aims to understand the complex relationships and motivations behind the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. For example, patronage networks might use methods like pressure, financial rewards, or political alliances to increase tensions and create an environment where persecution can thrive. Religious leaders also play a key role in shaping how communities view and treat minority groups like the Ahmadiyah. They might spread intolerant messages or encourage their followers to target the Ahmadiyah, leading to

ongoing persecution. Additionally, civic organisations can help spread anti-Ahmadiyah views and organise efforts to marginalise or discriminate against the community. These groups might use their resources and connections to push for policies against the Ahmadiyah or rally local support for their cause.

Through a comprehensive case study approach focused on Ahmadiyah in Indonesia, the research aims to uncover the complex interplay of these mediator themes and provide a nuanced understanding of the local dynamics surrounding religious persecution as seen in Figure 1 below.

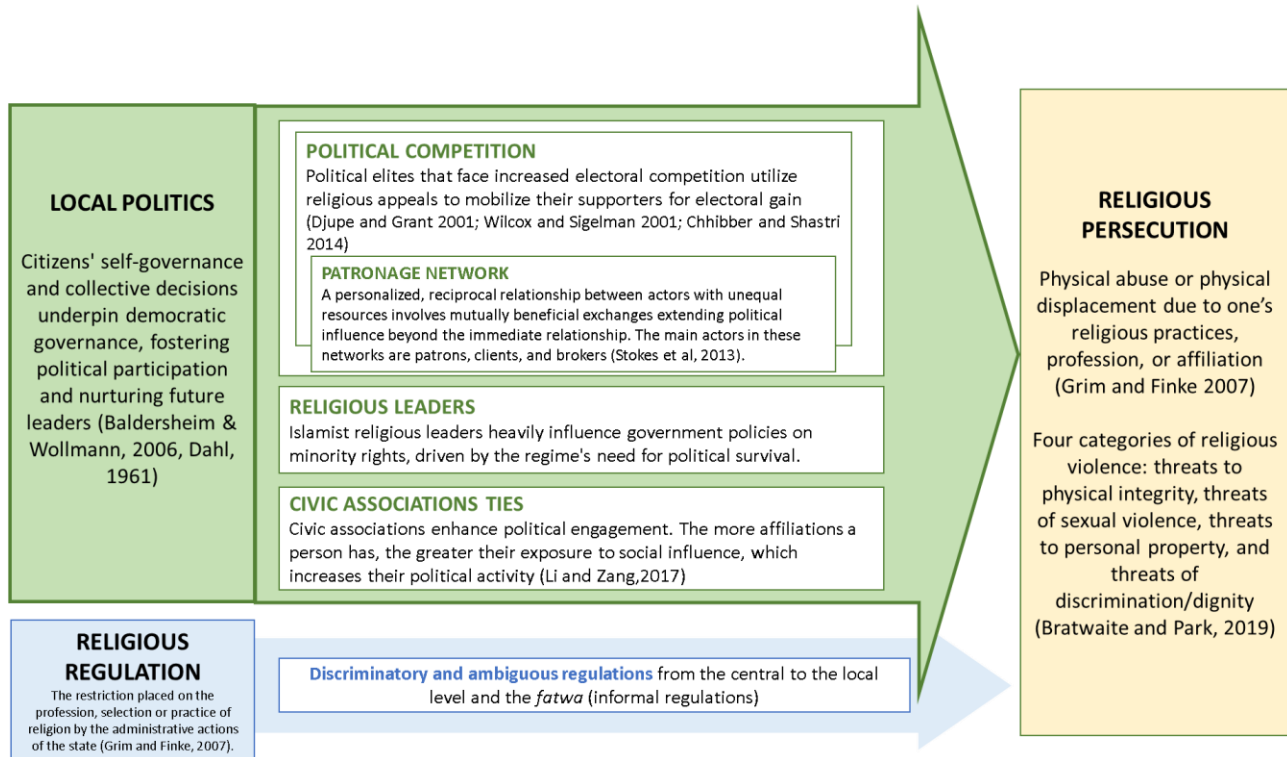


Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

Political competition

The relationship between political competition as part of local politics and religious violence emerges as a significant area of inquiry within the literature. Scholars argue that political elites manipulate religious identity to mobilise support, leading to increased incidents of violence (Djupe and Grant, 2001; Wilcox and Sigelman, 2001). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in countries like India, where communal violence often coincides with electoral cycles, driven by sectarian tensions (Van der Veer, 1994).

A seminal study by Brathwaite and Park (2019) sheds light on this dynamic, focusing on reported religious violence in India between 2000 and 2015. They uncover a noteworthy correlation between political competition and instances of religion by revealing that regions experiencing higher levels of political competition tend to witness more frequent episodes of religious violence, even after accounting for other contributing factors. Additionally, they observe that religious violence tends to escalate alongside increases in both political competition and voter turnout. The central question posed in their study revolves around the relationship between political competition and religious violence. Furthermore, they seek to discern specific types of religious violence influenced by political competition and identify the actors involved – both perpetrators and victims. Through their empirical analysis, Brathwaite and Park (2019) highlight the nuanced interplay between political dynamics and religious tensions, ultimately demonstrating that heightened political competition can exacerbate instances of religious violence.

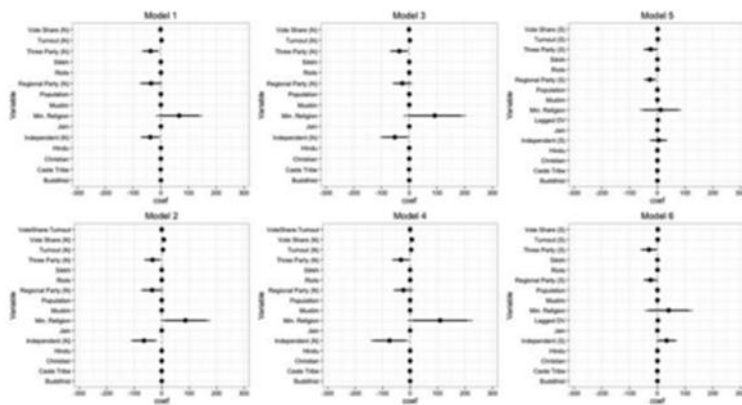
In general, their findings underscore the significance of understanding the role of political competition in shaping patterns of religious persecution and violence. By elucidating these dynamics, policymakers and researchers can gain valuable insights into mitigating factors and devise strategies to promote religious harmony and social cohesion (Brathwaite and Park, 2019).

Regression Result for National and State Elections with All events and kill only DVs

Variable Name	Model 1 All Events	Model 2 All Events	Model 3 Kill Only	Model 4 Kill Only	Model 5 All Events	Model 6 Kill Only
Vote Share (National)	-1.145** (0.579)	7.439*** (2.675)	-0.906* (0.463)	6.354** (2.871)		
Regional Party (National)	-35.236* (20.882)	-34.782 (21.311)	-24.771 (18.453)	-24.387 (18.806)		
Three Parties (National)	-36.942** (16.290)	-33.610** (15.820)	-35.868** (17.463)	-33.050* (17.050)		
Independent (National)	-37.896** (18.325)	-64.828*** (24.540)	-52.075* (27.231)	-74.854** (35.187)		
Turnout (National)	2.398*** (0.699)	4.368*** (1.318)	2.005*** (0.675)	3.672*** (1.316)		
Population	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Caste_Tribe	-0.509 (0.449)	-0.421 (0.447)	-0.605 (0.459)	-0.530 (0.447)	-0.269 (0.395)	-0.426 (0.460)
Hindu	0.000* (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Muslim	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)
Christian	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)
Sikhh	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Buddhist	0.000** (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)
Jain	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
Minority Religions	66.196	86.340*	92.077	109.114*	11.446	40.473

The table beside highlights the significant impact of electoral competition on the occurrence of religious violence, particularly in the context of India. Specifically, when more than three parties, along with an independent candidate, compete in elections, there tends to be a decrease in the frequency of

religious violence. This suggests that heightened political competition correlates with a reduction in instances of religious violence, even after adjusting for various influencing factors (Brathwaite and Park, 2019).



Coefficient Plots for Model 1-6

Moreover, the study delves into detailed statistical analyses, revealing deeper empirical insights. Model 1 illustrates that political competition positively influences the presence of religious violence at a significant level of 5%. Conversely, the vote share demonstrates a negative

relationship with the number of reported incidents of religious violence, also at a 5% significance level (Brathwaite and Park, 2019). Additionally, Model 1 indicates that increases in voter turnout correspond to increases in reported religious violence when other factors remain constant.

Model 2 explores the interaction between the intensity of political competition and religious violence. It finds a positive correlation between a political match, characterised by three parties and an independent candidate being competitive, and religious violence, significant at the 5% level (Brathwaite and Park, 2019). Models 3 and 4 analyse the effect of extreme religiously motivated violence on the relationship between political competition and religious violence, finding a statistically significant correlation even when considering only incidents of killing or murder. Models 5 and 6 suggest that the relationship between political competition and religious violence operates primarily within the context of national elections, with inconclusive results at the state level (Brathwaite and Park, 2019). Moreover, the study identifies specific types of religious violence influenced by increased political competition. Among them, threats of physical harm, including torture, assault, disappearance, and murder, were observed to escalate with heightened political competition (Brathwaite and Park, 2019). The study also sheds light on the roles of perpetrators and victims in religious violence. Political parties that mobilise support around religious identity were more likely to be associated with perpetrating religious violence, while intra-group religious violence was found to increase more than intergroup dynamics among victims (Brathwaite and Park, 2019).

Patronage Networks

In political competition, winning the support of essential vote-getters is crucial for winning political office. Political power in a new democratic country is generally delivered through

informal institutions or patronage networks. Patronage networks not only shape political outcomes in a newly democratised country (Berenschot, 2010), but also influence public service delivery (Berenschot, 2010), democratic consolidation (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997), and electoral violence (Berenschot 2011; Taylor, Pevehouse, and Straus, 2017).

According to Lemarchand and Legg (1972), the definition of patronage network is a more or less personalised, effective, and reciprocal relationship between actors or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships. There are three main actors in patronage networks, namely patrons, clients, and brokers (Stokes et al., 2013). Patrons are higher socio-economic individuals who offer material benefits or protection to subordinate clients in exchange for assistance and general support. Meanwhile, brokers are local mediators between patrons and subordinate clients who act as the access point for clients' goods and services and deliver support networks for patrons. Clients are beneficiaries of this process (Stokes et al., 2013). The relationship between brokers and clients is unique; if a clientelist relationship is based on exchanging material goods, it is most likely 'betrays' the relationship between brokers and their clients (Aspinall, 2014). Therefore, many patrons employ policy promises to nurture brokers' and clients' loyalty (Holland and Palmer-Rubin, 2015).

A recent study by Soedirgo (2018) investigates the relationship between clientelistic/patronage networks and religious persecution. She argues that the ability of religious minority groups to get protection in a new democratic country is conditioned not only by formal guarantees but also through clientelist networks in which political power is delivered (Soedirgo, 2018). This means that state actors will actively participate in or allow the religious persecution of minority groups to maintain or gain support from brokers of critical networks. To test her argument, she looked at Ahmadiyah as a religious minority group in Indonesia. Ahmadiyah has been a frequent target of discrimination from state or non-state actors, such as banning their ability to worship, shutting down places of worship, and attacking Ahmadiyah followers' homes by mobs. She used paired comparison and process tracing design to see how clientelistic structures linked with the decisions to protect or not protect Ahmadiyah in two districts, Tasikmalaya district and Bandung city.

Based on her investigation, she found that the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Tasikmalaya resulted from the high level of the district's clientelistic structure. The essential

networks in Tasikmalaya were primarily led by brokers interested in limiting Ahmadiyah activities. Those necessary brokers are local religious leaders (*kiai*) that have long been concerned with Ahmadiyah activities. Winning the support of these essential *kiais* is therefore crucial for winning political office; the preferences of important brokers dictate political strategy, including persecuting Ahmadiyah followers. On the other hand, Bandung's Ahmadiyah followers were treated differently from their counterparts in Tasikmalaya. The state actors did not actively participate in anti-Ahmadiyah activities, even though there were many anti-Ahmadiyah campaigns by non-state actors in Bandung. This meant that state actors were not highly dependent on brokers to get support from clients, and the diversity of brokers' preferences discouraged state actors from persecuting Ahmadiyah followers. Therefore, Ahmadis in Bandung have been able to worship freely.

Consequently, religious persecution of religious minority groups such as Ahmadiyah is influenced by formal rules and informal networks through the brokers' interests that deliver political power. Due to political necessity, some state actors will allow or actively participate in religious minority persecution to maintain or gain support from brokers of critical client networks (, 2018).

Moreover, additional research on patronage networks and religious violence has been conducted by Berenschot (2020), focusing on case studies of religious violence in Gujarat (India) in 2002 and North Maluku (Indonesia) in 1999–2000. These instances of violence seemed to be politically motivated: the BJP in Gujarat aimed for an electoral victory in December 2002, while in North Maluku, the violence stemmed from power struggles amid Indonesia's democratisation, particularly concerning the election of a new governor. Berenschot's research offers a novel explanation, proposing that political figures are more inclined to instigate violence in regions where residents rely on ethnicised patronage networks to access state benefits (Berenschot, 2020). Patronage networks, characterised by informal connections among politicians, bureaucrats, and intermediaries, enable citizens to access state resources and regulatory benefits, especially in areas with ineffective state institutions where residents, particularly the impoverished, rely on these networks (Berenschot & van Klinken, 2018).

Furthermore, Berenschot contends that patronage networks play a pivotal role in sparking violence because (a) when organised around religious identities, they amplify tensions and hostilities, thus encouraging political exploitation of these divisions; (b) they grant individuals

the authority to initiate and justify violence; and (c) they facilitate mobilisation by providing incentives for local actors to align with political leaders (Berenschot, 2020). Ethnicised patronage networks, organised along religious or ethnic lines, can heighten tensions and offer political opportunities for exploiting divisions, granting authority to instigate and legitimise violence and creating incentives for local actors to align with political leaders.

Religious leaders

In addition to informal institutions and patronage networks that contribute to the persecution of religious minorities through brokers who seek political power, scholars have also emphasised the role of religious leaders in this context. Hick (2014) suggests that understanding the rising anti-minority sentiment in some developing countries requires examining the dynamics of religious leaders. Religious leaders claim authority in Islam based on their spiritual knowledge (Krämer and Schmidtke, 2006). Although there are established paths to religious dominance, they are weakly institutionalised, leading to a diverse array of religious authorities in Indonesian Islam, including *kiai*, *ajengan*, *ulama*, *imam*, *ustadz*, *mubaligh*, *da'i*, *penyuluh*, *tengku*, *buya*, and leaders of Muhammadiyah and NU. The *kiai* in Java, who typically operate independently from religious organisations, derive authority from leading *pesantren* (religious schools), which are often family-owned and self-sufficient. Meanwhile, *ulama* are salaried officials who manage mosques and teach in state-sponsored religious schools.

Hick (2014) further argues that anti-religious sentiments towards minority groups like Ahmadiyah in Indonesia are found among religious leaders across the traditional-modern divide. There are two main types of relationships between anti-Ahmadiyah *kiai* or *ulama* and politicians: first, some local politicians and political parties exploit the Ahmadiyah controversy for electoral gain (Platzdasch, 2011a); second, some elected regional mayors and governors maintain close ties with *kiai* or *ulama* who head *pesantren* and serve as their advisors (Setara Institute, 2017). These *kiai* or *ulama* leverage their students for political campaigns or demonstrations, making them influential players in local politics.

In addition, Rahman (2014) demonstrates the significant role of religious leaders in predicting state repression of religious minorities, as shown through a comparison between Indonesia and Pakistan's handling of groups like the Ahmadiyah sect. Her research reveals that the formal institutionalisation of Islamic law is not the most reliable indicator of state repression of minority rights. Instead, she identifies the powerful combination of Islamist actors and the regime's

political survival needs as the key predictor. In both Pakistan and Indonesia, religious leaders – whether traditional or fundamentalist *ulama* – have consistently advocated for anti-Ahmadiyah policies. However, these demands only translate into government action when they align with the regime’s political survival strategies. This underscores the dominant influence of Islamist religious leaders on government policies concerning religious minorities, driven primarily by the regime's need to maintain power.

Muslim organisation ties

Civic organisations play a crucial role in consensus-making, particularly in environments where state institutions may be weak or ineffective, and societal polarisation is rampant. In such contexts, these organisations often step in to fill the void left by inadequate governance structures, leveraging their grassroots connections, community trust, and capacity for mobilisation to bridge divides and mitigate conflict. Varshney's seminal study (2001) on urban religious rioting in India offers valuable insights into the role of civic organisations in fostering social cohesion and managing intergroup tensions.

One of the key findings of Varshney's research is the correlation between the presence of integrated civic organisations and reduced levels of communal violence in urban areas. Integrated civic organisations are those that bring together individuals from diverse religious, ethnic, or social backgrounds, fostering dialogue, cooperation, and mutual understanding across communal lines. These organisations serve as important platforms for promoting intergroup interactions, building social capital, and cultivating a sense of shared identity and common purpose among community members (Varshney, 2001).

The effectiveness of integrated civic organisations in conflict management stems from their ability to perform several critical functions. Firstly, they provide spaces for dialogue and reconciliation, allowing members of different communities to voice their grievances, address misunderstandings, and negotiate peaceful resolutions to disputes. By facilitating communication and fostering empathy between conflicting parties, these organisations help to de-escalate tensions and prevent the outbreak of violence. Secondly, integrated civic organisations often engage in proactive community-building efforts aimed at promoting social cohesion and intergroup solidarity. Through various activities such as joint cultural events, collaborative projects, and interfaith initiatives, they cultivate a sense of belonging and shared responsibility

among diverse populations, reducing the likelihood of communal polarisation and promoting a culture of tolerance and respect (Varshney, 2001).

In Indonesia, where religious persecution is a persistent issue, entities such as Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah emerge as significant actors in consensus-building within the Muslim community (Ufen, 2009). Their inclusive 'big tent' structures allow for the accommodation of diverse ideological perspectives, facilitating consensus through inclusivity rather than ideological purity (Bush & Munawar-Rachman, 2014; Van Bruinessen, 2011).

However, the presence of religious persecution complicates the dynamics of consensus-building within these civic organisations. Religious persecution, including discrimination against religious minorities, poses a significant challenge to the inclusive ethos advocated by NU and Muhammadiyah (Bush & Munawar-Rachman, 2014). Instances of persecution can exacerbate internal divisions and strain efforts to foster consensus, particularly when differing ideological factions within these organisations hold divergent views on issues related to religious freedom and tolerance.

Moreover, the response of NU and Muhammadiyah to religious persecution reflects their broader stance on pluralism and inclusivity. While both organisations officially endorse religious pluralism, internal divisions often arise when addressing specific instances of persecution or discrimination against religious minorities. Conservatives within Muhammadiyah and NU may prioritise preserving traditional norms and values, potentially leading to tensions with more progressive factions advocating for greater tolerance and inclusivity.

Despite these challenges, Muhammadiyah and NU continue to navigate the complexities of consensus-building in the face of religious persecution. Their efforts to promote dialogue, tolerance, and inclusivity within the Muslim community contribute to the broader discourse on religious freedom and human rights in Indonesia. By engaging in consensus-building while addressing issues of religious persecution, Muhammadiyah and NU demonstrate the resilience and adaptability of civic organisations in responding to complex societal challenges.

1.4 Research design and methodology

This study adopts a comparative case study design, utilising various data collection methods and analyses. By focusing on the Ahmadiyah community in Indonesia, we aim to contribute to the development and validation of theoretical propositions, shedding light on broader contexts (Gerring, 2007). George and Bennett (2005) assert that case studies offer detailed examinations of historical episodes, enabling the testing of explanations applicable to other events.

Acknowledging limitations, such as the challenge of establishing causation due to the 'degree of freedom' problem, where a single case or a few cases may have many potential causal variables (Campbell and Stanley, 1966, as cited in Levy, 2008), we address this by intensively observing the same variable. King et al. (1994) emphasise the importance of generating numerous testable implications within a case by observing the same variable extensively. George and Bennett (2005) outline three key tasks in case study research design: (1) specifying the research puzzle and typology, (2) selecting cases, and (3) collecting and analysing data. These tasks provide a structured approach to conducting case studies, ensuring rigour and depth in the research process.

Specification of research case study's typology

Expanding on the typology of case studies outlined by George and Bennett (2005), there are six distinct categories. These include configurative-idiographic case studies, disciplined-configurative case studies, heuristic case studies, theory-testing case studies, plausibility probes, and building block studies. Each category serves a unique purpose in the realm of case study research.

Given the objective of investigating how local religious regulations contribute to religious persecution, particularly in understanding the underlying conditions affecting Ahmadiyah followers, this research can be classified within the disciplined-configurative case study typology. Disciplined-configurative case studies are characterised by their utilisation of established theories to explain specific cases. However, they go beyond mere application by actively contributing to theory testing or even extending existing theories into previously unexplored domains (George and Bennett, 2005).

In this context, the disciplined-configurative approach allows for a systematic examination of the dynamics between local religious regulations and religious persecution within the Ahmadiyah

community. By integrating established theories with empirical data, this research not only seeks to explain the observed phenomena but also to validate or refine existing theoretical frameworks. Additionally, it opens avenues for advancing understanding in areas of inquiry that may have been overlooked or underdeveloped within the broader scholarly discourse. Therefore, by adopting a disciplined-configurative case study approach, this research aims to provide nuanced insights into the complexities of religious persecution and its underlying mechanisms, with implications extending beyond the specific case of the Ahmadiyah community in Indonesia.

Case selection

Expanding on the case selection process outlined in the research, I delve into three key aspects: spatial, temporal, and theoretical considerations (Levy, 2008).

Spatial Aspect: From a spatial perspective, the research focuses on districts or cities where significant Ahmadiyah communities reside. With approximately 70 districts/cities housing notable Ahmadiyah followers, this selection criterion allows for a nuanced understanding of state practices at the local level. Gupta (1995) emphasises the importance of studying state interactions at this level, as it is where citizens most keenly experience the manifestations of state authority. By examining districts/cities where state practices are most palpable, researchers gain insight into the profound impact of state attitudes on citizens, particularly on religious minority groups.

Temporal Aspect: In terms of the temporal dimension, the research narrows its focus to events unfolding from 2008 onwards. This timeframe aligns with the introduction of specific central government regulations targeting Ahmadiyah activities. The enactment of Joint Ministerial Decree 3/2008 on 9 June 2008, issued by the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Minister of Home Affairs, and the Attorney General, marked a significant turning point. Subsequently, 24 local regulations were enacted, comprising both provincial and regency/city levels, aimed at prohibiting Ahmadiyah activities. By concentrating on this timeframe, the research captures the dynamics following the central government's regulatory actions, providing insights into their implementation and impact at the local level.

Theoretical Aspect: In line with Levy's (2008) recommendation, the research adopts purposive sampling guided by academic criteria rather than intrinsic interest or historical significance alone. Leveraging the most similar system design, the case selection process identifies

comparable cases with one distinct aspect or phenomenon of interest. This approach, as advocated by Andrade (2009), facilitates a focused examination of specific variables or conditions within a controlled comparative framework. By employing this methodological approach, the research aims to rigorously evaluate the targeted aspect or phenomenon across selected cases, contributing to theoretical advancement and empirical understanding.

Furthermore, from a spatial perspective, it is evident that the majority of Ahmadiyah followers reside in 70 districts/cities, with the highest concentration found in West Java Province, comprising 20 districts/cities as shown in Table 2 below. This geographical distribution underscores the significance of West Java as a focal point for studying Ahmadiyah communities within Indonesia. The concentration of Ahmadiyah followers in this region not only highlights the demographic prominence of the community but also suggests potential variations in state interactions and local dynamics across different provinces and districts/cities.

Table 2
Ahmadiyah Followers by Districts/Cities

Provinces	Districts/Cities	Provinces	Districts/Cities	Provinces	Districts/Cities
DKI Jakarta	1 Jakarta	Central Java	1 Semarang	Riau	1 Bengkalis
			2 Kendal		2 Rokan Ilir
Banten	1 Serang		3 Karanganyar		3 Pekanbaru
	2 South Tangerang		4 Wonosobo		4 Kampar
	3 Tangerang				
	4 Pandeglang	East Java	1 Surabaya	Riau Island	1 Batam
			2 Blitar		
West Java	1 Bandung (City)		3 Malang	Bengkulu	1 Bengkulu
	2 Bandung (District)		4 Tulungagung		
	3 Tasikmalaya (District)			Bangka Belitung	1 Bangka
	4 Tasikmalaya (City)	NAD	Meulaboh		
	5 Majalengka			South Sumatra	1 Palembang
	6 Banjar	North Sumatra	Medan		2 Musiwaras
	7 Ciamis				
	8 Sukabumi	West Sumatra	1 Bukittinggi	West Lombok	1 Mataram (City)
	9 Bogor (City)		2 Padang		2 Bima
	10 Bogor		3 Payakumbuh		3 Lombok Barat
	11 Cianjur		4 Bukit tinggi		4 Lombok Timur
	12 Cimahi		5 Solok		5 Selong
	13 Bekasi		6 Padang Pariaman		
	14 Garut			South Kalimantan	1 Banjarmasin
	15 Depok (City)	Jambi	Sorolangun		2 Tanah Bumbu
	16 Kuningan		Sungaienuh		
	17 Subang		Kerinci	East Kalimantan	1 Samarinda
	18 Banjar (City)				
	19 Sumedang	South Sulawesi	Sidenreng Rappang	West Kalimantan	1 Sintang
	20 Purwakarta		Pinrang		
				North Kalimantan	1 Tarakan
Yogyakarta	1 Yogyakarta	North Sulawesi	Manado		

Source: Data compiled by the author from the Setara Institute (2017)

The prevalence of Ahmadiyah communities in West Java Province presents a compelling case for deeper exploration, considering the region's cultural and political context. As one of the most populous provinces in Indonesia, West Java serves as a microcosm of the complexities inherent in religious dynamics within the country. The diverse socio-political landscape, coupled with varying levels of state intervention and societal attitudes towards religious minorities, offers a rich tapestry for examining the experiences and challenges faced by Ahmadiyah followers. Moreover, the concentration of Ahmadiyah followers in West Java Province raises questions about the role of local governance, community dynamics, and interfaith relations in shaping the experiences of religious minorities. By focusing on this region, the research can delve into nuances and contextual factors that may influence the implementation of state regulations and the treatment of Ahmadiyah communities at the local level.

Given that West Java Province boasts the highest population of Ahmadiyah residents, this research focuses on districts/cities within the province, representing each category. Category 1: Regions with local regulations against Ahmadiyah and documented persecution against Ahmadiyah followers; Category 2: Regions with local regulations against Ahmadiyah, but without recorded instances of persecution; Category 3: Regions without local regulations against Ahmadiyah, yet reported cases of persecution against Ahmadiyah followers; Category 4: Regions without local restrictions on Ahmadiyah activities and no reported persecution against Ahmadiyah followers, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Ahmadiyah followers are distributed across districts/cities according to four categories

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2	CATEGORY 3	CATEGORY 4
Regulation (+)	Regulation (+)	Regulation (-)	Regulation (-)
Persecution (+)	Persecution (-)	Persecution (+)	Persecution (-)
Tasikmalaya District	Bogor City	Bandung City	Purwakarta District
Sukabumi District		Badung District	
Bogor District		Tasikmalaya City	
Cianjur District		Majalengka District	
Cimahi City		Sumedang District	
Bekasi City		Ciamis District	
Depok City		Bekasi District	
Kuningan District		Cimahi City	
Garut District			
Subang District			
Banjar District			

This categorisation provides a systematic framework for examining the varying degrees of state intervention and societal attitudes towards Ahmadiyah communities across different regions within West Java Province. By encompassing districts/cities from each category, the research aims to capture a comprehensive spectrum of experiences and challenges faced by Ahmadiyah followers, shedding light on the complex interplay between legal frameworks, state practices, and societal dynamics.

In the final step of the case selection process, this research adopts a purposive approach to select three representative cities within West Java Province: Depok City, Bogor City, and Bandung City, representing categories 1, 2, and 3, respectively, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4
Selected case studies

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2	CATEGORY 3
Regulation (+)	Regulation (+)	Regulation (-)
Persecution (+)	Persecution (-)	Persecution (+)
Depok City	Bogor City	Bandung City

This deliberate selection is grounded in several key factors aimed at ensuring comparability and relevance across the chosen cases. First and foremost, Depok City, Bogor City, and Bandung City are strategically chosen due to their socio-cultural similarities. These cities share commonalities in terms of language and customs, predominantly characterised by the Sundanese culture. This shared cultural heritage establishes a foundational similarity that facilitates meaningful comparisons and analyses across the selected cases. Additionally, the selected cities exhibit comparable municipal characteristics. With populations ranging from 1.4 to 1.8 million people, Depok, Bogor, and Bandung represent urban centres of substantial size within West Java Province. Moreover, considerations such as unemployment rates play a pivotal role in the selection process, as they reflect underlying socio-economic conditions that may influence the dynamics of religious persecution and state responses within each city. By opting for cities with comparable unemployment rates, ranging around 10%, the research aims to control for potential confounding variables and ensure that observed differences in outcomes can be attributed to relevant contextual factors rather than extraneous influences.

Qualitative data collection and data analysis

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the circumstances leading to the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, employing a process-tracing approach. This method, as advocated by George and Bennett (2005), is particularly suited for illuminating causal relationships and effects within case studies. By delving into the decision-making processes and actors' perceptions, the process-tracing approach, as highlighted by Collin (2011), allows for a deeper understanding of how outcomes are produced and enables the formulation of more generalisable propositions.

To implement this approach, qualitative data collection methods are utilised, including gathering secondary materials, conducting in-depth interviews, engaging in participant observation, and facilitating Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) within three selected cities. These methods serve to provide rich, context-specific insights into the intricate dynamics at play, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the factors influencing religious persecution against Ahmadiyah followers.

1. Secondary material collection

Annual reports on religious affairs in Indonesia, sourced from various reputable government institutions, universities, and NGOs, have been utilised for document analysis. Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as the systematic evaluation of both electronic and printed materials. These reports are sourced from entities such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies at Gajah Mada University, Setara Institute, Wahid Institute, and Kontras (The Commission for Disappeared and Victims of Violence). Through document analysis, empirical data are extracted to examine the broader landscape of religious life and specifically delineate instances of religious restrictions or persecution targeting Ahmadiyah followers. This encompasses documenting incidents such as attacks, intimidation, intolerance, property demolitions, and the closure of worship spaces affecting the Ahmadiyah community.

2. In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were employed to deepen comprehension of the circumstances or contributing factors elucidating the connection between religious regulations and religious persecution within the Ahmadiyah context. According to Kapiszewski et al. (2015), two primary

objectives of in-depth interviews are to glean crucial and specific insights from key informants and to capture broader perspectives regarding a population.

This study conducted a total of 70 interviews encompassing a diverse range of stakeholders, including local government officials, representatives from NGOs, academics, journalists, religious leaders, Ahmadiyah followers, and members of the local community. These interviews aimed to gather insights and confirmations regarding the enforcement of local regulations banning Ahmadiyah activities. Below is a detailed breakdown of the interviewees.

Table 5
List of Interviewees

Stakeholders	Institutions/Affiliates	Locations	Number of Interviewees
Local Government officials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mayor and former Mayor of Depok 2. Mayor and former Mayor of Bogor 3. Mayor of Bandung 4. Regional Secretariat officers 5. National Sovereignty and Politics Agency 6. Local Religious Affairs Agency 7. Local Police officers 	Depok, Bogor, and Bandung	10
NGOs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setara Institute 2. Wahid Institute 3. KontraS (The Commission for Disappeared and Victims of Violence) 4. PUSAD (Research Center of Religion and Democracy) 5. Komnas Perempuan (National Commission on the Elimination of Violence against Women) 	Jakarta	8
	<p>Local NGOs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YLBHI (Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation) Bandung 2. Inklusif Foundation 3. Jakatarub (<i>Jaringan Kerja antar Umat Beragama</i>) – Inter Religious Networking Community 4. Satu Keadilan Foundation 	Depok, Bogor and Bandung	7
Academics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies Gajah Mada University 2. Padjadjaran University 3. German-Swiss University 4. LIPI (The Indonesian Institute of Sciences) 	Yogyakarta, Bandung, and Jakarta	4
	A local university study on religious studies	Depok, Bogor, and Bandung	2
Local Religious Leaders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) 2. Muhammadiyah 3. Nahdatul Ulama 	Jakarta	4
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional officers of Muhammadiyah 2. Regional officers of Nahdatul Ulama 	Depok, Bogor and Bandung	7

Stakeholders	Institutions/Affiliates	Locations	Number of Interviewees
	3 Regional officers of Persatuan Islam 4 <i>Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama</i> (FKUB) – Religious Harmony Forum 5 Regional Indonesian Ulama Council		
	Islam Defenders Front (FPI)	Depok, Bogor and Bandung	6
	Islamic Reform Movement (GARIS)	Depok, Bogor and Bandung	4
Journalist	Serikat Jurnalis untuk Kebebasan (SeJuK) – Journalists Union for Freedom		1
Ahmadiyah Followers	1 Spoke person of JAI (Ahmadiyah Indonesia Community) 2 Head of legal division JAI 3 Local Ahmadiyah leaders in Depok, Bogor and Bandung 4 Member of Ahmadiyah followers in Depok, Bogor and Bandung Ahmadiyah Followers (Leaders and selected followers in 4 locations)	Depok, Bogor and Bandung	17
		Total	70

3. Participant observation

Participant observations were carried out within three distinct Ahmadiyah communities situated in Depok, Bogor, and Bandung. The primary objective of these observations was to directly engage with and immerse in the daily activities and interactions within these communities, thereby gaining firsthand insight into the realities on the ground. By being present within these communities, researchers could observe and document various aspects, including the responses and reactions of Ahmadiyah followers in the face of persecution.

Moreover, participant observations served as a valuable method for corroborating and validating the findings obtained through in-depth interviews. By comparing and contrasting the information gathered through both methods, researchers could enhance the reliability and credibility of the study's conclusions. Additionally, participant observations allowed for a more holistic understanding of the dynamics at play within Ahmadiyah communities, providing nuanced insights into the lived experiences of individuals amidst religious persecution.

4. Focus group discussion (FGD)

Following the completion of document and content analysis, in-depth interviews, and participant observations, the final step in data collection involved organising a Focus Group Discussion

(FGD). This discussion brought together practitioners and experts in conflict resolution, religious studies, and policy analysis from Depok, Bogor, and Bandung to delve into the research findings. The inputs and suggestions provided during the FGD played a pivotal role in shaping the subsequent data analysis and writing process. Participants included local religious leaders, police officers, representatives from NGOs, academics, and selected Ahmadiyah followers, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives and insights.

Moreover, to effectively analyse unstructured or non-numerical data such as interview recordings and FGD transcripts, NVivo software was utilised as an organisational tool. This software facilitated the systematic arrangement and classification of information, allowing for the examination of relationships within the data. By leveraging NVivo, researchers were able to generate a transparent, reliable, and more accurate representation of the interview and FGD results, enhancing the overall rigour and credibility of the study.

1.5 The significance and novelty of this study

This study makes a significant contribution by addressing a crucial gap in the literature on religious persecution, particularly regarding the Ahmadiyah community in Indonesia. Unlike previous research that primarily attributes religious persecution to theological disputes, societal intolerance, or state-driven regulations, this study reveals how local political elites deliberately orchestrate religious intolerance for electoral gain. It highlights the social mechanisms through which religious hardliners, patronage networks, and governance structures interact to sustain persecution, offering a political-economy perspective on religious discrimination. By uncovering these strategic mobilizations, the research equips activists, policymakers, legal scholars, and religious organizations with a deeper understanding of the political forces driving religious intolerance, enabling them to develop more effective interventions.

A major novelty of this study is its comparative case study approach across Depok, Bogor, and Bandung, which illustrates how persecution manifests differently in varied political contexts. Unlike prior studies that treat religious intolerance as a homogeneous phenomenon, this research demonstrates how local governance structures, political alliances, and patron-client relationships shape the intensity and nature of persecution. The stark contrast between Depok—where conservative religious networks are deeply embedded in local politics—and Bogor & Bandung—

where more inclusive governance limits persecution—reveals how local politicians instrumentalize religious identity based on political expediency. This comparative framework provides new insights into the conditions under which religious persecution is intensified or mitigated.

Additionally, this study advances scholarly discussions by integrating theories of political competition, political patronage, and religious mobilization to explain the persistence of persecution. Unlike previous research that often treats religious conservatism as a static societal force, this study uncovers how political actors actively cultivate and sustain alliances with Islamic hardliners to secure electoral support. It moves beyond ideological explanations and instead foregrounds the role of political incentives in reinforcing religious intolerance. Furthermore, the research exposes the weak influence of moderate and pluralist Muslim organizations, explaining why these groups struggle to counteract religious persecution effectively. The structural marginalization of these voices allows hardline factions to dominate the political landscape, further entrenching discrimination against religious minorities.

Expanding on the work of Brathwaite and Park on political competition and religious violence, this study deepens the theoretical and empirical understanding of how political opportunism shapes religious persecution. By uncovering the social mechanisms that sustain intolerance, it highlights the deliberate strategies used by local political elites to instrumentalize religious identity for electoral advantage. In doing so, this research moves beyond macro-level analyses of religious violence, providing a localized and empirically grounded explanation for its persistence. Rather than viewing persecution as an organic societal reaction, this study reveals it as a calculated political maneuver. This perspective not only challenges prevailing narratives but also contributes to broader discussions on religion and politics, electoral strategies, and state-society relations.

1.6 Thesis outline

There are seven chapters in this thesis as follows.

Chapter 1, the Introduction, sets the stage for the study by addressing the research background, presenting the research questions, establishing the conceptual framework, outlining the research design and methodology, and emphasising the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 delves into the evolution of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia and the historical persecution faced by its followers. It explores the early origins of the Ahmadiyah movement, highlighting its division into two branches: the Qadian and the smaller Lahore sects, and elucidating their differences. Additionally, the chapter reviews the development of the Ahmadiyah movement since Indonesia's Independence, while also examining the history of persecution endured by Ahmadiyah followers.

Chapter 3 (*Fatwas* as social regulations and the persecution of Ahmadiyah). This chapter reveals that social regulations, particularly *fatwas* from the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), are closely linked to persecution against Ahmadiyah followers. Islamist groups often justify persecution using MUI's *fatwa*,¹ sometimes with local authorities' collaboration, as seen in Depok and Bandung. However, Bogor presents a different scenario, with persecution ceasing after the government issued a local regulation, the MUI's conservative shift post-reform era fosters an environment conducive to discrimination against Ahmadiyah. Islamist groups, like the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), enforce Sharia law using MUI *fatwas*, legitimising violence. Despite some Islamic organisations acknowledging MUI *fatwas*, differences in views exist within the Islamic community. The MUI's coalition with hardline Islamist groups legitimises their actions, allowing them to exploit religious illiteracy and justify violence.

Chapter 4 (Local politics during the mayoral election and religious persecution in Depok City). This chapter delves into the intricate local politics during local elections and its correlation with religious violence against Ahmadiyah members in Depok City. Through an analysis of the 2005 and 2010 election cycles and the tenure of Nurmahmudi Ismail from 2005 to 2015, the study focuses on 45 instances of Ahmadiyah persecution within the community, with a significant portion occurring during Ismail's leadership. The study particularly examines the response of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), which has held power in Depok since 2005.

The findings reveal a complex web of mediators influencing the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. Firstly, the study identifies political competition, including patronage networks, as instrumental in shaping political candidates' stances on religious persecution. Due to intense

¹ The *fatwa* is an opinion as an answer given by some qualified religious scholars based on Islamic law on a question from the society. On regards on Ahmadiyah, the MUI has the strongest commitments against this movement by issuing two *fatwas* in 1980 and 2005. The latter *fatwa* was very strongly advocating for banning Ahmadiyah and prohibit the spread of Ahmadiyah teaching. It also stated that Ahmadiyah is not part of the Islamic community and the Muslim who follows it is a heretic.

political competition, incumbents seek to bolster their Islamic credentials by aligning with hardline Islamist groups, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), to garner support during elections. Additionally, the collaboration between political actors and local conservative religious leaders, particularly those leading *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), further exacerbates religious persecution. Moreover, weak Muslim civic associations, notably the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Depok, contribute to the lack of opposition against restrictions on Ahmadiyah activities, as NU activists and clerics are implicated in attacks against Ahmadiyah followers. These findings underscore the complex interplay between political competition, religious institutions, and societal dynamics in perpetuating religious violence against Ahmadiyah members in Depok City.

Chapter 5 (Local politics during the mayoral election and religious persecution in Bogor City). This chapter aims to explore the factors underlying the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, with a focus on Bogor, a region where local regulations against Ahmadiyah have been implemented. Despite the issuance of these regulations, there have been no reported instances of continued persecution against Ahmadiyah followers. To address this paradox, the chapter employs a conceptual framework of local politics and religious persecution, investigating the role of intermediary factors such as political competition, patronage networks, local religious authorities, and Muslim civic organisations.

Empirical findings reveal a correlation between intense political competition and political candidates' stances on Ahmadiyah persecution in Bogor. During the 2008 mayoral election, Diani Budiarto aligned himself with hardline Islamist factions to bolster his Islamic image and secure votes. This collaboration facilitated the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, endorsed by conservative local religious authorities. Conversely, in subsequent elections under Bima Arya's leadership, a shift towards progressive campaign tactics and alliances with progressive religious leaders led to a decline in Ahmadiyah persecution. Furthermore, the study underscores the role of progressive local religious authorities, notably *kiai* figures like KH Mustafa Abdullah bin Nuh and KH Hasbullah, in promoting religious moderation and shielding Ahmadiyah followers from persecution. Additionally, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) plays a crucial role in Bogor, counterbalancing municipal policies and fostering religious pluralism. NU's advocacy for religious moderation aligns with the inclinations of Bima Arya's administration, contributing to a climate of tolerance and inclusivity in Bogor.

Chapter 6 (Local politics during the mayoral election and religious persecution in Bandung City). This chapter investigates the root causes of religious persecution against Ahmadiyah followers, with a focus on Depok and Bogor, presenting a striking contrast in their treatment of the Ahmadiyah community. While Depok demonstrates clear instances of persecution, Bogor's Ahmadiyah followers have been spared such mistreatment despite the implementation of local regulations against them. Bandung, on the other hand, falls into a unique category, experiencing persecution despite the absence of explicit local regulations targeting Ahmadiyah. The chapter aims to dissect empirical data to understand the core research focus within the thesis scope, particularly analysing variables contributing to religious persecution in contexts without local regulations.

This study explores the complex relationship between local politics and the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Bandung, focusing on political competition, religious leaders, and civic organisations. During the 2008 and 2013 mayoral elections, Islamist groups like FPI and GARIS targeted Ahmadiyah members to increase their influence, but this trend declined after 2013. The research highlights the critical role of incumbent candidates in securing support from progressive religious leaders, or *kiai*, who are essential in competing for election votes and countering the conservative influence of Islamist hardliners. Leaders like Dada Rosada and Ridwan Kamil avoided exploiting anti-Ahmadiyah sentiments and instead aligned with these progressive figures, significantly reducing persecution. Additionally, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) played a vital role in promoting religious tolerance and protecting Ahmadiyah rights in Bandung after 2013.

Chapter 7 (Conclusion). The research delves into understanding why religious regulations are invoked to justify persecution in certain areas but not others, prompting an investigation into the conditions under which such regulations lead to violent persecution. Despite the presence of Islamist hardliners across various regions, violent persecution against Ahmadiyah followers is not uniform. Hence, the study aims to uncover the origins of pressure for anti-Ahmadiyah actions and the motivations driving key actors. By examining local dynamics and determining contributing factors within communities, the research seeks to reveal the underlying conditions that fuel religious persecution against Ahmadiyah followers.

The findings shed light on the nexus between political competition during mayoral elections and the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. The study reveals that the behaviour of local political actors, particularly during fiercely contested mayoral elections, plays a significant role

in perpetuating persecution. It becomes apparent that political candidates exploit the Ahmadiyah issue to enhance their Islamic credentials, seeking support from conservative Muslims and Islamic hardliners for electoral backing. This aligns with Brathwaite and Park's theory, suggesting that areas with high political competition experience increased religious violence, a phenomenon exacerbated by electoral competition. Through an analysis of persecution patterns in selected cities, the study elucidates the correlation between local politics and religious persecution, driven by political competition, local religious authorities, and Muslim civic organisation ties.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AHMADIYAH AND THE HISTORY OF PERSECUTION OF ITS FOLLOWERS IN INDONESIA

Ahmadiyah, a global movement, has followers spread across 213 countries worldwide. Despite its widespread presence, this movement has faced harassment and persecution for years, primarily due to its divergent beliefs from mainstream Muslims. In Indonesia, the nature of oppression has evolved over time. Before 1998, it primarily manifested through written and public debates, but post-1998, violent acts and persecution became more prevalent. This chapter delves into the distinct forms of opposition post-1998: disclosure opposition, led by entities like MUI, LPPI, HTI, and FUI, and fierce opposition, carried out by groups like FPI, and local vigilantes such as GARIS and GERAH. This chapter serves as a foundational exploration into the origins of violent resistance against Ahmadiyah followers in the 2000s, beginning with a detailed history of Ahmadiyah's development in Indonesia, tracing back to its origins in Qadian India, the founders, internal conflicts, and significant events from the first Qadian missionary's arrival in Indonesia to the present day.

2.1 The development of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia

The development of the Ahmadiyah movement in Indonesia, which traces its roots back to the early 1920s, finds its inception with the arrival of Rahmat Ali, an Ahmadiyah missionary from Qadian, India, who landed in Tapaktuan, Aceh Province, on 2 October 1925 (Zulkarnain, 2005). This significant event began a concerted effort to propagate the movement's teachings in the Indonesian archipelago. It is important to note that Ahmadiyah was established by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in India in 1889 (Friedmann, 1989), with its headquarters in Qadian, India.

The name 'Ahmadiyah' holds significant meaning, drawing interpretations from various scholars. While some, like Smith (1986) and Crouch (2011), suggest that it is derived from the founder's last name, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, others, such as Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad (1980), argue that it is linked to the name of the Prophet Muhammad, whose epithet 'Ahmad' is intertwined with the essence of Islam. This divergence underscores the richness of interpretations within the movement, where Ghulam Ahmad himself elucidated that his name, 'Ghulam', signifies being a

servant of Ahmad (Khan, 1978), thus symbolising the beauty of Islam emerging after its glory has been attained.

Following the demise of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1908, internal strife within the movement led to its bifurcation into two branches, namely the Qadian and the Lahore factions (Burhani, 2013). The differences between these branches revolve around fundamental theological tenets, such as the nature of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood and the system of leadership within the movement. The Qadian branch emphasises distinctive beliefs from mainstream Islam, while the Lahore branch aligns more closely with Sunni Islam. Despite these internal schisms, the Ahmadiyah movement persevered, with its propagation efforts gaining momentum under the leadership of missionaries like Rahmat Ali.

The propagation of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia emphasised organisational structure and membership. Rahmat Ali established the first Ahmadiyah groups in Tapaktuan, Aceh, and Padang, West Sumatra, in the late 1920s (Zulkarnain, 2005). However, these efforts encountered staunch opposition from local *ulamas*, who viewed Ahmadiyah as a threat to traditional Muslim society (Hamka, 1982; Ropi, 2010), notably in Aceh and Padang. Local *ulamas*, including Ahmad Syukur, Muhammad Isya, and Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, vehemently opposed the movement, attributing it to colonial agendas and labelling it as heretical (Hamka, 1982; Burhani, 2013). This resistance culminated in theological debates and the publication of literature aimed at refuting Ahmadiyah doctrines.

Despite these challenges, the Ahmadiyah movement in Indonesia persisted and even thrived. In 1950, Rahmat Ali left Indonesia, leaving the charge to Indonesian graduates from Ahmadiyah colleges in Qadian and Rabwah (Zulkarnain, 2005). Native missionaries trained in Ahmadiyah colleges in Qadian and Rabwah assumed leadership roles, establishing educational institutions like the Ahmadiyah College in Parung, Bogor, to groom future missionaries (Zulkarnain, 2005). The movement's organisational structure underwent evolution, culminating in the establishment of the Jamaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI) in December 1949, which served as the national umbrella organisation (Abidin, 2007). The JAI and all Ahmadiyah branches are structurally under the command of *Khalifatul Masih* from the headquarters in London. However, each country representative has an *amir* (governor-general) and a *raisut-tabligh* (chief of Ahmadiyah mission). The *raisut-tabligh* helped and was placed under the *amir* in managing *ummah* or followers (Zulkarnain, 2005). Maulana Marajuddin is the current *amir* of JAI.

Legal recognition further solidified the status of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia, with the JAI obtaining official recognition from both the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Home Affairs (Zulkarnain, 2005; Ropi, 2010). Despite discrepancies in estimating the number of Ahmadiyah followers, ranging from 50,000 to 400,000, the movement continues to maintain a presence across the Indonesian archipelago, particularly in West Java (Crouch, 2009; CGI, 2008).

2.2 Comparing Ahmadiyah beliefs with mainstream Islam

Ahmadiyah followers have faced significant intimidation and persecution due to their distinct beliefs, which set them apart from mainstream Muslims. These beliefs include differences in the *shahada* (the declaration of faith) (Jaiz, 2008), the acknowledgment of additional holy sites such as Qadian and Rabwah alongside Mecca and Medina (Jaiz, 2008; Djamaludin, 2008), and the recognition of the Tadzkirah as a sacred text alongside the Qur'an (Djamaludin, 2008; Abdurahman, 2011).

However, Burhani (2013) argues that these accusations are often unfounded and not entirely accurate. For instance, Ahmadiyah adherents still consider Mecca and Medina to be the foremost sacred pilgrimage sites. The significance of Qadian and Rabwah lies in the fact that, due to restrictions imposed by the Saudi Arabian government on Ahmadiyah pilgrims, visiting these sites becomes crucial for Ahmadiyah followers to fulfil their religious obligations (Burhani, 2013). Therefore, Ahmad (2007) and Burhani (2013) have outlined at least six distinctive beliefs of Ahmadiyah in comparison to mainstream Islam, which will be discussed below.

The claim of the prophethood of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Ahmadiyah doctrine delineates two categories of prophethood: law-bearing prophets, exemplified by figures like Muhammad and Moses, and non-law-bearing prophets, such as Harun, Ismail, and Jesus (Ahmad, 2007). Law-bearing prophets are characterised by their reception of divine legislation (*shari'a*) for their respective societies, whereas non-law-bearing prophets continue the teachings of legislative prophets without receiving specific legislation (Burhani, 2013). Ahmadiyah belief also holds that non-legislative prophets continue to emerge, while legislative prophets ceased to appear after Muhammad (Burhani, 2013).

According to Ahmadiyah followers, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad falls into the category of non-legislative and subordinate prophets of Muhammad, known as *nabi ummati* (Khan, 1978). They view Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a perfect reflection and the fulfilment of the second advent of the Prophet Muhammad, adhering to his teachings and *shari'a* (Khan, 1978). This perspective has sparked significant controversy not only between Ahmadiyah and mainstream Muslim communities but also within the Qadian and Lahore Ahmadiyah branches. The Qadian Ahmadiyah maintain the belief that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is indeed a prophet² (Khan, 1978), whereas the Lahore Ahmadiyah regard him as a shadow or manifestation of a prophet, rather than a prophet in his own right (Ali, 1994).

The implementation of the Caliphate system

Following the concept of prophethood, the Ahmadiyah community's adherence to the caliphate system sets it apart from mainstream Muslims, representing a significant and distinctive teaching. Since the demise of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, all his duties and obligations have been assumed by successive caliphs (Burhani, 2013). The caliphate holds authority over the care of followers, regardless of their nationality, and wields considerable power in religious matters. Ahmadiyah followers are required to respect and remain loyal to the caliph, as he represents Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and is an integral part of the prophethood system (Zirvi, 2010).

The selection of a caliph involves an electoral process, with the elected individual typically being a descendant of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, except for the inaugural caliph, Hakim Nuruddin. Once elected, a caliph cannot be deposed (Bashir, 2010). Since the passing of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1908, the Ahmadiyah community has had five caliphs: Hakim Nuruddin (r. 1908–1914), Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad (r. 1914–1965), Nasir Ahmad (r. 1965–1982), Tahir Ahmad (r. 1982–2003), and Masrur Ahmad (r. 2003–present) (Bashir, 2010). Initially based in Qadian, India, the caliphate's headquarters relocated to Rabwah, Pakistan, in 1947 due to the partition of India. However, following the criminalisation of Ahmadiyah religious beliefs in Pakistan, the headquarters relocated to London in 1984.

The affirmation of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the Messiah

In addition to being regarded as a non-law-bearing and subordinate prophet of Muhammad, followers of the Ahmadiyah perceive Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the promised Messiah. Ahmadis

² This thesis focuses on the Qadiani perception on Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood.

assert that Jesus, in contrast to mainstream Christian belief, did not die on the cross but survived and eventually passed away at the age of 120 in Khan Yar Street, Srinagar, Kashmir, India (Ghulam Ahmad, 2003). According to Ahmadiyah belief, Jesus was taken down from the cross, and his wounds were treated with the Ointment of Jesus (Marham-I Isa), after which he embarked on a journey to locate the ten lost tribes of Israelites in Kashmir and Tibet (Ghulam Ahmad, 2003).

This doctrine presents a challenge to both Islamic and Christian teachings. In Sunni Islam, it is taught that God saved Jesus by raising him to heaven before his crucifixion, while in Christianity, Jesus is believed to have willingly endured crucifixion to atone for humanity's sins and was subsequently resurrected after three days in the tomb. However, the existence of Jesus's tomb in Kashmir suggests that he died a natural death, contradicting the belief in his ascension to heaven and eventual return. Instead, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is considered the promised Messiah and the Mahdi, fulfilling the role of both Jesus and the Mahdi (Burhani, 2013). Ahmadiyah doctrine posits that the Messiah and the Mahdi are not separate individuals, as commonly believed in Sunni Islam, but the same person.

According to *Tadhkiratush Shahadatain*, there are notable similarities between Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Jesus (Burhani, 2013). Both figures are seen as supplements to Muhammad and Moses, respectively, as legislative prophets. Additionally, they were entrusted with the task of reforming the teachings of Islam and Judaism, respectively. Furthermore, there are striking resemblances in the ritual initiations of Christianity and Ahmadiyah, with the *bay'a* of Ahmadiyah resembling the baptism of Christianity (Ghulam Ahmad, 1984).

Redefining the concept of Jihad

The reevaluation of *jihad*, particularly in relation to the doctrine of the Mahdi in Sunni Islam, is a significant aspect. In Sunni tradition, the Mahdi is anticipated to lead a 'holy war' against non-believers. However, Ahmadiyah theology diverges from this perspective, contending that the commonly understood portrayal of a bloodthirsty Mahdi contradicts the peaceful teachings of Islam (Burhani, 2013). Ahmadiyah doctrine asserts that the Mahdi and the Messiah should embody tranquillity and amiability rather than aggression. Instead of resorting to violence, the Mahdi is envisioned to champion the cause of Islam through the power of persuasion and rational discourse (Ghulam Ahmad, 2003).

Furthermore, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad challenged the traditional concept of warfare *jihad*, arguing that *jihad bi al-saif* (Jihad with the sword) is no longer an effective means of spreading Islam. Instead, he advocated *jihad bi al-qalam* (Jihad with the pen) (Ghulam Ahmad, 2003). Consequently, during his lifetime, Ghulam Ahmad authored over 80 books, and today, the Ahmadiyah community leverages advanced technology such as 24-hour TV satellite broadcasts (Muslim Television Ahmadiyah – MTA), the internet, and face-to-face communication to disseminate their teachings.

The System of Chanda (Financial contribution)

The concept of *Chanda* (financial contribution) originated from Mirza Ghulam Ahmad during the final years of his life, coinciding with the establishment of the *Bahishti Muqbarah* (Heavenly Graveyard), as detailed in the *Tadzkirah* (Friedmann, 1998). For Ahmadiyah followers desiring burial in the *Bahishti Muqbarah*, specific material and spiritual prerequisites must be met. The primary material requirement entails the payment of *Chanda* by Ahmadiyah adherents to the movement. This contribution is at least one-tenth of their monthly income, with the additional provision of bequeathing one-tenth of their property after their passing (Burhani, 2013). The spiritual condition involves detaching oneself from worldly attachments and surrendering one's body and soul to God (Burhani, 2013). *Bahishti Muqbarahs* are established in Qadian, India, and Rabwah, Pakistan, with several others situated in different countries, such as Indonesia, catering to *musi'* and *musi'ah* (*Chanda* payers) in Bogor and Kuningan Regency.

While *Chanda* does not negate the obligation of *zakah* (almsgiving) in Sunni Islam, the Ahmadiyah movement prioritises the management of *Chanda* over *zakah* (Friedmann, 1998). Practically, *Chanda* enables the Ahmadiyah community, as an independent organisation, to support various endeavours such as sending missionaries worldwide, constructing mosques along with covering operational expenses, and providing monthly salaries to *mubalighs* (preachers) in every Ahmadiyah mosque.

Intra-Ahmadiyah marriages

There is a prohibition within the Ahmadiyah community against marrying non-Ahmadi Muslims. This prohibition not only signifies the division between Ahmadiyah and non-Ahmadiyah followers but also reflects the belief that non-Ahmadiyah Muslims are considered akin to other non-believers (*kafir*) (Burhani, 2013). This restriction primarily applies to Ahmadi women, who

are discouraged from marrying non-Ahmadi men. Such unions could potentially pose challenges for the women in maintaining their faith and raising their children as Ahmadiyah adherents (Zirvi, 2010).

To facilitate intra-Ahmadiyah marriages, the Ahmadiyah community established a matchmaking program called Ristha Nata. This program maintains a comprehensive list of male and female Ahmadiyah followers seeking matrimonial partners, thereby assisting them in finding suitable matches (Djamaluddin, 2007). Additionally, some branches of Ahmadiyah have dedicated Marriage Departments tasked with organising and overseeing intra-Ahmadiyah unions (Majlis Amilah, 2003).

A deeper exploration of the theological tensions between Ahmadiyah and mainstream Islam is necessary to comprehend how these differences fuel perceptions of heresy and threats, which drive the persecution they face. These theological distinctions, particularly the Ahmadiyah belief in the continued emergence of non-law-bearing prophets (*nabi ummati*) and the recognition of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as both the Messiah and Mahdi, fundamentally challenge the mainstream Islamic doctrine of the finality of prophethood (*khatam an-nabiyyin*). This divergence has led to widespread accusations of heresy, which form the basis for their exclusion and marginalization. For many mainstream Muslims, these beliefs are seen as not only a deviation but a direct threat to the unity and integrity of the Muslim ummah.

This sense of threat is exacerbated by Ahmadiyah's reinterpretation of core Islamic concepts, such as jihad. The doctrine of *jihad bi al-qalam*, emphasizing intellectual and non-violent forms of religious struggle, contrasts sharply with the traditional understanding of jihad in Sunni Islam, particularly the anticipation of a Mahdi leading a 'holy war.' This divergence positions Ahmadiyah as a reformist movement that seeks to redefine the parameters of Islamic practice and belief. When coupled with their centralized leadership under a caliphate system and their robust organizational structure funded by the chanda system, Ahmadiyah is perceived as an alternative model of Islamic authority, challenging the socio-religious dominance of mainstream Islamic leaders and organizations.

Furthermore, conservative Muslim leaders and groups play a pivotal role in amplifying these theological differences, framing Ahmadiyah as not merely heretical but as an existential threat to Islamic orthodoxy. Through public sermons, fatwas, and campaigns, these leaders foster a narrative that portrays Ahmadiyah as a danger to the moral and spiritual cohesion of the Muslim

community. Such rhetoric legitimizes social ostracization and persecution, often culminating in direct acts of violence or systemic discrimination.

These theological disputes are further instrumentalized in the socio-political arena. Local politicians frequently align themselves with hardline Islamic factions to secure electoral support, portraying themselves as defenders of Islamic orthodoxy. By endorsing anti-Ahmadiyah policies and rhetoric, these politicians embed discrimination within the framework of local governance, making Ahmadiyah communities increasingly vulnerable to systemic marginalization.

2.3 The persecution history of Ahmadiyah followers in Indonesia

Persecution of Ahmadiyah adherents in Indonesia began when the movement arrived in the country in the 1920s. Oppression had many forms before and after 1998 (Burhani, 2013). Before 1998, oppression was primarily evident in written and public debates, while violent acts and persecution became more common after 1998.

From the 1920s to 1998, the disapproval of Ahmadiyah was primarily expressed through discussions and debates by major Muslim organisations, including Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam (Persis), and Nadhlatul Ulama.

The Muhammadiyah, a reformist Muslim organisation, initially embraced the arrival of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia, perceiving them as potential allies in countering the spread of Christianity and fostering a modern understanding of Islam (Beck, 2005). This positive reception was evident when two Ahmadiyah missionaries, Mirza Ali Ahmad Baig and Maulana Ahmad, were welcomed as guests to lecture at the 13th Congress of Muhammadiyah in Jogjakarta in March 1924 (Beck, 2005).

The positive association ended when Haji Rasul, one of the founders of Muhammadiyah, discovered that the teachings of Ahmadiyah were incompatible with the philosophy of Muhammadiyah during the 14th Congress of Muhammadiyah in March 1925 in Jogjakarta. Haji Rosul seized the opportunity to engage in a debate with Mirza Ali Ahmad, leading Muhammadiyah to comprehend the heretical nature of Ahmadiyah (Hamka, 1982). The connection deteriorated when Abdul' Alim Siddiq al-Qadiri, an Indian religious leader, exposed

the heretical beliefs of the Ahmadiyah sect during his visit to Jogjakarta in November 1927 (Zulkarnain, 2005).

A year later, on 5 July 1928, the Muhammadiyah released a declaration (*maklumat*) No. 294, which said that the Muhammadiyah banned the teachings of Ahmadiyah in its schools (Yasir and Yatimin, 1989). In addition, Muhammadiyah attempted to eliminate any Ahmadiyah supporters within its ranks. Muhamad Husni, the General Secretary then, followed the Ahmadiyah and consequently had to step down from his position in the Muhammadiyah organisation (Yasir and Yatimin, 1989). Furthermore, the Muhammadiyah opposed Ahmadiyah during the 18th Congress of Muhammadiyah in 1929 in Solo. The Muhammadiyah issued a decree (*fatwa*) that anyone who still believed in the Prophet after the Prophet of Muhammad was an unbeliever or *kafir* (PP Muhammadiyah, 1964).

The *Persatuan Islam (Persis)*, or the *Muslim Union*, shares a similar platform with the Muhammadiyah as a reformist Muslim organisation. While smaller than Muhammadiyah, Persis followers are often characterised by their more profound commitment and piety (Burhani, 2013). Unlike Muhammadiyah, Persis demonstrates a more consistent opposition to Ahmadiyah, mainly due to the presence of both Persis and Ahmadiyah followers in West Java Province. Although Persis did not issue a formal decree (*fatwa*), it engaged in numerous public and written disputes challenging Ahmadiyah teachings. One notable event was a famous nine-day debate held in Bandung and Jakarta in 1934 between Ahmadiyah missionaries and prominent Persis figures, including Chairman Ahmad Hassan, which attracted over 2000 attendees from both sides (Blood, 1974). The debate was around three topics: Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's existence as a prophet, the concept of the Prophet after Muhammad, and the death of Jesus (Federspiel, 2001). Hamka (1982) argued that it was neither the arguments nor the nine days of debate that attracted people to convert to Ahmadiyah. The endurance and patience of the Ahmadiyah representatives who received abusive intimidation and humiliation drew people to join. For instance, Muhammad Muhyiddin, the chairman of the debate, joined the Ahmadiyah after the end of the debate in Jakarta (Murtolo, 1976).

Additionally, Persis scholars published books, articles, and magazines refuting Ahmadiyah teachings following these debates. Ahmad Hassan authored a book challenging Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood titled *an-Nubuawah* (The Prophecy), as well as a response to the doctrine of the death of Jesus titled *Nabi yang masih hidup* (The Prophet who is still alive) (Ropi, 2010).

Similarly, Fawzy Sa'ied Thata contributed articles critiquing Ahmadiyah in various magazines such as *Al-Lisan* and *Pembela Islam* (Burhani, 2013)

The *Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)*, the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia, has taken a more tolerant stance towards Ahmadiyah compared to Muhammadiyah and Persis (Burhani, 2013). This leniency stems from NU's relatively minimal confrontation with Ahmadiyah. For instance, while Qadiani Ahmadiyah was established in West Sumatra and Lahore Ahmadiyah settled in Yogyakarta, the heartland of Muhammadiyah, NU's main base, has been less affected by Ahmadiyah activities (Burhani, 2013). Although Qadiani Ahmadiyah later expanded into West Java, a stronghold of Persis, it did not lead to significant tensions between NU and Ahmadiyah.

Despite the presence of Ahmadiyah followers in East Java, where NU is prominent, their numbers remain relatively small compared to the vast NU membership in the region. Consequently, Ahmadiyah's presence has not posed a significant challenge to NU, especially in East Java (Burhani, 2013). While NU did not issue a formal fatwa against Ahmadiyah teachings like Muhammadiyah, it collaborated with Muhammadiyah to oppose the spread of Ahmadiyah teachings. For instance, they jointly rejected the translation of the Qur'an into Indonesian based on Ahmadiyah's English translation (Benda, 1958). Furthermore, NU advocated for the exclusion of Ahmadiyah members from the Supreme Council of Indonesian Muslims (MIAI) and their participation in the Al-Islam Congress (Noer, 1973).

Since 1998, opposition against Ahmadiyah has escalated, with numerous incidents of violence directed towards Ahmadiyah followers. These include intimidation, physical attacks, destruction of Ahmadiyah residences, vandalism or arson of worship places, as well as discrimination and restrictions on worship activities. According to Burhani (2013), opposition to Ahmadiyah after 1998 can be categorised into two primary forms: ideological opposition and violent confrontation. Ideological opposition, represented by organisations like MUI, LPPI, and FUI (*Forum Umat Islam – Muslim Community Forum*), actively disseminates negative narratives about Ahmadiyah through publications and public speeches. They lobby the central government to ban Ahmadiyah teachings and organise rallies demanding the dissolution of Ahmadiyah. On the other hand, violent opposition, exemplified by groups like FPI (*Front Pembela Islam – Front for the Defence of Islam*) and local vigilante groups, engage in direct intimidation of Ahmadiyah followers. These acts of intimidation involve physical attacks, discrimination, and the closure of

Ahmadiyah worship places. The first category, disclosure opposition, will be explained as follows.

The Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI – Council of Indonesian Ulama). The MUI was established on the government's initiative on 27 July 1975. The MUI is a quasi-state body. This means that the MUI is not an official government agency but receives funds from the state budget (Hasyim, 2011). The MUI also has 33 branches at the provincial level and more than 400 district-level offices across the archipelago.

During the presidency of Suharto, the MUI provided recommendations and advice related to the regulation of belief (*aqidah*), public morality, and worship. Also, the MUI was the place for Muslim religious leaders (*ulama*) to discuss theological issues and bridge the relationship between *ulama*, Muslim society, and the government (Ichwan, 2005). In other words, by issuing a *fatwa*, the MUI became the leading supporter of the government's policy related to Islam. A *fatwa* is an opinion and an answer given by some qualified religious scholars based on Islamic law on a question from society (Hasyim, 2011). After the downfall of Suharto, during the national congress in 2000, the MUI redefined its role to become the servant of the Muslim people (*khadim al-umma*) rather than the servant of the government (*khadim al-hukuma*) (Burhani, 2013).

In the context of the Ahmadiyah, the MUI has issued two *fatwas*, before and after Suharto stepped down in 1980 and 2005, respectively. The first *fatwa* of Ahmadiyah was issued on 1 June 1980 (Ropi, 2010). It referred to the *fatwa of Rabithah A'lam al-Islami* (the World Muslim League), released in April 1974. The *Rabithah's fatwa* clearly stated three main doctrinal allegations of the Ahmadiyah, namely damaging very fundamental Islamic teachings with claims of a new prophecy, twisting the meaning of some Qur'anic verses, and promoting a different concept of *jihad* (Ropi, 2010). The MUI's *fatwa*, however, is straightforward, without referencing any Qur'anic verses that state the Ahmadiyah as a deviant sect. It stated that:

Following the data found in nine books about the Ahmadiyah Qadian, the Council of Indonesian Ulama has decided that the Ahmadiyah Qadian is deviant and misled. Therefore, the Islamic community excluded the Ahmadiyah (Burhani, 2013).

The issuance of this *fatwa* drew substantial responses from many stakeholders, intellectuals, moderate Muslim organisations, and the Ahmadiyah elite. They questioned the nine reference books as a primary assessment. The Ahmadiyah asked the MUI to reveal the list of those nine

books, but the MUI did not respond (Ropi, 2010). The Ahmadiyah elite hypothesised that the books used were written by traditional Muslim scholars who unsurprisingly discussed the wrong side of Ahmadiyah's teachings, such as Ahmad Hassan, the author of *an-Nubuawah* and Haji Rasul, the author of *al-Qawl al-Sahih* (Ropi, 2010).

Since the government did not respond to the *fatwa* promptly, some traditional Muslim leaders sent a petition to the *Rabithah* in Saudi Arabia asking for backup. A year later, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) received a letter from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia requesting the government of Indonesia release a regulation to prohibit Ahmadiyah activities (Ropi, 2010). After receiving so many internal and external 'pressures', the MORA (through the Directorate General for Islamic Guidance and the Hajj) issued a circular letter on 20 September 1984 to all MORA offices at the local level stating that:

After having an intensive assessment of the Ahmadiyah, we conclude that the Ahmadiyah is not part of mainstream Islam as having the belief that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is a prophet after the Prophet of Muhammad. So then, Ahmadiyah is deviant teaching (MORA, 1985).

Besides that, the Ahmadiyah teachings are only directed to their circle, to avoid conflict within society (MORA, 1985). At first glance, the issuance of the *fatwa* followed by the ministerial-level circular seems to provide a foundation for the dissolution of Ahmadiyah. However, it was an insufficient basis to give any sanction to the Ahmadiyah. With its *fatwa*, the MUI serves the interest of the government's Islam-related policy. The ministerial-level circular had a lack of credibility since it was only for internal administrative affairs. Additionally, Ismatu Ropi (2010) argued that the MUI and the MORA focused on maintaining stability and political survival to improve the regime's reputation at that time, rather than providing a solution to the controversy of Ahmadiyah at the national level.

The second *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah was issued on 29 July 2005 (MUI, 2005). Different from the previous *fatwa*, the latter contained many references, not only from the Qur'an and the Hadith, but also from recommendations from other institutions such as the World Muslim League, Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Islamic Jurisprudence Council, and Expert Research Council (MUI, 2005). Three main recommendations of this *fatwa* were:

Firstly, as stated in the previous *fatwa* the Ahmadiyah Qadian is deviant and misleading. The Islamic community excluded the Ahmadiyah, and Muslims who follow it are heretics. Secondly, the Ahmadiyah followers should return to good Islamic teaching based on the Qur'an and the Hadith. Thirdly, the government must ban this organisation, prohibit the spread of Ahmadiyah teaching, and close all centres for the activities (MUI, 2005).

Since the regime had changed, the MUI encouraged the government to ban the Ahmadiyah and close all Ahmadiyah centres for activities. The MUI shifted the paradigm from serving the interests of the ruling regime to being more neutral as the servant of the Muslim people and serving as a quasi-governing institution occupying a more stable position in negotiating and bargaining with other parties (Ichwan, 2005).

Furthermore, this *fatwa* was issued only fourteen days after vigilante groups such as the LPPI and the FPI (The Islamic Defenders Front) attacked the Ahmadiyah annual gathering (*Jalsa Salana*) on 9–15 July 2005. They destroyed Ahmadiyah's properties and injured some Ahmadiyah followers. Ropi (2010) argued that there was a connection between the Parung incident, followed by some destruction of Ahmadiyah property in 2005, and the issuance of this *fatwa*.

All members of MUI agree that Ahmadiyah is outside Islam and an abnormal movement. Still, figuring out the specific *ulama* in the MUI who was responsible for issuing the recent *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah was pretty challenging. Several *ulamas* in the MUI actively opposed the presence of the Ahmadiyah, promoted the MUI *fatwa* of 2005, and advocated the dissolution of the Ahmadiyah. These *ulamas* are KH Ma'ruf Amin and Cholil Ridwan.

Those two *fatwas* were not legally binding on the Indonesian state legal system. The conservative Muslim groups used the MUI's *fatwa* to justify violent religious minority groups, including Ahmadiyah (Ropi, 2010). Those groups quoted the *fatwa* publicly as spiritual evidence against the Ahmadiyah. 'Physical action is one of the moral responsibilities of an obedient Muslim against 'deviant' teachings' (Said, 2008). Many scholars have warned about the potential adverse side effects of the *fatwa* and the violence that might result (Suryana, 2017). However, the MUI did not acknowledge it by mentioning that the *fatwa* never encourages violence. Therefore, the police should take responsibility for preventing violence from taking place. A further discussion about the MUI and its *fatwa* will be discussed in Chapter 3.

The LPPI (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengkajian Islam- Islamic Research and Study Institute). The main objective of this institution is to protect Islamic beliefs from any deviant teachings that pretend to be Muslim, and they have a noticeable motto, *pemberantas aliran sesat* (the eradicator of aberrant teaching), as shown on their website. It was established in 1980 with Amin Djamaludin as a director of this institution until now.

The opposition of LPPI to the Ahmadiyah has manifested in four forms (Burhani, 2013). Those activities are publishing books showing the heresy of Ahmadiyah and arranging many seminars or public discussions on the deviance of Ahmadiyah teachings. Also, organising mass campaigns and rallies to attack Ahmadiyah activities and urging the local and central government to issue regulations to ban Ahmadiyah.

The LPPI has published books discussing the deviance of Ahmadiyah's teachings, such as *Ahmadiyah dan pembajakan Al-Qur'an* (Ahmadiyah and piracy of the Koran), most recently published in 2008 and *Ahmadiyah menodai Islam* (Ahmadiyah defiles Islam), most recently published in 2011. The former book has been reprinted eight times since its first publication in 1992, and the latter has been reprinted four times since its first publication in 2007. These books are pretty popular in the market but are not particularly analytical and are filled with descriptions of minutes of meetings and newspaper clippings. Burhani (2013) mentioned that these books were not scholarly works but how LPPI provoked people to resist the Ahmadiyah.

The LPPI has been organising seminars and public talks on the Ahmadiyah for many years. However, the most essential and significant workshop that impacted the oppression process of the Ahmadiyah followers was on 11 August 2002, held at the Istiqlal Mosque Jakarta (Burhani, 2013). The title of this seminar was 'Ahmadiyah: Its Deviation and Danger'. The speakers were internal to the LPPI and also invited Dr Abdur Rashid of Pakistan (a prominent anti-Ahmadiyah figure in Pakistan) and Hasan bin Mahmood al Odeh (former Arabic publications director of Ahmadiyah). Djamaluddin (2011) mentioned that this assembly motivated conservative Muslim groups to perform anti-Ahmadiyah movements in some places. Three days later, the LPPI held a small but intense workshop on deviant sects with Ahmadiyah as a subject of discussion at *Asrama Haji* in Ampenan, West Nusa Tenggara, on 14–22 August 2002 (Djamaludin, 2011). After this workshop, three weeks later, the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers took place in West Nusa Tenggara on 10–11 September 2002 (Zaenuri, 2009). A conservative Muslim groups burned and destroyed many houses and mosques of Ahmadiyah followers in Salang and Pancor, West Nusa Tenggara

(Zaenuri, 2009). Over 33 households, or 131 Ahmadis, have not been able to return to their village and have had to live in Asrama Transito (like a refugee camp) until now.

The LPPI have also organised mass campaigns and rallies to attack Ahmadiyah activities (Burhani, 2013). For example, they provoked people to join mass campaigns and rallies to dissolve *Jalsah Salana* (Ahmadiyah annual meeting) in Parung, Bogor on 9–15 July 2005. During these days, the LPPI and other conservative groups like the FPI (The Islamic Defenders Front) assembled in Parung to dissolve this gathering. They destroyed Ahmadiyah properties and injured some Ahmadiyah followers. Also, the LPPI sent an objection letter to the local government and police about *Jalsa Salana*; even the LPPI stated the possibility of more social violence if the police did not fulfil their demands (Muryadi, 2005; Djamaluddin, 2011).

Moreover, Amin Djamaluddin, as the leader of LPPI, was actively urging the local and central government to issue regulations banning the Ahmadiyah. Djamaluddin became a prominent actor against Ahmadiyah when the MUI (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* – Council of Indonesian Ulama) in 2005 appointed him as a spokesperson to deal with the government and society in the context of Ahmadiyah (Burhani, 2013). He and his team lobbied many local governments to ban Ahmadiyah activities. Subang, East Lombok, Kerinci, Tarakan, Sidengreng Rapang, and North Sumatra's local government enacted regulations banning Ahmadiyah teachings. Another significant milestone was when he could supply information and dominate discussions about Ahmadiyah deviance with central government officers, such as the Bakorpakem and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Therefore, on 12 May 2005, the Bakorpakem³ (Coordinating Agency for the Surveillance of Spiritual Movement in Society) recommended that the central government prohibit Ahmadiyah teachings and activities in Indonesia. The substance of this recommendation was mostly coming from Amin Djamaluddin (Djamaluddin, 2011). The most significant contribution of Djamaluddin as well as the LPPI was the issuance of Joint Ministerial Decree 3/2008 (Surat Keputusan Bersama – SKB) on 9 June 2008 by the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Minister of Home Affairs, and the Attorney General as a warning to Ahmadiyah followers and also other religious followers. This decree said the Ahmadiyah should not allow the deviant interpretation of Islamic teaching, or preach their beliefs outside their community. These regulations aimed to protect religious harmony

³ The Bakorpakem is under coordination of the Attorney General's office, which can give recommendations to the central government to prohibit or ban heretic movements or groups.

against the spread of heretical religious teaching, and were not a government intervention in a personal belief (Crouch, 2011).

The Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI – Liberation Party of Indonesia). Initially, the HTI was established in 1982 in Bogor, but they publicly disclosed their movement eighteen years later when they held the International Conference on the Caliphate in Jakarta on 28 May 2000. The main objective of this movement is to implement *shari'a* law and reestablish the global caliphate, including in Indonesia (Munabari, 2010).

When they are running this movement, according to Burhani (2013), there are three reasons why the HTI insists on dissolving the Ahmadiyah. The HTI theologically considers the Ahmadiyah teaching heretical and outside Islam, and politically, the Ahmadiyah has its caliphate system that challenges the HTI mission to establish a global caliphate system. The HTI intends to anger Indonesian Muslims that the secular government of Indonesia cannot satisfy the demands of Muslims (ICG, 2008). Also, the HTI wants to show that the ideal governance system is global Islamic governance, and that this system would not accept heretical beliefs.

The HTI participated in many rallies and public talks to dissolve the Ahmadiyah. For instance, the HTI organised and managed a discussion on 'the conspiracy behind the legalisation of Ahmadiyah' (ICG, 2008), as well as the mass rallies and conservative Muslim groups gathering in Banjar Ciamis on 14 February 2008. On both occasions, Muhammad Al-Khattath, as the leader of the HTI, called the people to surround the Presidential Palace and force him to issue the decree banning Ahmadiyah's teachings and activities (ICG, 2008).

Furthermore, the Jokowi administration issued a regulation instead of a law (Perpu) No. 2/2017 to change Law No. 17/2013 concerning Community Organisations. In this regulation, the government banned the HTI as their primary goal was to establish a global Islamic caliphate that was not in line with Pancasila, the state ideology. Since then, all activities of HTI have been banned, including their collaboration with other conservative Muslim organisations.

The Forum Umat Islam (FUI – Forum of the Muslim Community). The FUI was established in April 2005 as an alliance of 30 Muslim organisations, with the HTI as the midwife (ICG, 2008). It is supposed to be a representative organisation of all Indonesian Muslims, as suggested by its name, but it represents the voice of conservative Muslim groups (Burhani, 2013). The International Crisis Group (2008) mentioned that the establishment of FUI was to support the *fatwa* of MUI

against pluralism and heretical teachings of Islam, including Ahmadiyah. The Muhammadiyah and the NU, as the two largest Muslim organisations, do not participate actively in this forum.

In daily activities, the HTI supports the FUI in many aspects. The ICG (2008) also believes that the FUI has become a voice for the HTI. Therefore, Mohammad al-Khaththath, the leader of the HTI, was appointed as the deputy chairman of Mashadi and the FUI's chairman. The role of Khaththath is quite significant in creating a coalition of mass-based organisations to support the FUI movement.

The focus of the FUI's activities in the context of the Ahmadiyah is limited to organising mass marches, public talks, and enacting statements. For instance, the FUI managed mass rallies on 20 April 2008 called the Gathering of a Million Muslims to Support the Dissolution of the Ahmadiyah. Besides that, the FUI passed a statement banning Ahmadiyah teaching, published on their website on 10 February 2008, and issued 'five demands' on 25 May 2008. The five demands were: lower the prices of basic foodstuffs, postpone oil price increases, public asset nationalisation, dissolve Ahmadiyah teaching, and declare the Ahmadiyah a banned organisation (ICG, 2008).

Likewise, opposition to Ahmadiyah has gradually changed to become more extreme, especially when violent resistance as the second category comes into account. The vigilante groups are the FPI (*Front Pembela Islam – The Islamic Defenders Front*), the GARIS (The Muslim Reformist Movement), and the GERAH (Anti-Ahmadiyah Movement), who are intimidating Ahmadiyah followers. Those groups will be discussed as follows.

Front Pembela Islam (FPI – The Islamic Defenders Front). The FPI was established on 17 August 1998, a few months after Soeharto stepped down in Jakarta and inaugurated Habib Rizieq Shihab as the leader. The establishment of FPI was supported by political elites as well as military and police generals (Muryadi, 2005). In 2013, Ahmad Shabri Lubis was inaugurated as the leader of the FPI, and Habib Rizieq Shihab was appointed as the *Great Imam* or adviser for life⁴.

The FPI initially started its movement as a local religious group. It focused on Islamic moral police prohibiting wrongdoing in society, or *al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-n-nahy 'ani-l-munkar* (commanding right and forbidding wrong) (Muryadi, 2005). The main target of this movement formerly was bars, nightclubs, and entertainment places being open and selling alcohol during Ramadhan, and

⁴ 'Munas FPI daulat Rizieq jadi Imam Besar', *Antaranews*, 26 August 2013, <https://megapolitan.antaranews.com/berita/5771/munas-fpi-daulat-rizieq-jadi-imam-besar>, viewed 12 Mei 2020

fighting drug abuse, prostitution, and pornography. Later, it transformed into a vigilante group related to theological issues, such as attacking, forbidding worship, discrimination, and sealing the worship places of deviant sects, including the Ahmadiyah (Burhani, 2013). These attacks were symbolic messages about their power and existence to political elites or local governments, and they used hate speech and demonisation to legitimate violent attacks (Setara Institute, 2017).

The question may arise: Why did the FPI expand its main objective? The FPI includes theological issues to attract social recognition as defenders of Islam (Burhani, 2013). The defender of Islam prohibits wrongdoing in society and protects Islam from deviant teachings, including Ahmadiyah. Therefore, the FPI has presented itself as a spearhead in eliminating the aberrant teachings supported by the MUI and the Muhammadiyah and NU as leading Muslim organisations (Wahid Institute, 2011). FPI's National Congress endorsed the expansion of this objective in 2008 in Bogor (Syihab, 2011).

Additionally, there are two modes that the FPI uses in implementing their expanding purpose, namely civil and uncivil manners (Bagir et al., 2010). In a considerate way, the FPI has established positive credibility in the public domain, for example, the FPI as the ally of authorities assisting those in need, like helping the victims of a natural disaster. On the other hand, the FPI's uncivil mode demonises nearly all its opponents by using harsh rhetoric and physical violence to those lacking official status and protection (Bagir et al., 2010).

Regarding the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, the FPI has been involved in much significant intimidation and violence against Ahmadiyah, and Burhani (2013) argued that if the LPPI is the brain, then the FPI is the brawn. Some notable examples of the FPI's opposition to the Ahmadiyah will be discussed as follows.

The first involvement of the FPI in attacking Ahmadiyah happened on 15 July 2005 in Parung Bogor. A mob of around 5,000 led by the LPPI attacked one of the most prominent Ahmadiyah compounds in Parung Bogor, demanding the dissolution of Ahmadiyah. It was in the early stages that the FPI became involved in the theological issue. The LPPI invited the FPI to join this action because of its ability to gather mobs on short notice. This attack was intended as a strong message to the MUI to be firmer in handling Ahmadiyah teachings, and two weeks later, on 28 July 2005, the MUI issued the *fatwa* (Islamic legal opinion) that Ahmadiyah was deviant and outside Islam at the end of the MUI congress (Ichwan, 2005).

Moreover, over 1,000 people gathered to protest against Ahmadiyah in Cikeusik, Pandeglang, Banten on 6 February 2011. The FPI and the Cikeusik Muslim movement led the mob to protest against Ahmadiyah followers who did not want to interact with other communities. They argued that the Ahmadi gathered for prayers, including Friday and Eid prayers, at the house of the Ahmadiyah religious leader instead of at the local mosque (Kontras, 2011). This implied that Ahmadiyah isolated themselves and did not want to interact with the broader Muslim community. The mob dragged Ahmadiyah followers and attacked them with sticks and knives. Three Ahmadiyah followers died, and five others were seriously injured in this incident (Kontras, 2011). This incident also raised serious questions about implementing criminal justice, as the 12 perpetrators only had light sentences of three to six months in jail (Crouch, 2011).

Besides, the FPI represents itself as an ally of the government in controlling sin and vice in society; they also use hate speech to legitimate their actions and motivate members and supporters. The address of Sobri Lubis, the Secretary-General of the FPI, was one critical examples of this. He said in his speech, '*... Muslim people! We call upon you! Let's fight against the Ahmadiyah! Kill the Ahmadis wherever they are, my brothers! Allāhu Akbar! Kill, kill, kill, kill them all! It is okay to kill them. They destroy our religion. [Therefore, their lives] are no longer sacred... Without any doubt, it is permissible [to shed the Ahmadis' blood]... permissible (halal)!*' He spoke at a public gathering in Banjar, West Java on 14 February 2008 (Burhani, 2013).

Finally, the FPI issued two *Maklumat* (pronouncements) as resistance to Ahmadiyah. The first *maklumat* circulated on 1 June 2008 with the title 'The proof of the infidelity of the Ahmadiyah' declared that the Ahmadiyah is not part of Islam and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is a false prophet. The second *maklumat* was proclaimed on 12 June 2008, or three days after the government issued Joint Ministerial Decree 3/2008 (*Surat Keputusan Bersama – SKB*) as a warning to Ahmadiyah followers and also other religious followers. The second *maklumat* responding to the SKB and the FPI argued that the SKB gave multiple interpretations about the status of Ahmadiyah, and the FPI still demanding the dissolution of the Ahmadiyah (Burhani, 2013).

The Gerakan Reformasi Islam (GARIS – The Muslim Reformist Movements). The GARIS movement formerly comes from Cianjur, West Java. It was established on 24 June 1998 or four weeks after the new regime collapsed. According to the Religious Industrial Complex in Indonesia, GARIS is one of Indonesia's conservative and radical religious mass organisations (Lukito, 2016).

The GARIS claimed that they have only 28 thousand members and supporters in Cianjur and another thousand members in provinces such as Aceh, North Sumatra, West Java, and East Java.

The main goal of this organisation is to implement *shari'a* law as the perfect tool to improve the whole life of people in Indonesia (Lukito, 2016). They found momentum in 2001 when the local government of Cianjur launched a bylaw called *Gerakan Pembangunan Masyarakat Berahlakul Karimah* or 'The Movement for Developing a Society with noble characters', in which the local government would be directly involved in promoting Islamic sanctions in the society. Therefore, the GARIS saw that this was the right time to do Islamic purification from deviant teaching, and the dissolution of Ahmadiyah movements became their focus (Lukito, 2016).

This kind of warning makes the GARIS quickly attack, condoning or forbidding worship for Ahmadiis. For example, the GARIS claimed responsibility for attacking four Ahmadiyah compounds in Cianjur on 19 September 2005, namely Cicakra, Penyairan, Ciparay, and Neglasari Village. This one-day attack destroyed four Ahmadiyah mosques, five small groceries, 43 houses, and three schools (Hasani and Naipospos, 2010). Ten days after this attack, the local government of Cianjur issued a local regulation (*Surat Keputusan Bersama – Joint Decree*) banning Ahmadiyah activities throughout Cianjur. It reflected intensive collaboration between the local government and the vigilante groups over the dissolution of the Ahmadiyah movement, since the provincial government needed political support from many Muslim constituents, including conservative religious groups (Lukito, 2016). At that time, the incumbent regent, Wasidi, was running for his second-term candidacy in the local election. One of the best issues to attract supporters was Ahmadiyah (Lukito, 2016).

Another example of the opposition of the GARIS to the Ahmadiyah happened in June 2008. They forbade worship and demolished six Ahmadiyah mosques in two villages in Cianjur, namely Panyairan and Sukadana Village (Hasani and Naipospos, 2010). Besides that, the GARIS also sealed two Ahmadiyah mosques in the city of Cianjur and sprayed in red ink on the wall, 'Ahmadiyah is not Muslims, and the Muslim Community has sealed this mosque' (Aziz, 2008).

The GARIS dispersed the Ahmadiyah National Conference at Setia Hotel Cianjur on 4 December 2010. This conference was supposed to be held in Jakarta, but the conference committee received a threat of disbanding from the FPI. Therefore, the meeting was moved to Cianjur. Unluckily, there was also an ally of the FPI in Cianjur that had the same intention of intimidating the Ahmadiyah (Hasani and Naipospos, 2010; Hernawan, 2010). Also, hundreds of the GARIS defenders occupied

the Al-Ghofur mosque of Ahmadiyah on 11 March 2011 to prohibit Ahmadiyah activities and forced the local government to make it a public mosque (Aziz, 2011).

The Gerakan Anti Maksiat (GAMAS – Anti-vice Movement) and the Gerakan Anti Ahmadiyah (GERAH – Anti-Ahmadiyah sub-Movement). In addition to the violent resistance to the Ahmadiyah movement, two other organisations still publicly and actively oppose the Ahmadiyah. They are the *Gerakan Anti Maksiat (GAMAS – Anti-vice Movement)* and the *Gerakan Anti-Ahmadiyah (GERAH – Anti-Ahmadiyah sub-Movement)*. They have been the backbone of violent actions since the 2000s against the Ahmadiyah community who lived in Manislor Village, Kuningan District. Approximately 3500 Ahmadiyah followers live there (Nurul Rosidin, 2009), making Manislor Village the most populous Ahmadiyah followers' compound.

The leaders of some Islamic Boarding Schools in Kuningan established GAMAS in October 1998, a few months after the new regime collapsed in May 1998. They wanted to revive *shari'a* Islam, after being suppressed during the new regime era, as the main objective of this organisation (Suryana, 2019). Therefore, this organisation regularly deployed its members to patrol the streets to halt vice activities such as prostitution, gambling, alcohol use, and drug abuse. Also, GAMAS engaged with religious issues, including dissolving abnormal movements, and the Ahmadiyah was one of their targets. Therefore, GAMAS' members actively initiated a heresy campaign against Ahmadiyah followers and participated in considerable violence, especially in 2007 and 2010 (Pangabean and Fauzi, 2014). GAMAS had around 3,000 sympathisers and 600 active members in Kuningan alone. Its members came from different backgrounds: casual workers in the private sector, farmers, entrepreneurs, and students in Islamic boarding schools. State officials were also mindful of their potential power of mass mobilisation (Suryana, 2019).

Furthermore, GERAH was established in 2003. It followed up on the seminar held by the LPPI on 11 August 2002 with the title 'Ahmadiyah: Its deviation and danger' in Jakarta. Nasruddin Sa'dillah and Salamin Sa'dillah were two out of ten proponents of anti-Ahmadiyah activists who were invited to the seminar (Burhani, 2013). Since one of the action plans of this seminar was the dissolution of the Ahmadiyah in Manislor, the LPPI helped the anti-Ahmadiyah activists in Manislor to establish GERAH. Nasruddin was appointed to lead GERAH and started to oppose and attack the Ahmadiyah in Manislor by inviting support from various elements (Rosyidin and Mursyid, 2007).

Since GAMAS and GERAH needed to increase their social and political legitimacy in the regency, they often worked together to build temporary alliances to organise anti-Ahmadiyah activities (Suryana, 2019). They tried to build strong support from the community by making a lot of accusations of heresy against Ahmadiyah. For example, the GERAH unfurled a banner around the village stating, 'Ahmadiyah is not part of Islam; those who support Ahmadiyah are apostate' (Pangabea and Fauzi, 2014). They also distributed copies of the anti-Ahmadiyah joint decree in many religious activities across the regency and during Friday prayers. Besides that, those two anti-Ahmadiyah groups renewed the heresy campaign against the Ahmadiyah movement by writing single-sided opinion articles published in the local newspaper (Pangabea and Fauzi, 2014). Their primary demand of their actions was to seal the Ahmadiyah mosque and its teachings in Manislor Village.

The first violent confrontation on the Ahmadiyah in Manislor happened on 20 October 2004 by attacking some Ahmadiyah properties. GAMAS vandalised At-Taqwa and Al-Hidayah mosques as well as some Ahmadiyah features (Muryadi, 2005). It also intimidated Ahmadi to close down their schools and places of worship (Rosyidin and Mursyid, 2007).

The heresy protests against Ahmadiyah peaked in 2007 and 2010. On 18 December 2007, around 1,000 people from GERAH and GAMAS protested the heretic teachings of Ahmadiyah in Manislor Village. They provoked and vandalised the Al Hidayah Mosque of Ahmadiyah and 14 houses of Ahmadiyah followers (Suryana, 2019). A similar incident happened on 26 July 2010, when GERAH and GAMAS, with some local officials, went to Manislor to seal another Ahmadiyah mosque, An-Nur. They sealed off the mosque with chains and planks of wood. Three days later, on 29 July 2010, GERAH and GAMAS, supported by the Coalition of Indonesia Muslim Community, attacked the Ahmadiyah followers who still used An-Nur mosque for worship. They not only helped achieve the closure of the Ahmadi mosque but also tried to intimate that the Ahmadiyah were teaching heresy. As a result, clashes and stone-throwing between the two groups could not be avoided (Suryana, 2019). Several Ahmadi houses were damaged in that incident, and five people were injured. The wounded people were one police officer, one Ahmadi, and three protesters (Pangabea and Fauzi, 2014).

Furthermore, between 2007 and 2023, Ahmadiyah adherents faced 568 episodes of persecution, mostly concentrated in West Java with 274 cases. The main perpetrators of these acts of persecution were community groups, specifically the strong Islamist hardliner groupings,

responsible for a significant 328 cases. Violence against Ahmadiyah followers included acts such as intimidation, intolerance, hate speech, and the demolition of their homes and places of worship. The factions used intimidation techniques such as protests, street demonstrations, and forcibly removing Ahmadiyah emblems and qualities to suppress them. Furthermore, there was persistent pressure on the government to legally disband Ahmadiyah as a group considered heretical, worsening the situation for its members.

Upon examining the data in Table 6, it is evident that out of the 328 documented occurrences carried out by Islamist hardliners, the majority, specifically 259 cases, were related to acts of intimidation or intolerance. Following this, there were 36 cases of worship places being destroyed or burned, 20 cases of hate speech, and 13 cases of Ahmadiyah dwellings being destroyed. This statistical analysis vividly illustrates the systematic terror campaign targeting the Ahmadiyah community, emphasising the widespread use of intimidation by Islamist hardliners to crush them. The reckless demolition of places of worship and the spread of hate speech highlight the immediate need for united actions to support religious freedom and tolerance, protecting the rights of individuals to freely practice their faith without facing persecution.

Additionally, the destruction or burning of places of worship occurred in 17 regions, primarily concentrated in Tasikmalaya with ten incidents, followed by Cianjur and Jakarta with 7 and 2 cases, respectively. Up until November 2023, reports indicated that at least 60 Ahmadiyah mosques had been vandalised, 54 forcibly closed, and 30 residences of Ahmadiyah followers demolished. A notable incident transpired in Greneng village, East Lombok district, on 20 May 2018, where an unidentified mob razed eight houses belonging to Ahmadiyah followers, resulting in the forced displacement of 24 individuals from the community. Moreover, instances of public hate speech and physical attacks against Ahmadiyah followers were most prevalent in Jakarta, and the most severe incident involved homicide, occurring on 6 February 2011, in the sub-district of Cikeusik, Pandeglang district, Banten province, resulting in the deaths of three Ahmadiyah followers and injuring five others.

Table 6
Type of persecution of Ahmadiyah followers 2007–2023

Provinces	Districts or Cities	Actor: Community/Islamist Hardliners Groups				Actor: Government Apparatus			Total Incidents
		Intimidation and/or Intolerance	Hate Speech	Destruction of Ahmadiyah Followers' Residence	Destruction and/or Burning of Worship Place	Discrimination	Forbidding Worship	Sealing of Worship Place	
DKI Jakarta									
	1 Jakarta	62	8	1	2	5	6	5	89
Banten									
	1 Serang	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
	2 South Tangerang	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
	3 Tangerang	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	3
	4 Pandeglang	4	-	-	-	3	1	-	8
West Java									
	1 Bandung (City)	10	2	-	-	3	-	-	6
	2 Bandung (District)	-	1	1	1	9	1	-	23
	3 Tasikmalaya (District)	10	-	4	10	7	1	3	35
	4 Tasikmalaya (City)	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	4
	5 Majalengka	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	3
	6 Ciamis	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	9
	7 Sukabumi	8	-	1	2	5	2	6	22
	8 Bogor (City)	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	4
	9 Bogor	8	1	3	3	5	-	2	22
	10 Cianjur	14	-	2	7	4	11	19	57
	11 Cimahi	2	-	-	-	3	1	-	6
	12 Bekasi	3	1	-	-	2	2	6	14
	13 Garut	9	-	-	-	-	-	2	11
	14 Depok	8	-	-	-	3	1	8	20
	15 Kuningan	5	-	-	-	8	-	2	15
	16 Subang	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
	17 Banjar	3	-	-	1	-	8	3	15
	18 Sumedang	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
Yogyakarta									
	1 Yogyakarta	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	4
Central Java									
	1 Semarang	2	2	-	-	1	-	1	6
	2 Kendal	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	6
	3 Karanganyar	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
East Java									
	1 Surabaya	5	1	-	1	-	-	-	7
	2 Blitar	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
	3 Malang	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	4 Tulungagung	-	1	-	1	-	3	2	7
Riau Islands									
	1 Batam	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	4
Riau									
	1 Bengkalis	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
	2 Rokan Ilir	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
	3 Pekanbaru	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	4
Jambi									
	1 Sorolangun	6	-	-	-	5	-	-	11
Bengkulu									
	1 Bengkulu	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
North Sumatra									
	1 Medan	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
West Sumatra									
	1 Bukittinggi	21	-	-	-	-	-	1	22
	2 Padang	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	3 Payakumbuh	12	-	-	-	6	-	1	19
	4 Bukit tinggi	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	5 Solok	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	6 Padang Pariaman	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
South Sumatra									
	1 Palembang	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
	2 Musiwaras	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bangka Belitung									
	1 Bangka	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	5
NTB									
	1 Mataram (City)	10	-	1	-	11	-	-	22
	2 Bima	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
	3 Lombok Barat	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
	4 Lombok Timur	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	4
South Kalimantan									
	1 Banjarmasin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2 Tanah Bumbu	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	5
		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
East Kalimantan									
	1 Samarinda	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	3
Central Kalimantan									
	1 Palangkaraya	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
	2 Barito Timur	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
South Sulawesi									
	1 Makasar	9	-	-	-	3	-	1	13
	Total Incidents	259	20	13	36	108	49	83	568

Source: Based on data compiled from Setara Institute's reports on the state of religious freedom and minority rights in Indonesia (2007–2023) and findings from fieldwork research

CHAPTER 3

FATWAS AS SOCIAL RELIGIOUS REGULATIONS AND THE PERSECUTION OF AHMADIYAH

3.1 Introduction

Since Indonesia's shift to democracy, conflicts have evolved from ethnic or inter-religious disputes to intra-religious conflicts (Bagir, 2014). Intra-religious conflict involves a series of smaller, localised, but more frequent disputes primarily concerning two issues: the sealing or demolition of houses of worship by religious minorities, and attacks on non-mainstream groups within Islam, such as the Ahmadiyah (Bagir, 2014). Violence against the Ahmadiyah community has notably surged since this transition (Hefner, 2013). Consequently, religious regulations are necessary to manage these intra-religious conflicts (Finke and Stark, 2005).

Regarding the Ahmadiyah conflict in Indonesia, central and local governments implemented religious regulations. Joint Ministerial Decree 3/2008 (Surat Keputusan Bersama – SKB) was issued on June 9, 2008, by the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Minister of Home Affairs, and the Attorney General, serving as a warning to Ahmadiyah followers and other religious groups. Subsequently, 24 local governments (six provincial and 18 regents/municipalities) enacted similar regulations. These regulations aim to preserve religious harmony and prevent the spread of heretical teachings, rather than interfering with personal beliefs (Crouch, 2012).

Brian J. Grim and Roger Finke (2007) have examined the link between religious regulations and the persecution of religious minority groups. Their research indicates that government regulation of religion significantly influences and is closely related to religious persecution. Additionally, social regulation of religion indirectly contributes to religious persecution by impacting government regulation (Grim and Finke, 2007). Often, a dominant religion or a specific religious group enforces social regulation either in the absence of state authority or to exceed the actions taken by the state (Grim and Finke, 2007).

When applying this theory to the Ahmadiyah case, my findings align with the theory and suggest an expansion of Grim and Finke's model. Government religious regulations may lead to violent

persecution. However, it is the social-religious regulation, particularly the MUI's fatwa,⁵ that has a direct correlation with the religious persecution of the Ahmadiyah in Indonesia.

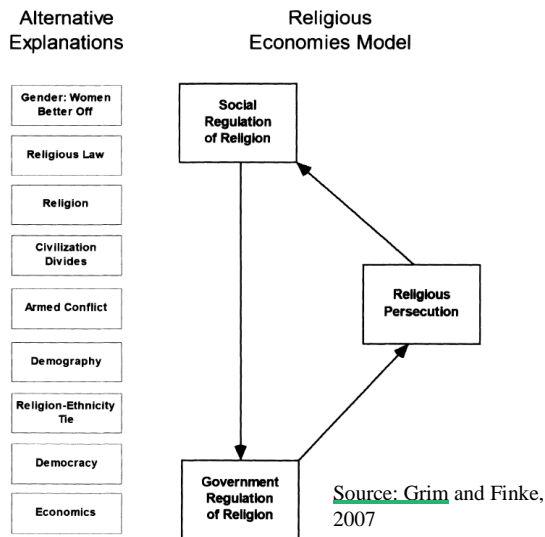
Two main reasons explain this direct correlation. Firstly, at the grassroots level, Islamist groups use the MUI's fatwa as the primary basis for rejecting or persecuting the Ahmadiyah, demonstrating these groups' adherence to the *ulama's* decisions. Secondly, since the reform era (post-1998), the MUI has become more conservative, fostering an environment conducive to the discrimination against minority rights, including those of the Ahmadiyah.

This chapter will explore the correlation between the MUI's *fatwas* and the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, beginning with the framework of regulation and persecution, *fatwas* against the Ahmadiyah from five Muslim organisations in Indonesia, and the MUI's *fatwa* and the persecution of the Ahmadiyah. Subsequent chapters will examine how government religious restrictions either translate to or prevent religious persecution.

3.2 Framework: Regulation and persecution

One of the seminal studies on regulation and persecution was conducted by Brian J Grim and Roger Finke (2007) using cross-national data from the 2003 US State Department report on International Religious Freedom that covered 147 countries across the globe. They examined the argument that religious regulation, comprising social and government regulations of religion, explains religious persecution. Government regulation of religion refers to restrictions imposed on the profession, selection, or practice of religion by the state's administrative actions (Grim and Finke, 2007). Additionally, they identify social regulation of religion as another potential cause of religious restrictions. Social regulation of religion is defined as limitations on the profession, selection, or practice of religion imposed by other religious groups or the broader culture (Grim and Finke, 2007).

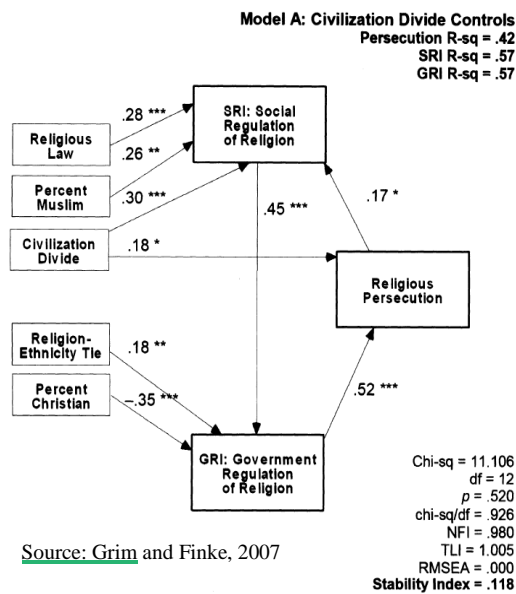
⁵ A *fatwa* is an opinion issued by qualified religious scholars based on Islamic law in response to a question from society. Regarding the Ahmadiyah, the MUI has shown the strongest opposition to this movement by issuing two *fatwas*, one in 1980 and another in 2005. The latter *fatwa* strongly advocated for banning the Ahmadiyah and prohibiting the spread of its teachings. It also declared that the Ahmadiyah is not part of the Islamic community and that Muslims who follow it are heretics.



They hypothesise that religious regulations, particularly government regulation of religion, have a significant effect and are most directly associated with religious persecution. In contrast, social regulation of religion indirectly correlates with religious persecution through its impact on government regulation of religion (Grim and Finke, 2007). They employed the religious economies model as a theoretical framework to assess their hypothesis and considered alternative explanations for the control variable, including

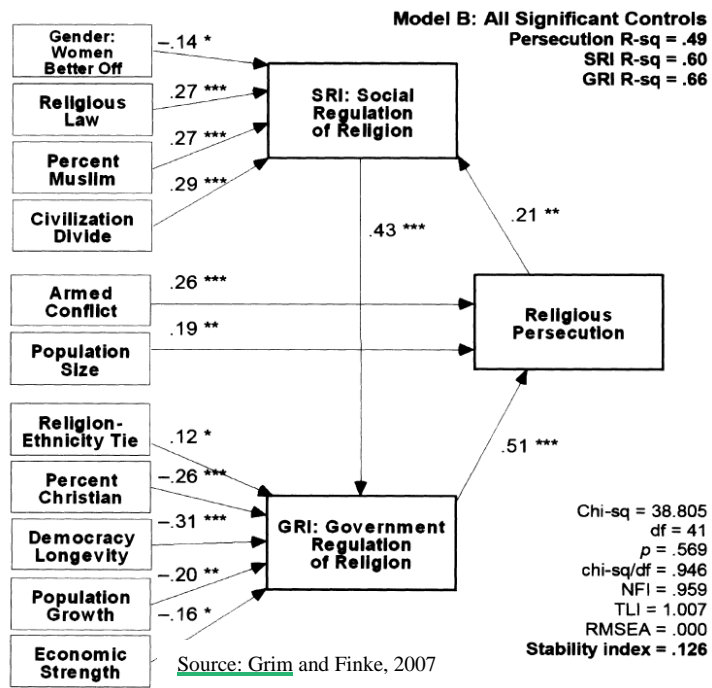
the civilization divide control, as mentioned above.

Firstly, Grim and Finke (2007) used the religious economy model, the civilization divide index, and other religion-related issues such as religion, ethnicity, religious law, and the percentage of



Muslims and Christians as control variables. Their model clearly showed that government regulation of religion has a significant and robust effect on religious persecution with a regression coefficient of .52. Meanwhile, religion's social regulation indirectly impacts religious persecution through government regulation on religion with a regression coefficient of roughly $.45 \times .52 = .23$. The civilization divide also has direct (.18) and indirect effects on religious persecution through social regulation. The researchers also found that religious persecution has a feedback effect on social regulation (.17).

Secondly, in addition to the previous explanation, they added some control variables, including gender, armed conflict, population size, demography longevity, population growth, and economic strength. But the religious economic model continues to explain religious persecution more comprehensively. By controlling other possible explanations, the government regulation of religion has the most significant association with religious persecution (.51), even though it decreased slightly from the previous model (.52) (Grim and Finke, 2007).



Their theoretical model of religious persecution empirically supports their hypothesis. They show that government **regulation of religion significantly impacts and is most directly associated with religious persecution**. Additionally, **social regulation of religion indirectly affects religious persecution through its influence on government regulation** (Grim and Finke, 2007).

This chapter delves deeper into the framework in the context of the Ahmadiyah in Indonesia, focusing on the correlation between social-religious regulation and persecution. A *fatwa* from a specific Muslim organisation is considered a social-religious regulation, representing a limitation on the profession, selection, or practice of religion imposed by other religious groups. There are five *fatwas* from four Muslim institutions regarding the Ahmadiyah. These *fatwas* come from Muhammadiyah, the Rabita al-Alam al-Islami (Muslim World League), the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI – the Council of Indonesian Ulama), and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Notably, the Nahdlatul Ulama did not issue a *fatwa* on the Ahmadiyah.

3.3 Fatwas against the Ahmadiyah in Indonesia

The public inquiry regarding Ahmadiyah revolves around how they should be treated, specifically whether Ahmadis should be considered apostates (*murtadd*), masked-apostates (*zindiq*), heretics (*mulhid*), innovators (*mubtadi*), or unbelievers (*kafir*) based on classical *fiqh* (Islamic teaching) categories. Classifying Ahmadiyah within these categories has legal consequences since the Ahmadiyah consider themselves reformers (*mujaddid*) of Islam (Burhani, 2014).

A *fatwa* from major Muslim organisations addresses these public inquiries. A *fatwa* is a ruling on the point of Islamic law issued by an authorised religious scholar based on a question posed by an individual, judge, government authority, or corporate entity (Hosen, 2008). Sirry (2013) also mentions that a *fatwa* is an Islamic legal opinion given by an individual *mufti* (*fatwa*-giver) or a group of *muftis* or *ulama* at the request of a *mustafti* (*fatwa*-seeker). Many Muslim *muftis* or jurists offer opinions daily, but their views are not considered a *fatwa* unless based on a specific query from a Muslim. It is regarded as a *fatwa* if it responds to a particular *mustafti* (*fatwa*-seeker). For over 70 years, Islamic issues or inquiries have been addressed through *fatwas* issued by three major Islamic organisations: Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) (Hosen, 2003).

In general, the *fatwas* from the Muhammadiyah, the *Rabita al-Alam al-Islami* (Muslim World League), and the MUI (1980) stated that the Ahmadiyah followers are unbelievers (*kafir*) or outsiders to Islam's pale. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) used the term apostates (*murtadd*), and called Ahmadiyah a deviant sect. Besides, the MUI's *fatwa* in 2005 used both terms; apostates (*murtadd*) for any Muslim who converts to Ahmadiyah and unbelievers (*kafir*) for those who become Ahmadi by birth. The explanation of each *fatwa* will be discussed as follows.

A. Muhammadiyah's fatwa on Ahmadiyah

The Muhammadiyah welcomed the arrival of the Ahmadiyah in Indonesia in the early 1920s, and Muhammadiyah and Ahmadiyah had a good relationship. In the beginning, the Muhammadiyah believed the Ahmadiyah was a partner in broadening the understanding of modern Islam and the possibility of merging into one (Beck, 2005). This good relationship came to an end when Haji Rasul (one of the Muhammadiyah founders) realised the Ahmadiyah teaching did not match the Muhammadiyah doctrine during the 14th Congress of Muhammadiyah in March 1925 in Jogjakarta. The relationship was weakening when Abdul' Alim Siddiq al-Qadiri, a religious leader

from India, revealed the heretics of Ahmadiyah when he came to Jogjakarta in November 1927 (Zulkarnain, 2005). Since then, the Muhammadiyah made a distance and opposed the activities of the Ahmadiyah. The issuance of the *fatwa* was the climax of this rupture.

The Muhammadiyah issued the first *fatwa* against Ahmadiyah during the 18th Congress of Muhammadiyah in 1929 in Solo (Burhani, 2013). The title of the *fatwa* was the *Hukum orang jang mengimamkan pada Nabi setelah Nabi Muhammad 'SAW'* (The law for those who still have faith in the presence of a prophet after the Prophet Muhammad). It stated that the Muhammadiyah believed there was no prophet after the Prophet Muhammad because He is the seal of prophets (*khatam al-nabiyyin*). Therefore, the Muhammadiyah declared those who did not accept this doctrine were unbelievers or *kafir* (PP Muhammadiyah, 1964). A year before, the Muhammadiyah took action to issue a declaration (*maklumat*) No. 294 on 5 July 1928 that the Muhammadiyah prohibited any Ahmadiyah teachings in the school of Muhammadiyah (Yasir and Yatimin, 1989).

B. Rabita al-Alam al-Islami's fatwa on Ahmadiyah

The *Rabita al-Alam al-Islami* (Muslim World League) was the second institution that issued a *fatwa* about the heresy of Ahmadiyah. Even though this institution is not an Indonesian Muslim organisation, Mohamad Natsir (1908–1993), the fifth Indonesian Prime Minister, was the leader of the *Rabita* at that time. The *Rabita* was established in 1962 as a non-governmental Islamic organisation in Mecca, Saudi Arabia (Burhani, 2013). During the annual congress in April 1974, a *fatwa* was issued stating that the Ahmadiyah is not part of Islam and its followers are unbelievers (Burhani, 2013). The foundation of this *fatwa* was mainly on the claim of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's prophecy as the Prophet after Muhammad and the promised Messiah, including Qadian as the place of pilgrimage for Ahmadiyah followers.

Since Indonesia has many Ahmadiyah followers and many activists against Ahmadiyah, such as *Dewan Dakwah Islamiah Indonesia* (DDII – Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation), the *Rabita* agreed to make Indonesia the destination of this *fatwa's* dissemination. To disseminate this *fatwa*, the DDII published many articles and books to spread information about the deviant teachings of Ahmadiyah, including in their magazine, *Serial Media Dakwah* (Ropi, 2010). Besides that, Prof. Muhamad Rasjidi (1915–2001), the leader of the DDII and former Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs, was one of the signatories of this *fatwa*.

c. Majelis Ulama Indonesia's fatwa on Ahmadiyah

The *Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI – Council of Indonesian Ulama)* issued a *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah on 1 June 1980 during the second MUI National Congress by referring to the *Rabita's fatwa* (MUI, 2010). However, the MUI's *fatwa* is straightforward, without referencing any Qur'anic verses that stated the Ahmadiyah was a deviant sect. It affirmed that following the data found in nine books about the Ahmadiyah Qadian, the Indonesian Ulama Council has decided that the Ahmadiyah Qadian is deviant and misled. Therefore, the Islamic community excluded the Ahmadiyah (MUI, 2010).

This *fatwa's* issuance drew substantial responses from many stakeholders, intellectuals, moderate Muslim organisations, and the Ahmadiyah elite. They questioned the nine reference books as a basic assessment. The Ahmadiyah asked the MUI to reveal the list of nine books, but the MUI did not respond (Ropi, 2010). Since the government did not respond to the MUI *fatwa* promptly, they held the *Rapat Kerja Nasional* (National Meeting) on 4–7 March 1984 and asked the government to review the legal status of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia (Burhani, 2013). The MUI considered three reasons for this appeal, namely (1) The teachings of Ahmadiyah contradict the teachings of Islam and have caused disharmony in the society; (2) The education of Ahmadiyah creates dissections among Muslims, such as in marriage, rituals, and prayers; (3) In the long run, it will cause public disorder and state insecurity (MUI, 2010). Besides that, some traditional Muslim leaders sent a petition to the *Rabithah* in Saudi Arabia asking for backup. A year later, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) received a letter from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia requesting that Indonesia's government release a regulation prohibiting Ahmadiyah activities (Ropi, 2010).

Another *fatwa* against Ahmadiyah comes from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (IOC), especially the Council of Islamic Fiqh Academy. The *fatwa* was issued during the second meeting on 28 December 1985 in Jeddah concerning the religious status of Ahmadiyah. Even though the Ahmadiyah believes that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is only a manifestation of the Prophet Muhammad, this *fatwa* declares that Qadian and Lahore Ahmadiyah are exiting Islam. Its followers have committed apostasy (Islamic Fiqh Academy, 2000). According to Burhani (2013), the difference between this *fatwa* and the *Rabita's fatwa* is that the IOC's *fatwa* does not distinguish between Lahore and Qadian Ahmadiyah, even though the Lahore Ahmadiyah have moved closer to ordinary Muslims.

During the National Congress on 20 July 2005, the MUI issued another *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah (MUI, 2010). Besides referring to the Qur'an and the Hadith, the latter contained many references, including recommendations from other institutions such as the World Muslim League, Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Islamic Jurisprudence Council, and Expert Research Council (MUI, 2010). Three main recommendations of this *fatwa* were: Firstly, as stated on the previous *fatwa*, the Ahmadiyah Qadian is outside Islam and also deviant and misled. Therefore, the Islamic community excluded the Ahmadiyah, and Muslims who followed leaving Islam or apostate (*murtad*). Secondly, Ahmadiyah followers should return to good Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and the Hadith. Thirdly, the government must ban this organisation, prohibit the spread of Ahmadiyah teaching, and close all centres for the activities (MUI, 2010).

In this updated *fatwa*, the MUI tried to express in a more influential voice that Ahmadiyah is not part of Islam and force the government to dissolve the Ahmadiyah movement. It means that the MUI shifted the paradigm from serving the interest of the ruling regime to more neutral as the servant of the Muslim people and serving as a quasi-governing institution occupying a more stable position in negotiating and bargaining with other parties (Ichwan, 2005; Hosen, 2004).

D. Nahdlatul Ulama's perspective on Ahmadiyah

The Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia's largest Muslim organisation, did not issue a *fatwa* against Ahmadiyah, but a non-legal recommendation during a Plenary Meeting of the Central Board on 9–11 September 2005 in Bogor (Burhani, 2013). In this recommendation entitled *Tausiyah: The stance of the NU towards Ahmadiyah*, the NU stated some points regarding Ahmadiyah; namely, the Ahmadiyah is a deviant sect and exiting out of Islam since they do not accept the Last Prophet of Muhammad. However, the NU forbids people or groups from persecuting Ahmadiyah followers, and it is entirely the government's discretion to ban or dissolve the Ahmadiyah movement. Therefore, people expressing their objections should be peaceful, and Muslim communities are recommended to study Islam comprehensively to avoid mistakes in religious interpretations. The government has to have a consistent policy dealing with Ahmadiyah activities in Indonesia (Karni, Ubaid, and Farida, 2010).

In conclusion, the MUI has shown the most substantial opposition to the Ahmadiyah by issuing two *fatwas* in 1980 and 2005. The latter *fatwa* strongly advocated for banning the Ahmadiyah and preventing the dissemination of their teachings. It also declared that the Ahmadiyah were not part of the Muslim community and labelled their followers as heretics. The MUI's *fatwa* reflects a

paradoxical stance, demonstrating strong conservatism and exclusivism during political openness and reform.

3.4 The MUI's fatwa and the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah

Observers and scholars hold varying perspectives on *fatwas* and their societal impact in Indonesia. Many argue that *fatwas* positively contribute to society (Sirry, 2013; Ichwan, 2013; Hasyim, 2016). For instance, MUI's *fatwas* have addressed issues such as corruption eradication, gender equality, terrorism prevention, and promoting good governance in the public sector (Hasyim, 2020; MUI, 2010). Furthermore, Hasyim (2020) notes that *fatwas* are neutral in nature as they can either impede or benefit society. The influence of *fatwas* depends on both the issuing authorities and the content of the *fatwas* themselves.

A few scholars have explored the potentially negative consequences of *fatwas* on Indonesian society, particularly examining the link between *fatwas* and religious violence (Assyaukanie, 2009). Research in this area has been limited, partly due to sensitivity and concerns about potential biases. Assyaukanie (2009) argues that many Muslims may reject the idea of a correlation between *fatwas* and religious violence, viewing *fatwas* as religious opinions based on good intentions and objectives, and thus not inherently negative. However, Porter (2004) and Gillespie (2007) contend that *fatwas* could hinder the progress of democracy in Indonesia. Assyaukanie (2009) further suggests that certain *fatwas* may have harmful effects, promoting violence, discrimination, and religious extremism against specific minority groups

Among those four Muslim institutions that issued *fatwas* toward Ahmadiyah, the MUI has the most substantial commitment against Ahmadiyah and had no regrets denying the Ahmadiyah as part of the Indonesian Muslim community by issuing two *fatwas* in 1980 and 2005 (Zahid, 2008). The MUI argues that the *aqida* (the regulation of belief) stands above and beyond everything; the main reason for charging apostasy to the Ahmadiyah is to sustain Sunni orthodoxy that the Prophet Muhammad is the seal prophet, including limiting Ahmadiyah followers (Burhani, 2014).

Based on fieldwork, the findings of this research support Grim and Finke's theory and suggest an extension: the *fatwa* as a social regulation of religion directly correlates with religious persecution, particularly in the case of the MUI's *fatwa* against Ahmadiyah. This direct correlation is evident for two main reasons. Firstly, at the grassroots level, Islamist groups use the MUI's *fatwa* as a

primary justification for rejecting or persecuting Ahmadiyah, demonstrating their adherence to the *ulama's* decisions. Secondly, since the reform era beginning in 1998, the MUI has become more conservative, creating an environment conducive to discrimination against minority rights, including those of the Ahmadiyah.

3.4.1 Islamist groups use the MUI's fatwa to justify persecuting Ahmadiyah

This research found that in areas where Ahmadiyah followers face persecution, such as Depok and Bandung, Islamist groups are committed to enforcing the MUI's *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah. Groups like FPI, GARIS, and FUUI use the MUI's *fatwa* as the primary justification for rejecting or persecuting Ahmadiyah. Conversely, in Bogor, where there is no violence against Ahmadiyah, Islamist groups prefer to collaborate with the local government and ensure no persecution occurs following the local government's regulation on Ahmadiyah issued in 2011

One of the reasons for the Islamist groups in Depok, for instance, to use the MUI's *fatwa* as the basis against Ahmadiyah is respecting the *ulama's* decision to refuse deviant sect development as AS, the adviser of FPI Depok, stated about the importance of MUI's *fatwa*. He argued that⁶:

Kami FPI Depok tidak mau mengakui Ahmadiyah sebagai bagian dari umat Islam, karena kami mengikuti Fatwa MUI yang telah diputuskan bahwa ajaran Ahmadiyah adalah menyimpang dan mereka murtad. Hal ini dilakukan sebagai upaya untuk melindungi keluarga kami dari ajaran sesat Ahmadiyah (We, FPI Depok, do not recognise Ahmadiyah as part of the Muslim community because we follow the MUI Fatwa which has declared Ahmadiyah teachings as deviant and its followers as apostates. This is done as an effort to protect our families from the heretical teachings of Ahmadiyah).

Echoing the sentiments of AS, EM, a board member of FPI Depok, emphasised that the Ahmadiyah issue is an internal matter within Islam. He stated that the broader community should adhere to the MUI *fatwa*, which scholars from various Islamic organisations formulated. The 2005 MUI *fatwa* explicitly declares that Ahmadiyah is misleading and not part of the Muslim community. Consequently, EM asserted⁷, 'We must obey the MUI's *fatwa* and distinguish between religious

⁶ Interview with AS, the Advisor of FPI Depok, 12 February 2019

⁷ Interview with EM, a board member of FPI Depok, 12 February 2019

differences and blasphemy. The FPI respects differences, but what Ahmadiyah has done constitutes blasphemy.'

FPI considers that the intimidation of the Ahmadiyah followers in Depok is not lawless but is part of law enforcement, according to MUI's *fatwa*. EM argued⁸ that:

FPI berusaha untuk melindungi hak-hak komunitas muslim untuk dapat beribadah tanpa gangguan dari komunitas Ahmadiyah yang telah menodai dan menghina Islam. FPI mengacu pada fatwa MUI 2005 terkait Ahmadiyah (FPI strives to protect the rights of the Muslim community to worship without interference from the Ahmadiyah community, which has defiled and insulted Islam. FPI refers to the 2005 MUI fatwa regarding Ahmadiyah).

In Bandung, the FUUI (Forum Ulama Umat Indonesia), chaired by KH Athian Ali, is the most influential Islamist group opposing the Ahmadiyah. The FUUI uses the MUI's *fatwas* from 1980 and 2005 to galvanise public action against Ahmadiyah. KH Athian Ali also encourages other Islamist groups, such as FPI, ANNAS, and GARIS, to confront Ahmadiyah's activities. According to NW⁹, head of FPI Bandung, 'KH Athian Ali is the leading figure of this movement and is highly respected by other members. He provides the framework for the movement, while other Islamist group members carry out actions in the field.'

In alignment with the FUUI, since Bandung's government has not enacted local regulations concerning Ahmadiyah, FPI Bandung also relies on the MUI's *fatwa* as the basis for their movement against Ahmadiyah teachings. NW asserts that¹⁰:

Karena di Kota Bandung tidak ada peraturan khusus terkait Ahmadiyah, maka kami mengikuti fatwa MUI sebagai dasar pergerakan menghadapi Ahmadiyah dan sebagai bentuk ketaaan kami terhadap para ulama (Since there are no specific regulations regarding Ahmadiyah in Bandung, we follow the MUI fatwa as the basis for our actions against Ahmadiyah and as a form of obedience to our religious scholars).

⁸ Interview with EM, a board member of FPI Depok, 12 February 2019

⁹ Interview with NWW, Head of FPI Bandung, 3 July 2019

¹⁰ Interview with NWW, Head of FPI Bandung, 3 July 2019

Additionally, Islamist groups in Bandung (FUUI, FPI, AGAP, ANNAS) have consistently demonstrated against Ahmadiyah's activities and religious celebrations. They protested when Ahmadiyah invited many people to the Mubarak Mosque in Bandung for their Jalsa Salana, the annual meeting of the Ahmadiyah Community. The Mubarak Mosque is a key location for Ahmadiyah followers in Bandung and its surrounding areas. Wahyul Afif, Secretary of NU Bandung, stated¹¹:

Kelompok-kelompok Islamis selalu menggunakan Fatwa MUI untuk membubarkan Jalsa Salana, yang dianggap sebagai penyebara Ahmadiyah tentang kenabian Mirza Ghulam Ahmad kepada non-Ahmadiyah (The Islamism groups always use the MUI's fatwa to dissolve the Jalsa Salana, which is considered to be the dissemination of Ahmadiyah teachings regarding Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's prophethood to non-Ahmadiyah).

These findings align with Lutfi Assyaukanie's study, which argues that radical Islamic groups have used MUI's *fatwas* as a powerful tool to persecute and discredit Ahmadiyah followers and their activities in Indonesia (Assyaukanie, 2009). He adds that the issuance of the second MUI *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah on 29 July 2005 exacerbated the violence and persecution, akin to pouring gasoline on a fire (Assyaukanie, 2009). For example, radical Islamic groups used this *fatwa* to justify burning and attacking homes in Ketapang and Gegurung Villages, West Lombok, on 4 February 2006 (Kompas, 2006). These attacks had severe psychological effects on Ahmadiyah families, particularly their children, who were bullied and hit at school (Kompas, 2006). Moreover, the strictest implementation of the MUI *fatwa* occurred on 6 February 2011, when over 1,000 people gathered to protest against Ahmadiyah in Cikeusik Village, Pandeglang, Banten. The mob, consisting of FPI members and local Muslim movements, aimed to enforce the MUI *fatwa* banning Ahmadiyah and prohibiting the spread of its teachings in Pandeglang (Kontras, 2019). During this incident, the mob attacked Ahmadiyah followers with sticks and knives, resulting in three deaths and five serious injuries (Kontras, 2019). In addition to enforcing the *fatwa*, the mob questioned the exclusivity of Ahmadiyah, arguing that its followers isolated themselves by not participating in community prayers at local mosques (Kontras, 2019). This implied that Ahmadiyah did not want to interact with the broader Muslim community.

¹¹ Interview with Wahyul Afif, Secretary of NU Bandung, 5 July 2019

Furthermore, the National Commission of Indonesian Human Rights (Komnas HAM, 2006) released a report on the monitoring and evaluation of the case of Ahmadiyah, demonstrating that the MUI's *fatwa* triggered the violence as follows:

Penolakan dari sebagian mayoritas Muslim, terhadap keberadaan dan doktrin Ahmadiyah tidak hanya diungkapkan dalam bentuk wacana tetapi juga sering kali dalam bentuk konflik sosial dan serangan fisik yang menyebabkan kerusakan. Wacana penolakan terhadap Ahmadiyah seringkali dalam bentuk demonstrasi dan cara kekerasan seperti merusak, membakar, menjarah, dan mengusir. Salah satu temuan terpenting dari Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia Indonesia adalah bahwa wacana semacam itu dipicu oleh fatwa MUI, yang menyatakan bahwa Ahmadiyah adalah sekte yang sangat sesat (The rejection by some of the Muslim majority towards the existence and doctrines of Ahmadiyah is not only expressed in discourse but also frequently in the form of social conflict and physical assaults that cause damage. The discourse against Ahmadiyah often takes the form of demonstrations and violent actions such as vandalising, burning, looting, and expelling. One of the most important findings of the National Commission of Indonesian Human Rights is that such discourse was triggered by the MUI fatwa, which states that "Ahmadiyah is a highly deviant sect").

'Author function' refers to the idea that an author's 'death' occurs when a text is misinterpreted by readers, leading to a deviation from the author's original intent. Hasyim (2014) argued that the implementation of the *fatwa* had gone beyond the authors' initial expectations. This phenomenon can be understood from two perspectives: on the one hand, it demonstrates how perpetrators of violence adhere to the MUI *fatwa* due to its religious authority, while on the other hand, it highlights the MUI's failure to persuade Islamist groups to halt their intimidation and violence against Ahmadiyah followers (Hasyim, 2014).

The MUI's loss of control over their *fatwa*, which provoked the persecution of Ahmadiyah, and their inability to convince Islamist groups to stop their attacks, were noted by the late Abdurahman Wahid. He argued that the MUI *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah fuelled Islamist groups' motivations to attack and intimidate Ahmadiyah followers. Secretary-General of MUI Ichwan Sam claimed that the re-

issuance of the fatwa was not intended to encourage persecution or violence but rather to address the Muslim community's fears and insecurities about the spread of Ahmadiyah, which had been considered deviant since 1980 (Hasyim, 2014). Similarly, Din Syamsyudin, a MUI leader, stated that the *ulama* always advocate for peace and that there is no connection between the issuance of the MUI *fatwa* and violence against Ahmadiyah followers.

The cases in different cities demonstrate how the MUI *fatwa* is directly linked to religious persecution, aside from the government's role in regulating religion in the Ahmadiyah issue in Indonesia. MUI leaders are unwilling to retract the *fatwa*, while some local governments have no objections to it. In certain situations, the government has even participated in the violence against Ahmadiyah (Assyaukanie, 2009). According to a September 2006 report from the National Commission of Indonesian Human Rights on monitoring and evaluating the Ahmadiyah case, the MUI *fatwa* has been a catalyst for violence against Ahmadiyah. In some instances, local government agencies (including police and prosecutors) have facilitated the implementation of the *fatwa*.

3.4.2 Conservative MUI (Indonesian Ulama Council) after reformasi (the reform era)

Another factor linking the MUI *fatwa* to religious persecution in the Ahmadiyah case, apart from the regulation of religion by the government, is the MUI's shift to a more conservative stance after the reform era. This shift has created a favourable climate for discrimination against minority groups, including Ahmadiyah.

Two critical pieces of evidence illustrate the MUI's increased conservatism after the reform era. First, the MUI has evolved from being an authoritative expert on Islamic doctrine to a regulatory authority with near-exclusive control over issuing fatwas, marginalising other fatwa issuers like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Second, the MUI has formed formal alliances with Islamic hardliner groups, such as the Islamic Defender Front (FPI).

Established on July 27, 1975, through a government initiative, the MUI is a quasi-state entity that receives state funding while not an official government agency (Hasyim, 2011). It has 33 provincial branches and over 400 district-level offices nationwide. The MUI represents a range of Islamic organisations from Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah to more conservative groups like Persatuan Islam, Mathla'ul Anwar, Syarikat Islam, Persatuan Tarbiah Islamiyah, and Al-Washliyah (Shafer, 2019). During Suharto's presidency, the MUI advised on religious doctrine,

public morality, and worship, serving as a platform for *ulama* to discuss theological issues and maintain the relationship between the *ulama*, Muslim society, and the government (Ichwan, 2005). Through issuing *fatwas*, the MUI became a primary supporter of government policies on Islam (Hasyim, 2011).

During the 2000 national congress following Suharto's fall, the MUI redefined its role from being a government servant (*khadim al-hukuma*) to serving the Muslim community (*khadim al-umma*) (Burhani, 2013). This shift marked a move towards greater independence and a focus on representing the interests of Indonesian Muslims (Gillespie, 2007). The MUI's member appointment process lacks formal procedures and often relies on group recommendations or self-nominations. As the MUI aimed for greater inclusivity, there was an overrepresentation of members with affiliations to Islamist hardliner groups in the post-reform era. Consequently, the commission has been used to promote an intolerant, *Shari'a*-centred agenda (Hasyim, 2014).

The MUI considers itself *Shari'a's* guardian and broadly defined Sunni theological orthodoxy and has stated that religious tolerance is acceptable only within this 'area of difference' (Burhani, 2013). It assumes that views outside these limits, including Shia and Ahmadiyah Muslims and Sunni liberalism and pluralism, are unacceptable. With this strong MUI commitment to implementing *Shari'a* law, the Muhammadiyah and the NU retained their *fatwa* committees. Still, they quietly ceased issuing *fatwas* on creed and let the MUI take the lead (Schafer, 2019). Therefore, by the end of the 2010s, the MUI held a near-monopoly on *fatwas* on Islamic creed (Ichwan, 2005) and claimed to be the most legitimate decision-maker over the question of Islamic creed (Schafer, 2019). With the strength of the MUI's *fatwa* related to Islamic doctrine, the FPI or other Islamist groups quickly become the 'fatwa police' in upholding *shari'a* law, including using the MUI's *fatwa* as the basis for acts of violence against Ahmadiyah.

Regarding MUI's *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah, the fieldwork found that the Muhammadiyah and the NU have different views. The Muhammadiyah issued its *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah in 1929 and is more inclined to consider the MUI's *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah compared to its counterpart, the NU. For instance, KH Idrus Yahya, as the head of Muhammadiyah Beji Depok, said¹², 'Muhammadiyah follows and obeys to MUI's *fatwa* that Ahmadiyah is heretical teaching and is not part of the Islam community. But, Muhammadiyah, as an institution, has never stated openly in conflict with Ahmadiyah'. KH Madropi, as the head of Muhammadiyah Bogor, has a similar statement to his

¹² Interview with KH Idrus Yahya, the head of Muhammadiyah Beji Depok, 12 January 2019

counterpart KH Idrus Yahya in Depok. KH Madropi¹³ stated that Muhammadiyah in Bogor follows the MUI's *fatwa* that Ahmadiyah is heretical teaching and is not part of the Islamic community. But, as an institution, Muhammadiyah does not encourage their people to persecute Ahmadiyah followers in Bogor. Moreover, KH Hasan Arif, the head of Muhammadiyah Bandung¹⁴, said, 'Muhammadiyah, as an institution, has never openly disagreed with Ahmadiyah. But, Muhammadiyah obeys MUI's *fatwa* that Ahmadiyah is heretical teaching and is not part of the Islam community'.

Since the NU did not issue a specific *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah, on the other hand, the NU respects their *fatwa* commission more than the MUI's one. KH Zainuddin, senior advisor of NU Depok and the headmaster of Alhamidiyah Islamic School, said that the NU did not issue a specific *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah. Even if the NU issues a *fatwa*, the 'MUI's *fatwa* is not higher than theirs'. He mentioned¹⁵, 'It is not our compulsion to follow the "MUI's *fatwa*", since we (the NU) have our perspective on Ahmadiyah. We may refer to the "MUI's *fatwa*", but it is not the obligation'. The NU scholars discuss the Ahmadiyah issue in the *Bahtsul Masail*. The *Bahtsul Masail* serves as a forum for assessing and discussing among *kiais* (religious leaders) to determine critical or problematic matters among the people. The *Bahtsul Masail* endorsed a recommendation entitled *Tausiyah: The stance of the NU towards Ahmadiyah*. It stated that the NU forbids people or groups to persecute Ahmadiyah followers even though Ahmadiyah is not part of Islam since they do not accept Muhammad as the Last Prophet. Therefore, it is entirely the government's discretion to ban or dissolve the Ahmadiyah movement. KH Zainuddin also states¹⁶, 'The NU of Depok does not encourage people to persecute Ahmadiyah followers. If persecution occurs, it is based on a personal perspective'.

Also, KH Mustafa Abdullah Bin Nuh, a senior advisor (*Rois Syuriah*) of NU Bogor and the headmaster of Al Ghazaly Islamic School, has a similar statement to KH Zainuddin in Depok. KH Mustofa Abdullah Bin Nuh stated¹⁷, 'The NU has its perspective on Ahmadiyah, and it is not our obligation to follow the 'MUI's *fatwa*'. *Tausiyah: the NU's stance towards Ahmadiyah*, stated that the NU prevents persecution of Ahmadiyah followers even though Ahmadiyah is heretical teaching since they do not accept Muhammad as the Last Prophet. KH Mustafa Abdullah wishes

¹³ Interview with KH Madropi, the head of Muhammadiyah Bogor, 14 May 2019

¹⁴ Interview with KH Hasan Arif, the head of Muhammadiyah Bandung, 15 July 2019

¹⁵ Interview with KH. Zainuddin, Senior Advisor of NU Depok, 15 January 2019

¹⁶ Interview with KH. Zainuddin, Senior Advisor of NU Depok, 15 January 2019

¹⁷ Interview with KH Mustafa Abdullah Bin Nuh, Senior advisor of NU Bogor, 16 May 2019

to copy his respected preacher of NU, the late KH Ilyas Ruhiat's approach on how, as a good example, Ilyas Ruhiat handled and protected Ahmadiyah followers in Cipasung Tasikmalaya. He wants to make Bogor as peaceful as Cipasung Tasikmalaya for Ahmadiyah followers. Furthermore, KH Ki Agus Deden, senior advisor of NU Bandung, argues that in line with Depok and Bogor's counterparts, the NU did not issue a *fatwa* on Ahmadiyah. The stance of the NU Bandung towards Ahmadiyah is that the NU prevents groups of people from persecuting Ahmadiyah followers and gives discretion to the government to ban or dissolve the Ahmadiyah movement. He¹⁸ added that if Ahmadiyah followers' persecution occurs in Bandung, it is based on their perspective since the NU does not encourage people to persecute Ahmadiyah.

Furthermore, the second piece of evidence of the MUI's conservativeness after the reform era is that the MUI has a mutual and formal coalition with Islamic hardliner organisations. This means that the MUI offers a stage and legitimises Islamist groups, such as the FPI (Islam Defender Front). Ian Wilson (2008) argues that the FPI finds the MUI a perfect partner. The MUI gives an external source of theological legitimation for the FPI to propagate its teaching and *nahi mungkar* campaign via its financial backing. Since the MUI has no authority to enforce the *fatwa*, the other hand, the MUI also benefited from this coalition. The MUI could rely on FPI to exercise political pressure on the public and the government (Wilson, 2008). Besides that, the support of a conservative group like FPI helps the MUI establish itself as an independent Islamic institution while receiving financial support from the government (Wilson, 2008). Ahmad Suhaedi, executive director of the Wahid Institute, argues that the MUI establishment's main objective is maintaining the religious status quo. However, the MUI now presents as a 'state-owned company' receiving public money from the government and holding considerable political influence in society (Sijabat, 2006).

Another example of the FPI and the MUI's tight relationship happened in June 2006. More than 40 Islamist hardliner organisations (such as FPI, HTI, and MMI) declared the formation of *ormas Islam satukan barisan* or 'unified Islamic front' to synchronise their respective programs under the coordination and guidance of the MUI (Wilson, 2006). The synchronised relationship resulted in mutual benefits between MUI and the hardliner organisations. The hardliners exploit people's religious illiteracy by using a particular *fatwa* to legitimise their violent acts. In contrast, the MUI irrationally uses this minority persecution to justify its *fatwa's* need to be followed to ensure 'religious harmony' (Sijabat, 2006).

¹⁸ Interview with KH. Ki Agus Deden, Senior advisor of NU Bandung, 16 July 2019

3.5 Conclusion

Applying Grim and Finke's theory to the Ahmadiyah case, this research both confirms and extends this model. While government religious regulations can sometimes lead to violent persecution, it is the social-religious regulations, especially the *fatwas* issued by the MUI, that have a direct and significant impact on the persecution of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia.

This direct connection can be attributed to two main factors. First, at the grassroots level, Islamist groups use the MUI's *fatwa* as the primary justification for rejecting and persecuting Ahmadiyah, which shows their compliance with the decisions of the *ulama*. Second, since the post-1998 reform era, the MUI has adopted a more conservative stance, creating a favourable environment for discrimination against minority groups, including Ahmadiyah.

Firstly, the MUI's *fatwa* serves as a powerful instrument for the persecution and discrediting of Ahmadiyah followers. In some instances, local authorities, including police and prosecutors, actively support the implementation of this *fatwa*. This was evident in Depok and Bandung, where the *fatwa* facilitated the persecution of Ahmadiyah adherents. This situation illustrates two key points: It demonstrates that perpetrators of violence follow the MUI's *fatwa* due to its authoritative religious influence, while also revealing the MUI's loss of control over its *fatwa* and its inability to persuade Islamist groups to stop their intimidation and violence against Ahmadiyah followers.

Secondly, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) 's conservative stance in the post-reform era has been a significant factor in the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. However, a nuanced analysis reveals that while the MUI's position on Ahmadiyah has remained consistent since its first *fatwa* in 1980, its influence has intensified due to structural and contextual shifts in Indonesia's political and social landscape.

The post-reform period marked a significant transformation in the MUI's role, with the council adopting a more assertive and politically conservative position. This shift enabled the MUI to gain near-monopoly control over *fatwas* related to the Islamic creed, positioning itself as the leading authority on doctrinal issues. The strength of its *fatwas* empowered groups like the FPI and other Islamist organizations to act as enforcers of shari'a law, often using MUI *fatwas* as a justification for violence against the Ahmadiyah. The MUI's alliances with hardline Islamic organizations further bolstered these groups by providing them with theological legitimacy and financial support,

while the MUI leveraged these coalitions to expand its political influence and apply public pressure.

Despite the MUI's consistent labeling of Ahmadiyah as deviant, its pre-reform impact was limited due to the authoritarian New Order regime's tight control over religious organizations, which restricted their influence. In contrast, the post-reform era's decentralization of power allowed organizations like the MUI to operate with greater autonomy, asserting themselves more forcefully in shaping public opinion and influencing government policy. The dynamic interplay between state and religion in this period created opportunities for local political and religious elites, including the MUI, to leverage their authority for political and social gains. Central government policies, such as Joint Ministerial Decrees targeting Ahmadiyah activities, further legitimized and institutionalized discriminatory actions.

The persistent labeling of Ahmadiyah as deviant has entrenched their marginalization, exacerbated by social dynamics and the politicization of religious identities. While Muhammadiyah aligns closely with the MUI's stance on Ahmadiyah, NU's reluctance to issue specific fatwas on the issue reflects a more nuanced approach. This divergence highlights the complex interplay of ideological, institutional, and socio-political factors shaping responses to Ahmadiyah.

In conclusion, while the MUI's fatwas provide a critical ideological basis for excluding Ahmadiyah followers, the escalation of persecution after 1998 cannot be attributed to ideological conservatism alone. The decentralization of power, evolving state-religion relations, and socio-political incentives for local actors play equally significant roles.

CHAPTER 4

LOCAL POLITICS DURING THE MAYORAL ELECTION AND RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN DEPOK CITY

4.1 Introduction

Expanding on the earlier discussion of the impact of informal regulations like MUI *fatwas*, this chapter explores the empirical findings to identify the conditions that contribute to the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. Using local politics as a conceptual framework, this research aims to uncover and comprehend the conditions driving the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers by answering the question: How does local politics during the mayoral election incite religious violence against Ahmadiyah followers in Depok City? This chapter presents a critical analysis using three mediator components – political competition during mayoral elections, conservative local religious authorities, and affiliations with traditional Muslim civic associations – to help elucidate the connection between local politics and religious persecution in Depok City.

The main question is divided into three sub-questions to explore the mechanism through which local politics incites religious violence. The first question is: How has political competition during mayoral elections influenced the political incumbent to support or oppose religious violence, and how do vigilante groups respond? Second, how do local religious leaders react to intense political competition by tolerating or opposing religious persecution? Third, how do connections to established civic associations contribute to religious discrimination?

This chapter investigates the role of local politics in the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Depok City, focusing on mayoral elections from 2005 and 2010 and Nurmahmudi Ismail's administration from 2005 to 2015. Analysing 45 cases of Ahmadiyah persecution between 2005 and 2023 – 29 of which occurred during Ismail's leadership – and using NVivo to analyse qualitative in-depth interview data from over 30 stakeholders in Depok, the study found that local politics during the local election was the crucial element creating religious persecution of Ahmadiyah members in the case of Depok, which served as the critical argument. It finds that fierce political competition during these election periods led incumbents to take actions that resulted in the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. Firstly, the political incumbent needs to

raise their Islamic profile for local elections by relying on Islamic hardliners for political support. Secondly, the cooperation between political actors and local aggressive vigilante groups as essential brokers and vote-getters to persecute Ahmadiyah followers needs to be aligned. Thirdly, the vigilante groups that are examined here participate in many election-related activities and serve as a vote-getter, especially for votes from the conservative group and vote mobilisation. Lastly, the political incumbent won the mayor position and continued receiving political backing from vigilante organisations. Furthermore, the study also reveals that support from conservative *kiai* and the limited effectiveness of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Depok allowed political actors to impose restrictions on Ahmadiyah practices with minimal political risk, further contributing to the persecution.

This chapter is organised as follows. It first explores the socio-economic and political landscape of Depok City, focusing on the local elections between 2005 and 2015, to offer a comprehensive understanding of the city and set the stage for the theoretical discussion in this thesis. Following this, the chapter presents empirical evidence of how local political dynamics during elections have led to the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Depok City viewed from three perspectives: Political competition (including patronage networks and vigilante groups), the involvement of religious leaders, and Muslim civic association ties. The chapter concludes with an empirical analysis of the patterns identified in each area.

4.2 Setting the context: An overview of Depok

Depok, located south of Jakarta, is an integral part of the Jabodetabek metropolitan area, which ranks as the world's tenth-most populated metro region. This vast urban area encompasses Jakarta, Depok, Bogor, Tangerang, and Bekasi. Depok's journey to city status began when it was designated an administrative city in March 1982 and eventually formally recognised as a city in 1999. As an autonomous city adjacent to Jakarta, Depok has developed buffer zones designed for various purposes, including residential, educational, commercial, and tourism activities, and municipalities focused on water absorption to manage environmental concerns. The city is divided into 11 sub-districts, illustrated in Figure 2 below, each contributing to Depok's diverse

and dynamic nature.

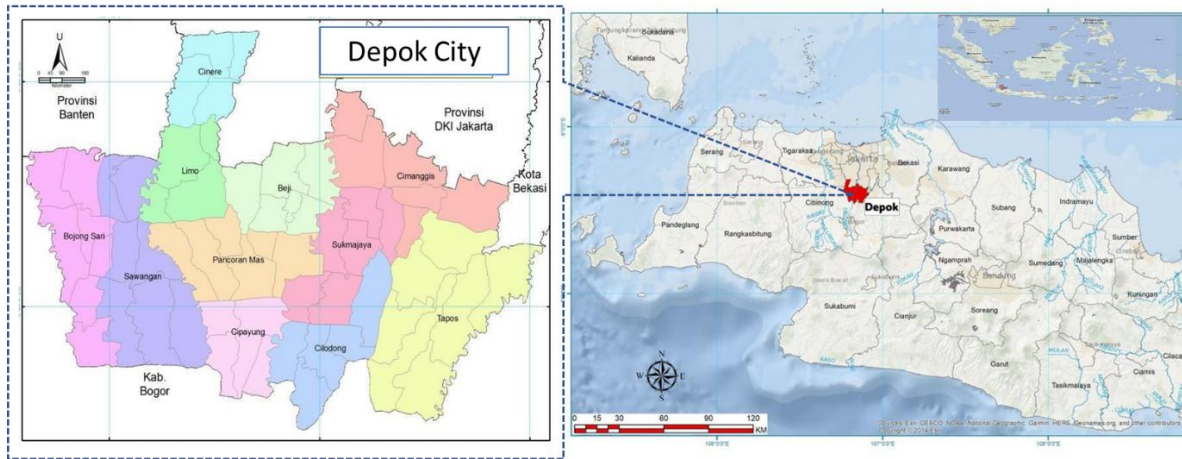


Figure 2
Administrative Map of Depok

As of the 2021 census, Depok was home to approximately two million residents. The growth of business and industry in the Jabodetabek region has increased middle-class households in Depok, bolstering the local economy and political landscape. Depok's proximity to Jakarta and its status as the location of several prestigious universities, such as the University of Indonesia, have made it strategically significant to the country's economy and politics.

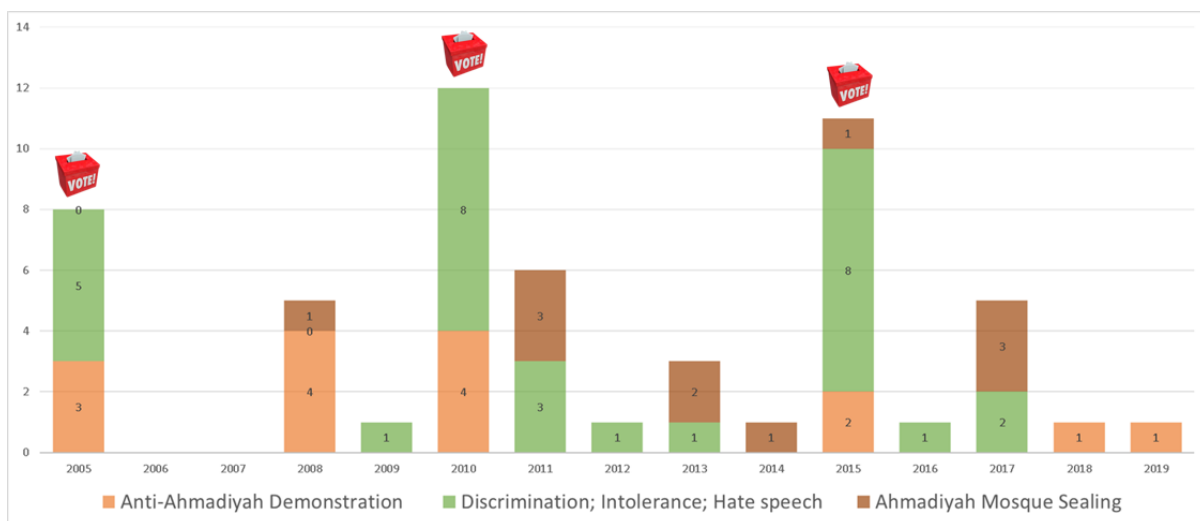
Moreover, Depok's Human Development Index (HDI) rose from 79.11 in 2020 to 79.6 in 2021 (BPS Depok, 2022), indicating improved development performance, quality of life, and government efficiency. With its current HDI of 79.6, Depok City is classified as upper-middle regarding these metrics. The city's advancements in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities contribute to this high ranking, reflecting its importance in the broader national context.

4.3 Political competition during the local election in Depok from 2005–2015

Political competition during mayoral elections appears to have a significant impact on the persecution of the Ahmadiyah community in Depok, Indonesia. The Graph 1 below clearly indicates a pattern where election years – 2005, 2010, and 2015 – correspond with increased incidents of persecution. Key types of persecution faced by the Ahmadiyah community during these periods include (1) Discrimination: Actions that marginalise Ahmadiyah followers and

deny them equal treatment; (2) Intolerance: Prejudiced behaviours and attitudes directed at Ahmadiyah followers due to their religious beliefs; (3) Hate Speech: Public statements that incite hostility or violence against Ahmadiyah followers; (4) Anti-Ahmadiyah Demonstrations: Protests and rallies aimed at opposing the Ahmadiyah community; and (5) Sealing of Ahmadiyah Mosques: Measures taken to close down Ahmadiyah places of worship, often under pressure from certain groups. These spikes in persecution during election years suggest that political dynamics and competition for votes can exacerbate societal tensions and lead to heightened targeting of minority groups like the Ahmadiyah.

Graph 1
Mayoral election and persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Depok 2005–2019



Source: Data compiled by the author from fieldwork

Therefore, this section will delve into the key elements that defined the political landscape during the mayoral elections in Depok from 2005 onward. The focus will be on two critical aspects: (1) Influential Actors: It will identify and describe the key political figures and stakeholders who play significant roles in the election process. These actors include mayoral candidates, influential political leaders, and other stakeholders who substantially impact the election outcomes; and (2) Margin of Victory: It will analyse the election results, focusing on the margin of victory in each mayoral race. Understanding the closeness of these races will help us gauge political competitiveness and intensity during these elections. Examining these elements aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the political dynamics during the mayoral elections in Depok. This analysis will set the stage for a more in-depth discussion in the subsequent

section, where it will explore the specific causes of the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers during these election periods.

It has been widely acknowledged that two key political parties, PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* – Prosperity and Justice Party) and Golkar (*Golongan Karya* Party), have significantly influenced the political battle since the 2005 mayoral election in Depok. The rivalry between PKS and Golkar began in September 2004, a year prior to the local election, when the chairman, two deputy chairmen, and 19 members of Depok's House of Representatives from the 1999–2004 term were charged with corruption for misusing the local budget. D. Bothin, from Golkar and the newly elected chairman for 2004–2009, was implicated in this case. In response, PKS publicly called for an investigation into the corruption and demanded that any re-elected members associated with it be barred from taking office as council members.

When the local prosecutor announced an investigation into these 22 members, the people of Depok rejected the 13 House of Representatives members who had been re-elected in the April 2004 general election for the 2004–2009 term, labelling them as fraudulent and unreliable. Despite widespread opposition and the evidence against them, the 13 re-elected members refused to step down and held their inauguration a day earlier than scheduled in the auditorium of the local government building instead of the traditional assembly hall¹⁹. After the rushed inauguration, hundreds of locals gathered and requested that the newly elected assembly members sign a statement pledging their moral commitment to combating corruption. Eighteen of the 45 members signed the pledge, including all 12 members of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), which had vigorously opposed corruption in 2004²⁰.

A total of IDR 15 billion had been allocated for the assembly members' operational expenses. However, IDR 9.5 billion was allegedly used for their personal expenses, such as mortgage payments, car repairs, and life insurance policies²¹. In January 2006, 17 assembly members from the 1999–2004 term were sentenced to two years in prison for misusing IDR 7.3 billion. This included naming D. Bothin from Golkar, the newly elected chairman for the 2004–2009 term, who was found guilty²².

¹⁹ See Kompas newsletter, 4 September 2004

²⁰ See Tempo newsletter, 3 September 2004

²¹ See Kompas newsletter, 11 September 2004 and 15 September 2004)

²² See Pikiran Rakyat newsletter, 25 January 2006

Given these facts, many Depok assembly members did not welcome the PKS, mainly due to the party's solid anti-corruption

stance. In an interview with *Pikiran Rakyat*, Quartifa Wijaya, the head of the PKS faction, it was stated that the other members collectively rejected the PKS when the PKS won the majority of parliamentary seats. He found interacting with other assembly members impossible and was excluded from decision-making²³. By the time of the 2005 mayoral election, the PKS was unable (and unwilling) to form a coalition with other parties, leading the party to decide to submit its candidates.

4.3.1 The 2005 Depok mayoral election

The first Depok mayoral election was held in June 2005. It was widely believed that this inaugural direct mayoral election gauged how Indonesia's political decentralisation impacted local and national power dynamics. As we will see below, Depok's mayoral election intensified political rivalry among the area's elites, marked by traditional patrimonial manipulation (Choi, 2011).

Although there were five pairs of candidates, the election primarily became a contest between two candidates: Badrul Kamal, the incumbent mayor supported by the Golkar-led coalition, and Nurmahmudi Ismail, the challenger backed by the PKS. Golkar, which received the second-highest number of votes in the 2004 general election (behind the PKS), was determined to maintain and expand its influence in the city, banking on Badrul Kamal's incumbency and loyalty as a devoted Golkar cadre. On the other hand, the PKS, which had won the general election in Depok in 2004, viewed this election as a crucial opportunity to test its strategic capabilities and strengthen its presence in the Jabodetabek region.

As shown in Table 7 below, political parties must have garnered 15% or more of the vote in the general election to propose candidates for the mayoral election. Only PKS, Golkar, and PD, who were permitted to field candidates in the mayoral election, and five other political parties that garnered less than 15% of the vote could form a coalition based on the results of the political party vote composition in the 2004 general election.

²³ See *Pikiran Rakyat* newsletter, 25 January 2006

Table 7
Party composition in the Depok Local House of Representatives (2004)

No	Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage of Total
1	PKS: Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (The Prosperous Justice Party)	12	27%
2	Golkar: Golongan Karya (The Party of Functional Groups)	8	18%
3	PD: Partai Demokrat (The Democratic Party)	8	18%
4	PDI-P: Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan: (The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)	5	11%
5	PAN: Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party)	5	11%
6	PPP: Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)	4	9%
7	PKB: Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party)	2	4%
8	PDS: Partai Damai Sejahtera (Prosperous Peace Party)	1	2%
	Total	45	100%

Source: KPU Depok, 2022

Two parties and three coalitions nominated five candidate pairs. The PKS and the PD each selected their candidates, while the Golkar allied with the National Awakening Party (PKB). The other parties also formed two other coalitions: the PDI-P with the PDS and the PPP, and the PAN built an alliance with four smaller parties, PBB, PBR, PKPB, and PKPI, as shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8
The 2005 Depok mayoral candidates and supporting parties

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	% Number of Seats
Single Party	PKS	Nurmahmudi Ismail Yusun Wirasaputra	26.7% or 12 seats
	PD	Abdul Wahab Abidin Ilham Wijaya	22.2% or 10 seats
Parties' Coalitions	Golkar and PKB	Badrul Kamal Syihabuddin Ahmad	22.2% or 10 seats
	PDI-P, PPP and PDS	Yus Rusyandi Soetadi Dipowongso	17.8% or 8 seats
	PAN, PBB, PBR, PKPB and PKPI	Harun Heryana Farkhan AR	11.1% or five seats (but had 17.7% of the total vote in the 2004 general election)

Source: KPU Depok, 2022

As mentioned earlier, even though there were five pairs of candidates, the first Depok mayoral election quickly became a race between Badrul Kamal, the incumbent mayor (1999–2004) whom the Golkar-led coalition supported, and Nurmahmudi Ismail, the challenger whom the PKS supported. This direct election became a test of legitimacy and accountability for Badrun Kamal since he was elected by the local House of Representatives (DPRD) and received 33 out of 45 votes from municipal assembly members.

When the election took place in 2005, 22 members and the chairman of the DPRD, along with Badrul Kamal, were under investigation by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) regarding the misuse of IDR 9.5 billion for assembly members' expenses, as mentioned earlier. Although Badrul Kamal was eventually cleared, the public continued to perceive him as corrupt, and his credibility was significantly damaged. He sought support from various local political and economic elites, particularly those accustomed to his patrimonial rule and keen to maintain the connections between the executive and legislative branches. In contrast, the PKS nominated a high-profile candidate, Nurmahmudi Ismail, the former Minister of Forestry and Plantations (1999–2000). The PKS saw the need to promote a younger, well-educated candidate to enhance the party's more moderate and progressive image.

On election day, 26 June 2005, over 61 percent of eligible voters cast their ballots, with Nurmahmudi Ismail and Yuyun Wirasaputra receiving the highest number of votes. However, the competition between the Golkar coalition and the PKS led to controversy. The Golkar coalition's candidates, Badrul Kamal and Syihabuddin Achmad, reported the Depok Election Commission to the West Java Court, alleging vote inflation. They claimed their loss was due to their supporters not being registered and thus not allowed to vote. Additionally, they argued that the KPU Depok permitted non-Depok residents to vote, inflating Nurmahmudi's vote count (Choi, 2011). According to the KPU Depok, Nurmahmudi and Yuyun Wirasaputra received 232,610 votes, or 43.90%, while Badrul Kamal and Syihabuddin Achmad received 206,781 votes, or 39.04% (Choi, 2011).

The High Court accepted Badrul's claim that his supporters could not vote because they were not registered, resulting in an undercount of his votes. Consequently, the court annulled the KPU Depok's decision in favour of Nurmahmudi Ismail and Yuyun Wirasaputra. According to the court, Badrul Kamal and Syihabuddin Achmad were the winners of the 2005 Depok regional elections, with 269,551 votes, while Nurmahmudi and Yuyun obtained 204,828 votes (Choi, 2011).

Supporters of Nurmahmudi's party were outraged by the court's judgment but couldn't immediately respond since the case was framed as a dispute between the Badrul-Syihabuddin pair and the KPUD Depok. The Nurmahmudi-Yuyun pair's only option was to assist KPUD Depok in obtaining legal counsel. However, they also had to figure out how to involve themselves in the case, as it had effectively overturned their apparent success. This decision drew significant attention, and KPU Depok did not remain silent, submitting the matter to the Supreme Court (MA). Following the judgment, Depok society experienced social unrest characterised by large protests, polarised neighbourhoods, politicised bureaucrats, and sluggish governance.

On 16 December 2005, the Supreme Court decided to accept KPU Depok's request, annul the West Java High Court's decision, and declare Nurmahmudi Ismail and Yuyun Wirasaputra the winners, as shown in Table 9 below. Badrul Kamal and Syihabuddin Achmad filed an objection to the Constitutional Court (MK) and issued a Judicial Review (PK). However, the Constitutional Court rejected the protest and reaffirmed that Nurmahmudi Ismail and Yuyun Wirasaputra were the winners of the Depok mayoral election.

Table 9
The 2005 mayoral election result

Candidates	Number of votes obtained in the polls	Number of votes (West Java High Court)
Nurmahmudi Ismail (PKS)	232,610	204,828 (deducting 27,782)
Badrul Kamal (Golkar's Coalition)	206,780	269,55 (adding 62,770)
Yus Rusyandi (PDI-P's Coalition)	34,096	No change
Abdul Wahab Abidin (PD's Coalition)	32,461	No change
Harun Heryana (PAN's Coalition)	23,859	No change

Source: KPU Depok, 2022

4.3.2 The 2010 Depok mayoral election

The rivalry between PKS and Golkar continued in the 2010 Depok mayoral election, with incumbent candidate Nurmahmudi Ismail (PKS) facing off against Badrul Kamal (Golkar). In this election, PKS formed a coalition with PAN to secure 36% of the parliamentary seats, aiming to increase their chances of winning. Badrul Kamal also benefited from the support of a wide coalition formed by Golkar, PD (thus securing collective control over national politics), PDI-P, and PPP, accounting for 56% of seats shown in Table 10 below.

Table 10
The 2010 Depok mayoral candidates and supporting parties

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	% Number of Seats
Parties' Coalitions	PKS and PAN	Nurmahmudi Ismail Mohammad Idris	36% or 18 seats
	Golkar, PD, PDI-P, PPP and PDS	Badrul Kamal Agus Supriyanto	56% or 28 seats
	Gerindra and Hanura	Yuyun Wirasaputra Pradi Supriatna	8% or 4 seats (but had 18% of the total vote in the 2009 general election)
Independent	-	Gagah Sunu Sumantri Derry Drajat	

Source: KPU Depok, 2022

The contest between Nur Mahmudi Ismail and Badrul Kamal was seen as highly significant due to the high stakes of the election and the strong support each candidate received from their respective parties and coalitions. On Saturday, 23 October 2010, the General Election Commission of Depok formally declared the election results. As for the mayoral election, Nur Mahmudi Ismail-Mohammad Idris won with 61.87% of the vote. Badrul Kamal-Agus Supriyanto finished second, taking 26.31%, while Yuyun Wirasaputra-Pradi Supriatna followed at 22.42%, and Gagah Sunu Sumantri-Derry Drajat were last in with 9.75%.²⁴ However, the three losing candidate pairs refused to accept the results, alleging widespread, organised, and systemic fraud. Consequently, they filed a lawsuit against the local election results in the Constitutional Court.²⁵

Badrul Kamal reported the election dispute to the Constitutional Court, in which he claimed electoral law violations. However, the Constitutional Court rejected the petition due to a lack of evidence. Badrul claimed that Nur Mahmudi's group had treated a labour program as election propaganda and questioned the inclusion of deceased persons on the voter lists. Additionally, Badrul questioned the existence of those who had passed away but were still listed as voters.

During the election campaign, some candidates took a hardline stance against Ahmadiyah, promising to maintain the ban on their activities in Depok. For example, Nur Mahmudi Ismail, who eventually won the election, was reported to have said that he would continue the ban on Ahmadiyah in Depok. His opponent, Badrul Kamal, also expressed support for the ban.²⁶ The issue of Ahmadiyah was not the main focus of the election campaign in Depok, and the candidates also discussed other topics such as infrastructure, education, and public services. However, the issue did attract attention, especially among conservative Muslim groups pushing for stricter controls on Ahmadiyah.

4.3.3 The 2015 Depok mayoral election

Although Nurmahmudi Ismail could no longer contest for mayor in the 2015 municipal elections, the rivalry between PKS and Golkar remained evident. The replacement candidate was Mohamad Idris, a PKS member who had previously served as Depok's vice mayor. Meanwhile, Golkar put forward Babai Suahimi as their top figure after Badrul Kamal. Babai Suahimi, Chair of the DPD Golkar Party in Depok, had been a member of the Depok DPRD since 2004 and

²⁴ Raharjo, Budi, 'MK Tolak Pemilukada Ulang di Depok'. *Republika*, 26 November 2010, accessed on 7 May 2023.

²⁵ Calon Walikota ditantang bikin SK Larangan Ahmadiyah, *Okenews*, 9 August 2010, accessed 7 May 2023.

²⁶ Calon Walikota ditantang bikin SK Larangan Ahmadiyah, *Okenews*, 9 Agustus 2010, accessed 7 May 2023.

served as Honorary Chair. Since the PDI-P won the most votes in Depok's 2014 election, Babai Suahimi was nominated as the deputy mayor candidate alongside Dimas Oky Nugroho, a PDI-P member and Grassroots Strategic Consulting (ARSC) executive director. ARSC is a firm specialising in political advisory services and communication strategies. Additionally, Dimas is an academic at Airlangga University and was part of President Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo's winning team.

Table 11
The 2015 Depok mayoral candidates and supporting parties

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	% Number of Seats
Parties' Coalitions	PKS, Gerindra, PD and PBB	Mohammad Idris Pradi Supriatna	52% or 26 seats
	Golkar, PDI-P, PAN, PKB and NasDem	Dimas Oky Nugroho Babai Suhaimi	48% or 24 seats

Source: KPU Depok, 2022

The contest between PKS and Golkar candidates grew more heated in 2015 than it was in the two previous municipal elections because only two pairs of mayoral candidates were running, as shown in Table 11 above. The number of votes cast in the legislature was nearly equal, with the PKS alliance winning 52% of the seats and the Golkar coalition taking 48%, as indicated above. With 61.87% of the vote, incumbent candidate Mohammad Idris-Pradi Supriatna won the election.

Table 12
The margin of victory in Depok's mayoral elections from 2005 to 2015

Local election	Number of candidates	Margin of victory	Dispute to the court
2005	5	4.86%	Yes
2010	4	14.14%	Yes
2015	2	23.74%	No
	Average	14.25%	

Source: Author compilation from various sources

Concerning the margin of victory, it is clear that the 2005 mayoral election was the most competitive, with a margin of victory of 4.86%. This was followed by the 2010 and 2015 elections, which had margins of victory of 14.14% and 23.74%, respectively as shown in Table

12 above. During the 2005 and 2010 mayoral elections, candidates employed various strategies to attract voters, including leveraging the issue of the Ahmadiyah minority. This was mainly aimed at gaining support from conservative Muslim voters. By focusing on issues related to the Ahmadiyah minority, candidates aimed to appeal to conservative segments of the electorate who might hold strong views on religious matters. This strategy involved positioning themselves as protectors of traditional values, which could sway conservative voters in their favour. The use of minority issues in campaigns likely contributed to polarisation within the electorate, as candidates targeted specific voter groups with tailored messages. This strategy might have intensified competition, particularly in closely contested elections like the one in 2005.

4.4 Local politics and religious persecution

The preceding section explains a fierce political struggle, especially during the regional elections in 2005 and 2010. The fact that there were two significant party coalitions with well-known candidates, more than three candidate pairings in each election, and narrow margins of victory served as evidence of this tight competition. By using local politics as a conceptual framework to understand the conditions underpinning the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, this section will respond to and explain field findings to answer the sub-research question of this thesis: What circumstances underlie the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in the case of Depok?

This research also revealed that Depok's local political dynamics during the crucial election cycles of 2005 and 2010 significantly influenced the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. This aligns with existing literature emphasising the importance of viewing local politics from a broader perspective. As Hadiz (2010) points out, decentralisation has created new opportunities that intensify conflicts over control of key local governance institutions, making district-level politics more competitive due to the political office's increased prestige and benefits.

In Depok's case, political elites sought to strengthen their position by aligning with Islamist hardliners, enhancing their chances of securing political power. This strategy involved leveraging the religiosity and spiritual fervour of potential supporters. Djupe and Grant (2001) similarly argue that political elites often exploit followers' religious devotion and spiritual hunger to increase their support and improve their chances of gaining political power.

This section critically examines the relationship between local politics and religious persecution, focusing on three key mediators: political competition during mayoral elections, conservative local religious authorities, and Muslim civic associations.

1. **Political competition and patronage networks:** In the context of fierce political competition during mayoral elections, candidates often leveraged patronage networks. Islamist hardliners frequently acted as intermediaries in the election process, influencing the mechanisms that led to the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. In their quest for political power, candidates forged alliances with these conservative elements, including hardline groups, to garner votes and support.
2. **Influence of conservative religious authorities:** Conservative local religious authorities wielded significant influence in the political sphere, shaping public opinion and electoral outcomes. These leaders played a pivotal role in the elections by portraying the Ahmadiyah minority as a threat to religious orthodoxy and societal harmony. This framing justified discriminatory practices and violence against the Ahmadiyah community, reinforcing the persecution.
3. **Impact of Muslim civic associations:** Muslim civic associations, particularly the largest Islamic group, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), were crucial in the dynamics of local elections and persecution. The relationships between mayoral candidates and these civil society organisations (CSOs) were instrumental in shaping electoral strategies. NU's involvement either supported or hindered persecution efforts. While some factions within NU may have endorsed persecution to align with conservative sentiments, others advocated for religious tolerance and coexistence.

4.4.1 Political competition and patronage network

The research reveals that the intense political competition in Depok during the critical 2005 and 2010 election cycles and Nurmahmudi Ismail's administration from 2005 to 2015 significantly impacted the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. It highlights 45 instances of Ahmadiyah persecution within the congregation between 2005 and 2023, with 29 occurring during Ismail's tenure. This finding aligns with Brathwaite and Park's (2019) theory of political competition and religious violence, which suggests that increased political competition correlates with higher levels of religious violence, especially when voter turnout is high.

Given the highly competitive nature of the Depok mayoral election, discussing a patronage network becomes essential since it influences local politics at all grassroots governance levels. Hillman (2014) asserts that patronage networks affect local politics from the village to the city, holding the local state together by providing administrative coordination and restraining internal political competition, thus supplementing official governmental institutions. Moreover, political competition can increase patronage practices in certain ways. Driscoll (2017) notes that political competition can enhance patronage in municipal elections where two major parties are in close contest, leading local governments to significantly increase public sector jobs, especially low-level positions sought by party activists. Driscoll describes a bottom-up phenomenon where voluntary party members exert pressure for patronage, with volunteers leveraging their parties' weaknesses in tight elections to demand rewards. Additionally, Aspinall and Asad (2015) argue that local electoral competition in some Indonesian districts is not merely a straightforward battle of wealth, where the wealthiest candidate wins. Instead, it is a conflict where candidates must have robust patronage networks to deliver benefits and ensure beneficiaries reciprocate with their votes.

Based on empirical findings, this research has established that political competition and patronage networks significantly influence political candidates to favour the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Depok, following these sequential steps, as illustrated in Figure 3 below. First, due to intense political competition, incumbents need to bolster their Islamic credentials for local elections by seeking political support from Islamic hardliners. Second, a partnership is formed between political candidates and local aggressive vigilante groups, who act as essential brokers and vote-getters, leading to the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. Third, these vigilante groups become actively involved in election-related activities, mobilising conservative votes and perpetuating the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. Finally, the political incumbent wins the mayoral position and continues to receive ongoing support from these vigilante organisations.

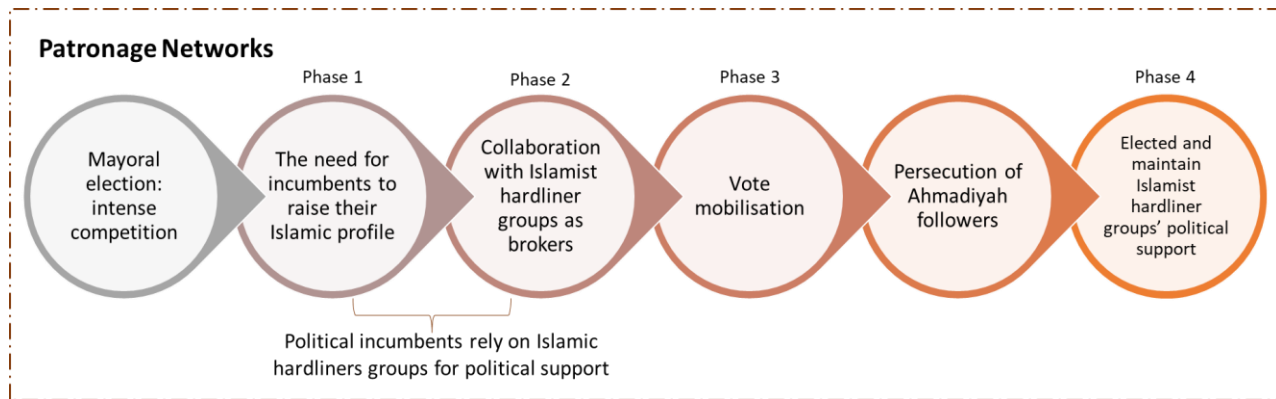


Figure 3

The correlation between patronage network and religious persecution in the case of Depok

The section below will explain in detail the stages by which political competition and patronage networks significantly influence political candidates to favour the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Depok, following these sequential steps:

Phase 1: The high level of political competition and the need for incumbents to raise their Islamic profile

Given the intense political competition, incumbents need to enhance their Islamic profile for local elections by seeking support from Islamic hardliners. During the high-stakes Depok mayoral elections in 2005 and 2010, candidates Nur Mahmudi Ismail and Badrul Kamal aimed to boost their Islamic profiles to attract and mobilise supporters for electoral gain. This approach aligns with Wilcox and Sigelman's (2001) findings, which indicate that political elites facing increased electoral competition often use religious appeals to galvanise their supporters. Additionally, note that political elites leverage religious identity and appeals for electoral purposes in regions with fierce electoral competition. This can elevate their specific profile, heighten social or sectarian tensions, and potentially lead to religious persecution, as the fervour for religious appeal can be difficult to control. The candidates' strategy to enhance their Islamic profiles for supporter mobilisation is understandable given the conservative social fabric of Depok society.

Depok exhibits two primary examples of conservative social construction: it ranked among the top five most intolerant cities from 2015 to 2022 (Setara Institute, 2023), and there is a prevalent trend of building Muslim-only gated townhouses.

Firstly, among 94 cities in Indonesia, Depok consistently ranked in the top five most intolerant cities from 2015 to 2022 (Setara Institute, 2023). The Setara Institute has monitored the city's tolerance index since 2015 to assess how well societal and municipal components maintain social harmony, tolerance, and inclusion. The factors considered in measuring municipal tolerance are (1) interactions between residents and other city residents, including government and citizens; (2) relationships between residents' demographic heterogeneity; (3) official actions of the city government; and (4) city government policies (Setara Institute, 2023).

This index operates on a positive hypothesis, assuming that cities in Indonesia are inherently tolerant and harmonious. Scores are weighted from (1) very intolerant to (7) very tolerant. Each city starts with a score of (7), which is reduced if conditions undermining tolerance are found (Setara Institute, 2023). Since 2015, Depok has been among the top five most intolerant cities. It ranked 91st out of 94 cities in 2015 with a score of 4.24, dropped to 90th in 2017 with a score of 3.30, slightly improved to 88th in 2018 with a score of 3.49, fell to 92nd in 2020 with a score of 3.35, and was the most intolerant city in 2021, ranking 94th with a score of 3.57. In the most recent ranking published in 2022, Depok was 93rd with a score of 3.61 (Setara Institute, 2023).

Moreover, Depok City has exhibited high levels of favouritism and formalism in its policies. From 2011 to 2022, Depok issued numerous discriminatory circulars and guidelines, showing favouritism in activities such as banning Ahmadiyah practices, prohibiting Valentine's Day celebrations, and mandating Qur'an recitation for civil servants. Amid such pervasive favouritism and formalism, efforts to promote national unity and harmony have been minimal. Consequently, pluralistic interactions within governance structures are diminishing, and Depok is increasingly becoming a city with a singular Islamic identity. The rise of religiously segregated residential areas further complicates the promotion of tolerance and harmony. Additionally, segregation is exacerbated by the limited number of public schools and the growing presence of schools with specific religious identities in Depok.

Secondly, Depok is experiencing a surge in the construction of Muslim-only gated townhouses, resulting in uniform neighbourhoods built on registered land. It contrasts with the older, more diverse, and inclusive *kampung* communities, characterised by village-style homes on undocumented land. Currently, Depok has about 35 Muslim-only townhouses (see Figure 4 below), where individuals of Christian or other faiths are excluded. This trend is anticipated to expand as the demand for this lifestyle increases (Jannah et al., 2022).

In this socially conservative environment, it makes sense that a mayoral candidate would seek to enhance their Islamist credentials through various strategies. One approach would be to emphasise opposition to Ahmadiyah to label it as a heretical belief and to collaborate with vigilante organisations (Islamist hardliners) as intermediaries within a patronage network to secure votes in mayoral elections. As a representative of JAI explains:

Secara politis, isu Ahmadiyah itu memiliki nilai jual yang tinggi melihat kondisi masyarakat Depok konservatif ini. Jadi bila ada kandidat yang ingin mencalonkan walikota dengan mengusung anti Ahmadiyah maka dangangannya akan laku keras melalui janji-janji politiknya [Politically, discriminating against Ahmadiyah has a high selling point considering the condition of the conservative Depok community. So if a candidate wants to run for mayor by advocating anti-Ahmadiyah, his campaign will sell well through his political promises].²⁷

Additionally, the Ahmadiyah issue goes beyond religious concerns; it is a latent issue that can be triggered by growing political ambitions, especially during mayoral elections.²⁸ The strategy to enhance the Islamic profile to attract votes from conservative Muslims aligns with the history and ideology of the main supporting parties. For example, Nur Mahmudi Ismail, the incumbent mayoral candidate, was backed by the PKS coalition emphasising orthodox Islamic beliefs. The candidates' campaigns aligned with the ideologies of their supporting parties.

As an Islamist party, PKS calls on the state to implement and enforce Islamic law, especially on proselytising, apostasy, media, and the family (Kendhammer, 2016) – likewise, the strategy used by Nurmahmudi Ismail in carrying out his winning design. Nur Mahmudi Ismail needed to increase his Islamic profile by forming relationships with the FPI (Islamic Defender Front) and signing a political contract with four demands,²⁹ namely (1) Remove the presence of Ahmadiyah followers in the city of Depok; (2) Halt the circulation of liquor in the city of Depok; (3) Stop all prostitution activities in the city of Depok and (4) Prioritise local workforce.

What Nurmamudi did was consistent with research by Fox and Menchik (2023), who argue that four elements influence whether Islamic parties appeal to the inclusive or exclusive as part of

²⁷ Interview with Spokesperson JAI, 3 January 2019.

²⁸ Interview with Ahmadiyah followers, 5 January 2019.

²⁹ Interview with senior member of FPI Depok, 18 January 2019.

their election campaigns: First, candidates make more exclusive Islamic appeals in conservative and overwhelmingly Muslim districts to garner significant Muslim support. Second, in urban regions, candidates are more likely to appeal to Islam's exclusivity, whereas in rural areas, nationalist appeals are more likely to be made. Third, a more exclusive request is made of candidates running in regional (provincial or district) elections instead of those running in national elections. This is because regional politicians have had more success implementing the problem of Islam at the local level. Finally, their ideologies encourage the more restrictive nature of Islamic party candidates.

Phase 2: Partnership formation: Collaboration with vigilante groups as brokers

After a mayoral candidate decides to enhance their Islamic profile to attract votes from conservative Muslims, the next step is to collaborate with local aggressive vigilante groups, who act as key brokers and vote-getters, resulting in the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. The PKS, represented by their mayoral candidate Nur Mahmudi Ismail, and Islamist hardliners like the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), shared similar views on Ahmadiyah, which facilitated their alliance before and after the mayoral elections. Jung (2020) highlights that the rising influence of the conservative Islamic movement in politics compels politicians to use religious rhetoric to secure electoral victories.

The collaboration between PKS and FPI was driven by two main reasons: (1) FPI shares a similar mission with PKS in advocating for *amar makruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil), and (2) the FPI was appealing to PKS (including the incumbent candidate) to attract conservative votes, especially during the 2010 mayoral election.

Firstly, the collaboration between the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) is deeply rooted in their shared commitment to *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil). This ideology serves as a unifying force, legitimizing their actions and reinforcing their alliances, particularly in targeting groups like the Ahmadiyah. PKS and FPI strategically employ religious rhetoric to appeal to conservative Muslim voters, intertwining theological principles with pragmatic political considerations.

FPI, as an Islamist organization, operates through both civil and uncivil modes. As Bagir et al. (2010) explain, its civil mode aims to enhance public legitimacy by portraying the group as an ally of the government, especially in disaster relief and moral enforcement. However, its uncivil

mode employs demonizing discourse, creating and sustaining a base for confronting, brutalizing, and occasionally harming individuals it deems deviant. In Depok, FPI's actions mirror those in other regions, as members consult the FPI Central Executive Board in Jakarta before acting. As one prominent FPI Depok member stated:

Kami konsisten untuk menjalankan misi amar makruf nahi munkar karena itu sudah menjadi misi terbentuknya FPI. Jelas kami menjalankan misi itu di Depok, tapi bila diperlukan dan dipanggil oleh 'imam besar' maka kami siap diturunkan dimana saja termasuk di Jakarta (We are consistent in carrying out the mission of enjoining good and forbidding evil because that has become the mission of forming the FPI. It is clear that we carry out this mission in Depok, but if needed and summoned by the "high priest," we are ready to be deployed anywhere, including in Jakarta).

This mission is facilitated by FPI Depok's considerable influence, as it is one of the most active branches, boasting 14,000 members—nearly 10% of the 200,000 active members nationwide (Wilson, 2015). FPI is notorious for sweeping (ransacking) nightclubs, bars, and other establishments it deems immoral, particularly during Ramadan, under the motto "*Live Honourably or Die as a Martyr*" (Woodward et al., 2014). Additionally, FPI has a history of violent, though often non-lethal, attacks against those it considers deviant. This aggression is further reinforced by its connections with certain police and military units, which find it advantageous to engage with Islamist groups capable of mobilizing mass support (Jahroni, 2004).

The strategic alliance between PKS and FPI exemplifies how political candidates leverage Islamist networks for electoral gains. Scholars like Soedirgo (2020) and Najib Burhani (2013) provide critical insights into this phenomenon. Soedirgo conceptualizes *productive intolerance*, where political actors collaborate with Islamist groups to target religious minorities, thereby showcasing their influence and mobilizing conservative voter bases. Similarly, Burhani's research highlights how Islamist groups frame the Ahmadiyah as theological *others*, exploiting religious narratives to maintain political relevance.

Framing plays a pivotal role in these alliances. FPI's ability to present itself as a moral guardian combating national moral degradation strengthens its appeal among conservative constituencies.

This positioning not only amplifies its legitimacy as a political ally but also establishes a powerful framework for justifying persecution. By portraying the Ahmadiyah as a threat to Islamic orthodoxy, FPI creates a sense of urgency that aligns with political actors' interests in securing support from conservative Muslims.

The collaboration between PKS and FPI during Nurmahmudi Ismail's mayoral campaign in Depok illustrates how theological motivations seamlessly integrate with political strategies. PKS benefited from FPI's grassroots mobilization and moral authority, while FPI gained access to political patronage networks and enhanced legitimacy. This mutually beneficial relationship underscores how alliances leverage religious identity to achieve political ends.

Religious ideology—particularly the mission of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*—is a significant driver of persecution against groups like the Ahmadiyah. Theological justifications, such as framing the Ahmadiyah as deviant, are strategically employed to mobilize support and advance political agendas. These dynamics illustrate how theological and political motivations reinforce each other, creating fertile ground for intolerance and persecution in Indonesia.

Secondly, the FPI was attractive for PKS (including the incumbent candidate) to collaborate in mayoral elections; besides carrying out its mission of *amar makruf nahi munkar*, I discovered that the framing employed by the FPI to carve out a space for itself in politics and attempt to position itself as a broker – a sort of morality racketeer – by purposefully fanning social tensions and igniting moral panics is quite effective.

The FPI also appealed to PKS (including the incumbent candidate) to attract conservative votes, especially during the 2005 and 2010 mayoral elections. The FPI effectively positions itself as a political broker by capitalising on social tensions and creating moral panics. This strategy allows the FPI to carve out a niche in the political arena, presenting itself as a key player in enforcing moral and social norms. By leveraging these tactics, the FPI enhances its influence and becomes a valuable ally for PKS in attracting conservative votes and shaping the political landscape.

This perspective aligns with social movement theory, which suggests that framing and political opportunity are key to understanding the impact of social movements. Scholars like Benford and Snow (2000), Jenkins (1995), and Tarrow (1994) have highlighted that effective framing can greatly influence both politics and policy. Employing Jung's (2020) theory of the framing process as a guide, Figure 5 illustrates how FPI Depok affects the political process by

collaborating with political parties to add their interests by creating frames and raising problem salience despite constrained access to decision-making.



Source: Adopted from Jung (2020)

Figure 5
The path of framing process by Front Pembela Islam

The first step the FPI takes to influence political processes is through framing, which involves creating and spreading meaning. According to Benford and Snow (2000), framing is crucial in shaping political actions and significance. The FPI has effectively framed its activities as 'Combating national moral degradation' as part of its *amar makruf nahi mungkar* mission (Encouraging good and forbidding evil). This framing has linked them to the broader Muslim community, which views changes brought by democratisation, economic liberalisation, and cultural globalisation as threats (Jung, 2020). Their compelling narrative has largely overshadowed moderate perspectives and appealed to those concerned about the impacts of political and economic changes. Consequently, conservative Islamic movements have been successful in promoting their agenda under the pretence of upholding morality. In orthodox Islamic circles, morality is utilised as a tool for mobilisation. This has heightened public awareness of their objectives and made it challenging for political parties, whether rooted in Pancasila or Islam, to oppose or criticise them.

The FPI's next tactic to win over certain political parties is to amplify the prominence of specific issues. I believe the FPI effectively turned Ahmadiyah into a major issue, as indicated by a notable FPI Depok member said:³⁰

Sebagai pemeluk agama Islam yang baik, jelas kita ini semua ingin menjalankan ajaran agama secara Kaffah (seutuhnya). Kesesatan Ahmadiyah tampak dari tiga hal yaitu mengakui pendiri Ahmadiyah

³⁰ Interview with UY prominent FPI Depok member, 12 February 2019.

*Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sebagai nabi setelah Nabi Muhammad; Ahmadiyah memiliki tempat suci selain Mekkah dan Madinah; dan Ahmadiyah mengakui Tadzkirah sebagai kitab suci selain Al-Qur'an. Apa kita mau kalau nanti anak dan cucu kita terpengaruhi hal-hal buruk yang jelas setat dan menyesatkan tersebut? Komitmen kami menentang Ahmadiyah berkembang di Depok ini demi menyeleamatkan kita semua dan generasi selanjutnya dari ajaran yang sesat ini [As good adherents of Islam, it is clear that we all want to carry out religious teachings in a *Kaffah* (complete) manner. Ahmadiyah's deviance can be seen from three things, namely acknowledging that the Ahmadiyah founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, is the prophet after Muhammad; Ahmadiyah has another holy site apart from Mecca and Medina; and Ahmadiyah believes the Tadzkirah is a sacred book next to the Al-Qur'an. Do we want our children and grandchildren to be affected by these bad things that are clearly heretical and misleading? Our commitment is against Ahmadiyah growing in Depok in order to save all of us and the next generation from this misguided teaching].*

Additionally, applying pressure on political parties is the subsequent step, particularly in the lead-up to the mayoral election. The increasing prominence of Ahmadiyah was emphasised more strongly, which is clearly a strategic issue for Islamic parties and Pancasila-based parties seeking to attract conservative voters (Jung, 2020). After a successful effort to sway political parties, especially PKS, the FPI and PKS formed a coalition with Nurmahmudi Ismail as the incumbent candidate. Ismail agreed to four demands,³¹ one of which was to expel Ahmadiyah's followers from Depok.

Phase 3: Election-related activities: Vote mobilisation

The FPI engaged in vote mobilisation to increase turnout in the mayoral election after securing support from PKS and the incumbent candidate, aligning with its mission of *amar makruf nahi munkar* concerning Ahmadiyah. By mobilising voters, the FPI can showcase its electoral strength and demonstrate the size of its base to potential partners and sponsors. This strategy, known as productive intolerance, also aids in recruiting supporters and forming alliances with

³¹ Interview with HB, 3 March 2019.

like-minded groups, as Menchik (2014) noted. For example, when Ahmadiyah communities occupy certain spaces, it allows political actors, such as hardliner groups, to display their support base and articulate their organisational goals (Soedirgo, 2020).

Due to their close ties with the incumbent candidate, the FPI participates in all election-related events, working to bolster support for the candidate. This connection is crucial for the incumbent to appear devout and engage with religious leaders. The FPI leverages religious identity to appeal to Muslim voters, maximising its networks and resources to help Nurmahmudi Ismail secure the mayoral election. As one of the organisation's Depok leaders stated:³²

Kedekatan kami tidak hanya sebatas organisasi, tapi kami secara personal juga dekat dan kami melihat bahwa Nurmahmudi Ismail dan PKS memiliki kesamaan cara pandang terkait dengan Ahmadiyah. Jadi kami mengoptimalkan sumber daya yang kami miliki untuk mendukung Nurmahmudi Ismail menjadi walikota [We are connected not just professionally but personally as well, and we can see that Nurmahmudi Ismail and PKS have the same viewpoint on Ahmadiyah. In order to promote Nurmahmudi Ismail for mayor, we maximise our resources].

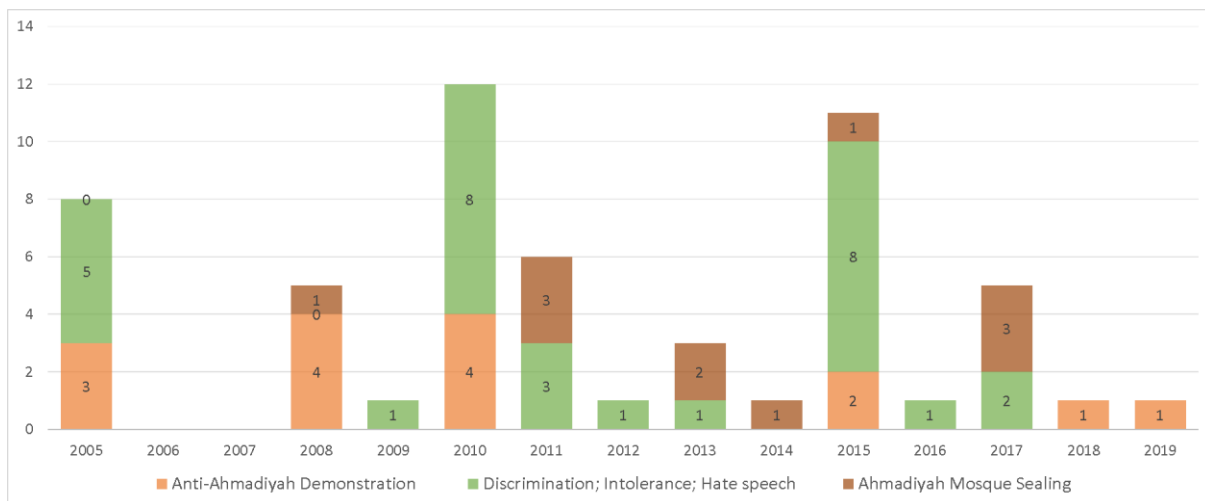
As a result of this vote mobilisation, the mayoral election yielded significant outcomes, with Nurmahmudi's vote share rising markedly from 43.9% in 2005 to 61.8% in 2010. According to Nastiti and Ratri (2018), Islamic hardliners possess three key advantages over political actors in mobilisation: organisational capacity, moral authority, and patronage networks. Consequently, the FPI-led mobilisation received positive responses from constituents. Islamist hardliners' organisational capacity allows them to infiltrate society through local networks easily. Additionally, they are granted moral legitimacy to present Islam as a political doctrine and way of life, making it easier to influence Islamic voters. These moral and social foundations provide access to political patronage networks. Islamist organisations gain access to state power through formal and informal institutions due to their connections with elites while retaining popular support (Nastiti and Ratri, 2018).

³² Interview with UE, 3 May 2019.

Phase 4: Persecution of Ahmadiyah followers and maintaining the political support of Islamist hardliners

Based on fieldwork and interview results, there were 56 instances of Ahmadiyah persecution in Depok between 2005 and 2019, including anti-Ahmadiyah protests, hate speech, discrimination/intolerance, and the closure of places of worship. Ahmadiyah followers faced persecution throughout these political years, as illustrated in Graph 2 below. The extremist Islamic group FPI, along with other large organisations such as HTI, FUI, and the Islamic Sharia Mudzakaroh Forum (Formasi), targeted the Ahmadiyah community. The Al Hidayah Mosque on Jl. Abdul Muchtar Sawangan in Depok, belonging to the Depok Ahmadiyah congregation, was a site of persecution.

Graph 2
Number of persecutions of Ahmadiyah followers in Depok 2005–2019



Source: Fieldwork data

The persecution of Ahmadiyah in Depok began during the political lead-up to the 2005 mayoral election on 29 September 2005. The FPI, along with other Islamic organisations like HTI and the Mudzakaroh Syariat Islam Forum (Formasi), held a demonstration in front of the Al Hidayah Mosque, which belongs to the Ahmadiyah congregation. Over 100 protesters demanded that the local government close the Ahmadiyah mosque and ban Ahmadiyah activities in Depok. The persecution continued on 19 December 2005, before the elected mayor's inauguration, when FPI staged another protest and voiced hate speech against the Ahmadiyah presence in Depok.

In 2008, there were five incidents of persecution against Ahmadiyah followers. One notable incident occurred on 8 June 2008, when FPI, supported by HTI and the Mudzakaroh Syariat Islam Forum (Formasi), led a demonstration witnessed by more than 150 people, demanding the regional government disband Ahmadiyah. On 23 August 2008, FPI and the Islamic Community Forum (FUI) led the first sealing of the Al Hidayah Mosque to restrict Ahmadiyah activities, including daily prayers and social gatherings.

Entering the political year of the 2010 mayoral election, FPI held another demonstration on 28 July 2010, demanding the dissolution of Ahmadiyah and causing property damage to the Al Hidayah Mosque to intimidate the Ahmadiyah congregation. FPI Depok Chairperson Habib Idrus Al Gadri declared in his speech that FPI would support a candidate who would disband Ahmadiyah and suggested abstaining from voting if no candidates supported this cause (Wahid Institute, 2010). On 8 August 2010, Habib Idrus Al-Qodri reiterated that Ahmadiyah should be treated as a harmful entity, urging the government to issue a regional regulation banning the group (Wahid Institute, 2010).

A month after Nur Mahmudi Ismail began his second term, he issued Local Regulation Number 09/2011 on 9 March 2011, banning Ahmadiyah activities. This action illustrates how politicians, driven by political necessity, may permit or even engage in the persecution of religious minorities to maintain support from influential groups (Soedirgo, 2018). This regulation perpetuates intolerance in Depok, showing the city's government succumbing to Islamist hardliners' demands to limit Ahmadiyah activities. In an interview, Nur Mahmudi Ismail stated that 'Ahmadiyah's doctrine is heretical, and the local government should take action to minimise the activity of Ahmadiyah by issuing the local regulation. We are grateful to the religious authorities and Islamist organisations who improve the worship environment in our neighbourhood.'³³

Moreover, the mayoral regulation is more extensive and contradicts the central government's Joint Ministerial Decree 3/2008 on Ahmadiyah, issued on 9 June 2008. The mayor's regulation explicitly prohibits adherents, members, and administrators of the Ahmadiyah from activities such as spreading Ahmadiyah teachings, displaying their nameplate, and using Ahmadiyah

³³ Interview with NMI, 3 May 2019.

attributes, whereas the SKB only warns against disseminating beliefs in a new prophet after Muhammad and advises against vigilante actions against Ahmadiyah followers (Crouch, 2012).

The study also found that the city government continued to need the political support of hardliner Islamists, using this mayoral regulation to seal the Al Hidayah Depok Mosque ten times from 2011 to 2022.³⁴ These sealings aimed to reduce Ahmadiyah activities and maintain social order, with the Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) carrying out the sealings, often accompanied by Islamist groups' hate speech and threats. As a result, Ahmadiyah followers had to worship outside the mosque, with their activities monitored by local police.

Furthermore, most brokers in the patronage network only establish connections with politicians during election campaigns. However, politicians maintain long-lasting relationships with brokers in Depok, institutionalising the patronage network. This network offers brokers structured access to state resources, incentivising their loyalty to a candidate (Barenschot and Aspinall, 2020). For instance, the elected mayors of Depok, Nurmahmudi Ismail and Muhammad Idris, appointed Al-Habib Muhsin Ahmad Al-Arthas, leader of FPI Depok, as Chairperson of FKUB (Religious Harmony Forum) and special envoy to the mayor. This appointment facilitated FPI's access to state resources, including government projects, and signified an agreement to manage religious life conservatively.

4.4.2 Religious authority/local religious leaders

Having examined how political competition influences the persecution of the Ahmadiyah congregation within a patronage network that emphasises hardline Islam, I will now delve into how conservative religious authority impacts persecution in the context of local politics, particularly during the mayoral election in Depok.

Regarding religious authority, the diversity and widespread distribution of religious leaders in Indonesian Islam are evident. These leaders include *guru pesantren*, and heads of Muhammadiyah and NU,³⁵ as well as *kiai*, *ulama*, *imam*, *ustadz*, *mubaligh*, *da'i*, *penyuluh*,

³⁴ The mayoral regulation was used as the basis for sealing the Al Hidayah Depok Mosque ten times from 2011 to 2022, namely on: 19 March 2011, 15 April 2011, 20 October 2011, 7 May 2013, 13 December 2013, 2 October 2014, 7 January 2015, 24 February 2017, 3 June 2017, and 22 October 2021.

³⁵ The largest Muslim civic groups in the world are Muhammadiyah and NU. Approximately 30 million people follow Muhammadiyah now. Although NU claims to have 30 million members, it is estimated that it has about 100 million followers (Bush, 2014). Islamist modernism is represented by Muhammadiyah and traditionalism by NU. Islamic modernism responds to and rejects traditionalism. Muhammadiyah is, in general, a very large membership

tengku, and *buya*. Geographical factors contribute to some differences, although none are formally defined. The *kiai*, Java's primary religious leaders, operate independently of other religious groups. Even though they claim membership in NU, they essentially function without centralised control despite sharing similar spiritual practices. Their power often stems from their leadership of *pesantren*, religious institutions typically family-run, financially self-sufficient, and passed down through generations. This authority of *kiai* contrasts with that in Sunni Middle Eastern nations, where prominent *ulama* are 'paid officials administering mosques in the towns and teaching at state-sponsored religious schools' (Hirikoshi, 1984). This independence often leads to more intense competition. Additionally, each *kiai* attracts devoted followers through their charisma (Turmudi, 2003), creating an authority structure based on personal traits that are temporary and ultimately unstable (Hirikoshi, 1984).

In Depok, it is essential to distinguish between the various types of religious leaders to clarify how religious authority influences persecution within the context of local politics during the mayoral election. Kaptein (2004) defines religious leaders as 'notions, texts, specific people, groups of people, or institutions.' The relationships between anti-Ahmadiyah *ulama* and politicians vary in closeness (Jung, 2020). However, in this case, religious authorities refer specifically to individual *kiai*.

Empirical findings indicate that the incumbent politician needs the support of conservative *kiai* to win the mayoral election due to the intense competition among religious leaders and the exclusion of moderate religious leaders. Therefore, it is evident that religious authority is exercised by groups or individuals who exert social control over power. Al-Astewani (2021), Barmania and Reiss (2021), and Pabbajah et al. (2020) argue that religious authority involves a tendency to demand things from individuals or groups with cultural and structural power in religious institutions. Religious leaders, community leaders, and holders of religious authority are often included in the government's decision-making process (Burhani, 2016). This involvement signifies that political parties or the government have made accommodations to engage with religious authority to maintain political stability.

of a modern civic organisation. NU is a contemporary civic organisation on top of a decentralised network of independent *kiai*, or *ulama* who direct *pesantren* (Islamic seminaries). Regarding policy, NU-affiliated *kiai* may follow the organisation's religious guidance but may not always do so (Brown, 2019).

4.4.2.1 What is religious authority?

Religious authorities or leaders, defined by Kaptein (2004) as 'notions, texts, specific people, groups of people, or institutions', are seen as possessing strong spiritual qualities and playing crucial roles in society's religious system (Aula, 2020). Muslims often perceive these leaders as charismatic figures in high positions (Pabbajah et al., 2020), influencing public response to government policies (Zulkarnain and Samsuri, 2018). Spiritual matters are a constant component of their work, but religious leaders also engage in various roles concerning socio-religious, socio-economic, and socio-political issues (Jones, 2022; Nisa and Saenong, 2022; Vekemans, 2021). The interpretation of holy books, a source of spiritual teachings, lies with these religious figures, who are seen as centres of authority stemming from religious beliefs (Aula, 2020). This central position complicates their relationship with communities due to the intertwining of religious emotions.

Moreover, religious authorities are viewed as vital for reinforcing the cohesion and integrity of Muslims, thereby holding significant societal control (Syamsurrijal et.al, 2022). Religious leaders often use *da'wah* (preaching) tools for political and social legitimacy to enhance their influence and dominance. This power hegemony within society elevates religious leaders to central figures who can issue religious policies that extend into social, economic, and political realms, implemented through official statements (Yuki and Hiroko, 2014). Consequently, policies addressing religious, social, and political issues contribute to social construction within society.

Religious authority in establishing human moral order involves correlational and hierarchical interactions (Agbaria, 2019). In Indonesia, religion is highly regarded as a source of moral guidance for social, political, and economic matters. Experts suggest that spiritual power is dynamic and adaptable, not necessarily textual, and can be contextualised based on societal events and circumstances (Abdullah, 2020). Religion holds a significant place in Indonesian culture and its social structure. The ability of religious leaders to issue various appeals and prohibitions in the form of policies on numerous societal issues signifies their authority (Pabbajah et al., 2020).

The public perceives religious leaders as sources of spiritual guidance, often more so than the government, due to their connection to religious institutions and organisations (Pabbajah et al., 2020). With advancements in information technology, the influence of these institutions,

organisations, and leaders has grown. Power brokers frequently leverage the stature of religious institutions, organisations, and leaders to garner support.

4.3.2.2 Conservative local religious leaders

In the context of local politics, this section will demonstrate how conservative religious leaders influenced the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers during the mayoral election. This research found that conservative local religious leaders who strongly opposed the presence of Ahmadiyah in Depok attracted the incumbent candidate's attention to secure their support, particularly those leading *pesantren* (large-scale Islamic boarding schools), which serve as the district's primary hub of religious activity and social services. This finding aligns with Sukmajati's (2011) and Kingsley's (2014) research, indicating that *pesantren* are the centres of the most prominent religious networks. Consequently, many mayoral candidates' reliance on these conservative religious networks to win elections underscores these leaders' significant role in local politics.

Furthermore, the mayoral candidate's dependence on conservative religious leaders aligns with Soedirgo's (2020) study, which highlights that direct elections of local district heads have increased the significance of local religious networks and brokers, aiding political candidates in gaining power and enhancing local accountability. Additionally, Buehler's (2009) study found that one of the decisive factors in municipal election outcomes is personal networks at the sub-district level, particularly those involving religious leaders. In contrast, during Suharto's New Order government, local religious leaders played a much smaller political role, with patronage used to foster allegiance and suppress dissent (Bertrand, 2004).

Depok hosts two prominent *pesantren* and two highly influential *kiai* with differing views on Ahmadiyah: KH Ahmad Damanhuri and KH Zainuddin Maksum Ali. KH Damanhuri, who has been at the forefront of opposing Ahmadiyah's presence in Depok, maintains a more traditional and conservative position. In contrast, KH Zainuddin has adopted a more progressive stance, welcoming Ahmadiyah adherents as part of the local community.

KH Damanhuri has led the Al-Karimiah Islamic boarding school since 1990, which integrates academic education with Qur'anic studies. At the 2022 Santri Day celebration, he was honoured by the Santri Alumni Network as the Father of Santri in Depok. Renowned for his impassioned

and vigorous speaking style, KH Damanhudi is frequently dubbed the 'Lion of the Podium' due to his ability to attract and energise his supporters, a theme he often highlights in his speeches:³⁶

Kami menolak kehadiran Ahmadiyah di Depok, karena mereka telah meyakini Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sebagai nabi setelah nabi Muhammad dan penyimpangan lainnya. Ahmadiyah telah dinyatakan sesat namun mereka masih menjalankan keyakinannya di sini. Jangan salahkan kami jika kami mengambil tindakan keras. Nilai-nilai Islam kita perjuangkan, sampai mati kita harus siap memperjuangkannya [We reject the presence of Ahmadiyah in Depok, because they already believe in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a prophet after prophet Muhammad and have been declared heretical but they still carry out their beliefs here. Don't blame us if we take tough measures. We fight for Islamic values, we must be ready to fight for them until we die].

By contrast, KH Zainudin has been more accepting of Ahmadiyah's presence in Depok. KH Zainudin leads the Al-Hamidiyah Islamic boarding school established in 1988. This Islamic boarding school is known for its moderate teaching approach and has academic units from early childhood to higher education. One of the advantages of this *pesantren* is that it has a dual curriculum between the national curriculum and the curriculum from Cambridge University. In the interview session, he conveyed:³⁷

Bagi saya keberadaan Ahmadiyah di Depok tidak bermasalah. Jamaah Ahmadiyah hanya perlu dirangkul, dibimbing dan diarahkan sesuai dengan tugas saya sebagai kiai. Bila mereka tetap pada keyakinannya itu adalah masalah lain. Intinya kita tidak boleh memusuhi mereka. Kalau dalam dakwah kita rangkul mereka dan mereka dipersilahkan beribadah dengan tenang [For me, the presence of Ahmadiyah in Depok is not a problem. The Ahmadiyah congregation only needs to be embraced, guided, and directed according to my job as a kiai. If they stick to their beliefs, it does not matter. The point is that we should not be hostile to

³⁶ 'Indonesian hard-liner again turn up heat on Ahmadis', Jakarta Post, 25 February 2017 <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/02/25/indonesian-hard-liners-again-turn-up-heat-on-ahmadis.html>; Accessed 18 June 2023.

³⁷ Interview with KH Zainuddin at his *Pesantren*, 5 April 2019.

them. In da'wah we embrace them, and they are welcome to worship in peace].

These two religious figures hold significant traditional authority, or what Jackson (1980) describes as the role of a *kiai*, a *pesantren* leader, making them appeal to candidates and political parties in the mayoral race to get their support. Due to their authority, *kiais* serve as key intermediaries between voters and politicians (Soedirgo, 2020). However, it is essential to recognise that not all *kiais* hold equal electoral influence, as their importance can vary based on their personal qualities, expertise, preaching skills, and the extent of their direct and indirect support. According to Mudzakkir (2017), *kiais* have various methods to influence voter decisions and secure votes, including through former students who establish their own smaller *pesantren*. These students continue to be influenced by the *kiai* and act as intermediaries within their local communities.

Furthermore, from an electoral perspective, KH Damanhuri is more appealing to political parties and incumbents seeking support compared to KH Zainuddin. KH Damanhuri leads the Al-Karimiah Islamic boarding school, which has been operational since 1990 and boasts thousands of devoted students. Some of these students have established their own Islamic boarding schools and *majelis taklim* in Depok. KH Damanhuri is also actively involved in *da'wah* across the Depok area and beyond, showcasing exceptional preaching skills. His extensive networking abilities, bolstered by his service on the Depok DPRD from 1999 to 2004, further enhance his appeal. KH Zainuddin also recognises KH Damanhuri's strong attractiveness and proximity to power due to his impressive qualifications and capabilities.³⁸

Securing KH Damanhuri's endorsement has been crucial for winning the mayoral election, as PKS and Nurmahmudi Ismail did in the 2005 and 2010 races. PKS and Nurmahmudi Ismail recognised that imposing restrictions on Ahmadiyah's religious activities, as promoted by KH Damanhuri, would not harm their electoral chances. This was due to the weak political support from local Muslim civic organisations and the silence of KH Zainuddin and other prominent *kiai* who support Ahmadiyah's citizenship rights.

Although KH Damanhuri did not publicly endorse Nurmahmudi Ismail, their close relationship was evident throughout the campaign and Nurmahmudi's tenure as mayor. KH Damanhuri

³⁸ Interview with KH Zainuddin, 5 April 2019.

played a significant role by organising *tabligh* (gatherings) against Ahmadiyah and urging the Depok government to seal the Ahmadiyah mosque, citing it as a hub for deviant sects.³⁹ After being re-elected as mayor on 26 January 2011, Nurmahmudi Ismail maintained his close relationship with KH Damanhuri. From February to August 2011, KH Damanhuri led multiple demonstrations calling for the banning and disbandment of Ahmadiyah activities at the Al-Hidayah Mosque in Depok. KH Abdullah Syafii also supported these demonstrations, which attracted hundreds of sympathisers. Instead of opposing or dispersing the demonstrations, Nurmahmudi Ismail instructed the local government police (Satpol PP) to secure the area around the Ahmadiyah mosque, catering to KH Damanhuri's demands. Consequently, under pressure from religious leaders and hardliners, Nurmahmudi Ismail issued Depok Mayor Regulation No. 9 of 2011, prohibiting Ahmadiyah activities in Depok City.

Despite Ahmadiyah's limited political backing in Depok, it does have allies. The young wing of the prominent Islamic organisation Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), GP Ansor, has supported Ahmadiyah followers in Depok. The chairman of GP Ansor has emphasised that preserving religious truth should not involve undermining other beliefs. From an organisational perspective, GP Ansor has consistently condemned the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, recognising their rights as Indonesian citizens.⁴⁰ However, GP Ansor's influence in Depok is limited, and their ability to advocate for minority rights is less effective due to their inability to mobilise broad support.

This case illustrates that in the competitive environment among religious leaders, the incumbent candidate requires the backing of hardline *kiai* to succeed in the mayoral race. The limited political support from other civic organisations and the silence of moderate religious leaders signalled that imposing restrictions on Ahmadiyah activities, driven by conservative leaders, would not result in a significant loss of votes for the political party and incumbent candidate.

4.4.3 Muslim civic organisation ties

Having explored how political competition influences the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers within a patronage network involving hardline Islamists and conservative religious leaders, I will

³⁹ 'Warga Depok segel masjid Ahmadiyah, *Republika*, 20 March 2011, <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/171386/breaking-news/nusantara/11/03/20/170944-warga-depok-segel-masjid-ahmadiyah>, accessed 13 June 2023.

⁴⁰ 'GP Ansor kutuk penyerbuan terhadap Ahmadiyah, *Kompas*, 6 February 2011, <https://travel.kompas.com/read/2011/02/06/20031494/gp.ansor.kutuk.penyerbuan.terhadap.ahmadiyah>, accessed 13 June 2023.

now examine how ties within local Muslim civic organisations impact persecution in the context of local politics, particularly during the mayoral election in Depok.

Many scholars have argued that civic organisations play a crucial role in electoral democracy and religious pluralism by acting as institutional checks on governmental power and fostering social cohesion among the population (Hefner, 2000; Menchik, 2016). To achieve this, Brown (2019) describes civic organisations as functionally non-state entities that can formulate policies, shape political discourse, and influence political actors in times of conflict while also serving as ideological tools to reinforce democratic and pluralist values. Furthermore, Kopecky and Muddle (2003) contend that civic organisations perform several key functions, including acting as intermediaries between the state and individuals, advocating for public policies outside of state institutions, maintaining independence from the state, and potentially serving as a check on state power.

Regarding the association between Muslim civic organisations and elections, Fealy and Bush (2014) argue that Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) remains a significant political force, especially at the municipal level, making politically active NU leaders and members a valuable source of new supporters for political parties. Indonesia's two major Muslim civic organisations are NU and Muhammadiyah. NU, representing Islamist traditionalism, claims 30 million members but is estimated to have over 100 million followers. In contrast, Muhammadiyah, which embodies Islamist modernism, has nearly 30 million followers (Bush and Muhawar, 2014). NU is a contemporary civic organisation with a decentralised network of independent *kiai*, or *ulama*, who run *pesantren* (Islamic seminaries). Muhammadiyah, on the other hand, is a modern organisation focused on Islamic education and healthcare (Brown, 2019).

According to Brown's (2019) classification, NU and Muhammadiyah undoubtedly qualify as civic organisations in a functional sense, though it is less clear if they fit the ideological category. While both organisations oppose the idea of an Islamic state, they support Indonesia as a multi-religious state that grants equal rights to people of all faiths (Brown, 2019). However, members of NU and Muhammadiyah may compromise their commitment to human rights, equal protection for religious minorities, and civil pluralism when they believe Islam is under threat from heresy, blasphemy, or encroachment by other religions (Menchik, 2016; 2019). Despite this, Muhammadiyah and NU continue to play a crucial role in defending democratic values,

particularly when parliamentary legislation endangers Indonesia's pluralist system, as they step in to uphold the state's formal commitment to religious diversity (Brown, 2019).

This research has found that political parties and incumbent candidates received signals indicating they would not lose significant electoral support if they imposed restrictions on the religious activities of Ahmadiyah followers. This outcome stems from the weakened influence of Muslim civic organisations, particularly Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Depok, which failed to act as a moderating force advocating for religious pluralism. The diminished role of NU Depok is linked to two main internal and external factors. Internally, some local NU *kiais* and activists were directly involved in incidents or attacks against Ahmadiyah followers. Externally, the influence of the Islamic political party, particularly PKS, was significantly strong during the mayoral election. Furthermore, this situation is worsened by the fact that local NU *kiai* prioritise managing their *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and are less attuned to the broader issues impacting the Muslim community.

4.4.3.1 Internal factor: Some NU kiais and activists are involved in various attacks or persecution of Ahmadiyah followers

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) leadership has consistently advocated for a tolerant and inclusive interpretation of Islam, emphasising peaceful coexistence with other religious groups, including the Ahmadiyah. Prominent NU figures like Abdurahman Wahid, Said Aqil Siradj,⁴¹ and KH Mustafa Bisri⁴² have rejected violence and promoted dialogue, insisting that Ahmadiyah followers be protected and treated as equal citizens. This approach, rooted in the principles of *tawassuth* (impartiality), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *tawasun* (balance), highlights NU's commitment to religious pluralism and moderation in Indonesia.

The local NU Depok also advocates for a more inclusive religious environment, recognising the predominantly conservative nature of the population. They emphasise the importance of protecting the rights of Ahmadiyah followers as fellow citizens who are free to practice their religion, according to the NU Depok chairman:⁴³

⁴¹ 'KH Said Aqil Siraj: Jangan ragu dengan PBNU', Wahid Institute, 3 June 2011 http://www.wahidinstitute.org/v1/News/Detail/?id=295/hl=id/KH_Said_Aqil_Siradj_Jangan_Ragu_Dengan_PBNU, accessed 19 June 2023.

⁴² 'Gus Mus: Jangan Gunakan Kekerasan pada Ahmadiyah', *NU Online*, <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/12105/gus-mus-jangan-gunakan-kekerasan-pada-ahmadiyah>, accessed 20 June 2023

⁴³ Interview with NU Depok Chairman, 5 April 2019.

Pengurus NU Depok mendorong agar suasana keagamaan lebih kondusif ditengah karakter masyarakat yang cukup konservatif. Secara prinsip kami tidak ada masalah dengan kehadiran Jamaah Ahmadiyah di Depok, mereka perlu dirangkul dan dilindungi haknya sebagai sesama warga negara yang memiliki hak dalam beribadah dan memeluk agamanya [NU Depok officials are pushing for a more conducive religious atmosphere amid the relatively conservative character of society. In principle, we don't have a problem with the presence of the Ahmadiyah congregation in Depok, they need to be embraced and their rights protected as fellow citizens who have the right to worship and embrace their religion].

The differing views of some NU officials on Ahmadiyah, including their involvement in persecuting Ahmadiyah followers, may be influenced by local political affiliations. These individuals were acting on their behalf and their *santri* (students). As KH Zainuddin⁴⁴ said:⁴⁵

Tindakan persekusi yang dilakukan oleh pengurus NU Depok, saya pikir itu hal tersebut mengatasnamakan pribadi bersama para santrinya, tidak mengatasnamakan NU. Mungkin ada pengaruh kedekatan politik lokal yang mendasarinya [I think the act of persecution carried out by NU Depok officials was in the name of themselves and the students, not in the name of NU. There may be an underlying influence of local political affinity].

KH Damanhuri is an example of an NU cleric with a divergent view on Ahmadiyah, who actively led the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Depok. From 2010 to 2017, he spearheaded demonstrations and collaborated with other Islamist hardliners like the FPI in these actions. Within the NU, KH Damanhuri has held the position of Mustasyar (Advisor) for NU Depok since 2010, giving him the authority to convene internal meetings as needed and to provide managerial guidance to groups or individuals, whether requested or not. In the interview, KH Damanhuri said⁴⁶:

⁴⁴ KH Zainudin is a vice *rais aam* (Supervisor of NU Depok).

⁴⁵ Interview with KH Zainudin, a vice *rais aam* (Supervisor of NU Depok), 5 April 2019.

⁴⁶ Interview with KH Damanhuri, 10 April 2019

Saya mengajak kepada para santri dan umat islam lainnya untuk lebih hati-hati dengan ajaran agama yang sesat. Kita harus membedakan mana toleransi dan mana penistaan agama. Saya berpendapat Ahmadiyah sudah masuk ke dalam penistaan agama dan berbahaya sekali bila ajarannya meluas dan membahayakan anak cucu kita. Saya ingin Ahmadiyah tidak berkembang di Depok [I urge Muslims and students to exercise greater caution when interacting with false religious doctrines. We must make a distinction between religious blasphemy and tolerance. I think Ahmadiyah has engaged in religious blasphemy, and it would be extremely dangerous if its doctrines were to spread and put our children and grandkids in peril. I don't want Ahmadiyah to grow in Depok].

Due to the differing views and actions of NU Depok's prominent *ulama* on Ahmadiyah, NU no longer serves as a leading example of a civic organisation promoting plurality. As a result, NU has struggled to advocate for more moderate policies in the city, weakening its negotiating power with incumbent candidates in a conservative environment. One key factor behind this issue is that NU has delegated doctrinal authority to local *ulama* who run *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), allowing them to issue and interpret independently *fatwas* that their students must follow. This aligns with Arifyanto's (2017) study, which found that these inconsistencies stem from NU's decentralised organisational structure, where local clerics hold ultimate theological authority and shape the beliefs of their followers, including Ahmadiyah.

Based on these circumstances, social movement theory explains how the political opportunity structure, framing, and resource mobilisation influence internal decision-making and the efficacy of policy strategy in various social organisation networks including in Nahdlatul Ulama (Arifiyanto, 2017). Besides that, this theory explains how a social network organisation can comprise multiple groups, orientations, and interests that may clash or conflict with one another (Melucci, 1989). In addition, a social movement is no longer considered to be a group of activists who share a common set of complaints about a social issue and a standard set of solutions to solve them, but rather a complex organisation made up of individual activists who may have various goals and priorities and frequently disagree with one another regarding the best way to achieve them while still belonging to a particular movement (Arifiyanto, 2017).

According to this idea, NU's organisational structure was decentralised to the *kiai* who preside over the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), which explains why some NU clerics have conflicting views, especially those regarding Ahmadiyah. The *Syuriah* (advisory board) and *Tanfidziyah* (leadership board) of NU, distributed from the centre to the regional level, are given the authority to carry out and make decisions in the organisation. However, the almost 18,000 NU *pesantren* in Indonesia are not entirely financed by NU and are not under its operational supervision. As a result, the *kiais* who assert to be connected to NU are required to support and run their *pesantrens* on their own (Arifiyanto, 2017). As a result, it is only natural for the *santri* and the local community to consult the *kiai* who have control over their *pesantren* for his guidance on matters of religion or other things, such as choosing candidates for the mayoral election. The unique aspect of NU is that occasionally every policy announced by the prominent *ulama* at *Tanfidziyah* conflicts with the mindset of the *kiai* at the grassroots level (Arifiyanto, 2017).

Because of the decentralised institutional system of NU, fatwas or opinions issued by the NU Central Board are not always followed by NU *kiai* at lower levels. This is different from Muhammadiyah, which is more hierarchical. In addition, there are no institutional safeguards in place by the NU leadership board to punish these clerics and compel them to abide by its decisions (Arifiyanto, 2017).

4.4.3.2 External factor: The strong dominance of the Islamic political party, particularly PKS, during the mayoral election

After discussing the internal challenges NU Depok faces, including the involvement of some local NU clerics and activists in incidents against Ahmadiyah, Alamsyah's (2021) study reveals that NU in Depok is fragmented and not well-connected with the local population. As a result, the PKS, having won the mayoral election four times consecutively, does not prioritise securing the support of NU and Muhammadiyah to boost its overall vote, as confirmed by a PKS Depok official:⁴⁷

Alhamdulillah, sejak pemilihan walikota tahun 2005 hingga sekarang empat kali calon walikota yang diusung PKS selalu mendapatkan dukungan luas dari masyarakat dan terpilih secara meyakinkan menjadi

⁴⁷ Interview with PKS Depok representatives 3 July 2020.

Walikota Depok. Hal ini menandakan bahwa kinerja partai dan cara kami meyakinkan masyarakat Depok sudah pada jalur yang benar. Kami yakin PKS Depok selalu mendapat dukungan luas masyarakat dari berbagai latar belakang [Praise to God that from the 2005 mayoral election till this year, the PKS-supported candidate for mayor of Depok has won four straight elections with strong community support. This shows that the party's efforts and our strategy for persuading the residents of Depok were successful. We believe that PKS Depok will always have widespread support from residents of all backgrounds].

The movement of PKS originated from the Tarbiyah movement, which the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood influenced. By the 1990s, Tarbiyah, which in Arabic means education, had progressively spread across the country and been formalised as a Campus Dakwah Organisation (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus) on each campus (Miichi, 2023). As part of the student movements that demanded the overthrow of Suharto's New Order, they established a national student organisation known as the Indonesian Muslim Students Action Union (KAMMI). In the two months following Suharto's overthrow, Partai Keadilan (PK) was created as the original form of PKS (Damanik, 2002).

The dispersal of Campus Dakwah Institutions over numerous Depok public and private campuses, combined with the city's conservative demographic, makes PKS supporters' loyalty remarkable. Due to these circumstances, PKS does not prioritise acquiring the support of the NU to increase its total vote. Additionally, the NU Depok chairman⁴⁸ expressed the following:

PKS itu berideologi salafisme yang jelas berbeda dengan kami NU yang mengusung ahlul sunnah wal jamaah. PKS mungkin memiliki basis masa sendiri di Lembaga Dakwah Kampus yang tersebar di belasan perguruan tinggi di Depok. Upaya memperoleh dukungan suara PKS sudah memiliki jalannya sendiri [PKS adheres to a salafi doctrine that is obviously distinct from ours at NU, which supports the ahlul sunnah wal jamaah. PKS might have its own mass base on the Campus Da'wah Institutions

⁴⁸ Interview with the Chairman of NU Depok, 4 March 2019.

dispersed over numerous campuses in Depok. PKS has their own pathway to gain people's votes].

The statement made by the Chairman of NU Depok aligns with the views of scholars (Hefner, 2000; Aspinall and Mietzner, 2019; Arifianto, 2020) that the ideological differences between the Islamists and the NU leadership – the former being Salafist-influenced groups, and the latter being a traditionalist Muslim organisation – are what account for the political rivalry between them. Furthermore, Miichi (2023) adds to PKS, as the Islamist views the pure period of the first generation of Muslims (the Salaf), during which the Prophet Muhammad and his companions lived. As a result, Islamists reject or criticise *madzhab*, the system of legal interpretation that developed later, and the legitimacy of *ulama* for interpreting the Qur'an and Hadith (the Prophet's sayings and acts), and instead seek direct reference to these sources. Given this ideological bent, Islamists in Indonesia are frequently perceived as being hostile against those who follow regionally specific religious practices and decrying them as unIslamic inventions (*bidah*), while the NU respects the authority of jurisprudential schools (*madzhab*) and religious scholars (*ulama*) (Miichi, 2023).

The post-Islamist moderate PKS has been regarded as a model. Instead of advocating for democratic reforms like anti-corruption initiatives and efforts to develop good administration, the party has abandoned its policy of openly embracing the creation of an Islamic state or implementing *Shari'a* law (Miichi, 2020). Since its inception, PKS has been accommodating to the nation-state of Indonesia. To promote its political goals, the party refrained from using the word *caliphate* to describe its ideal state; instead, the party advocated the concept of the *Masyarakat Madani* or Islamic civil society. With this approach, the party highlighted Islamisation and the advancement of human rights as its political objectives, which need to be attained through the democratic process (Miichi, 2020). Before the 2009 election, PKS's democratic moderation was more apparent as it frequently formed alliances with secularists, non-Islamic parties, and many non-Muslim politicians in the polls for the presidents of regional administrations. The most recent election was in 2019, and this tendency has persisted since then. PKS increased its electoral success by attempting to reduce exclusivist perceptions and build practical coalitions (Miichi, 2020).

PKS has established itself within a democratic framework for more than 20 years. Among the post-Islamist characteristics of the party are the abandonment of the Islamic state, emphasis on

human rights, and support for religious plurality. However, in terms of Ahmadiyah followers in Depok, PKS's stance is quite repressive and conservative, as conveyed by PKS Depok officials:

Harus dibedakan mana yang toleransi beragama dan penistaan agama. Bagi kami jelas bahwa Ahmadiyah itu adalah penistaan agama dengan meyakini adanya nabi setelah Muhammad dan hal lainnya yang bertentangan dengan ajaran Islam yang sesuai dengan tuntunan Al-Qur'an dan Al-Hadist [It must be distinguished between religious tolerance and religious blasphemy. For us it is clear that Ahmadiyah is blasphemy by believing in the existence of a prophet after Muhammad and other things that are contrary to Islamic teachings in accordance with the guidance of the Al-Qur'an and Al-Hadith].

While the PKS generally supports post-Islamist religious plurality, the PKS in Depok maintains a conservative Salafist approach, particularly towards the Ahmadiyah community. This conservative stance is also reflected in the actions of local politicians who, after winning mayoral positions, adopted the same rigid attitude. For example, Nurmahmudi Ismail, a mayor elected under the PKS banner, held a highly conservative view on Ahmadiyah. During his tenure, he issued a mayoral regulation that resulted in the Ahmadiyah mosque being forcibly closed on seven different occasions. This policy illustrates how local governance in Depok, influenced by PKS's conservative ideology, has directly impacted religious minority groups.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter utilises local politics as a conceptual framework to explore and understand the factors behind the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers by addressing the question: How does local politics during mayoral elections trigger religious persecution against Ahmadiyah followers in Depok City? It has accomplished this by analysing two mayoral election cycles from 2005 and 2010 and Nurmahmudi Ismail's administration from 2005 to 2015. It focuses on 45 instances of persecution against the Ahmadiyah community between 2005 and 2023, 29 of which occurred under Ismail's leadership. The chapter offers a detailed and critical analysis through three mediating factors – political competition during mayoral elections, the influence of conservative

local religious authorities, and connections with traditional Muslim civic associations – to clarify the link between local politics and religious persecution in Depok City.

This study reveals that the intense political competition in Depok during the crucial election cycles of 2005 and 2010 had a significant impact on the treatment of Ahmadiyah adherents. This finding aligns with Brathwaite and Park's theory that increasing political competition correlates with a rise in religious persecution and that heightened political competition and voter turnout intensify this violence. Specifically, due to the fierce political rivalry, incumbents sought to enhance their Islamic credentials for local elections by aligning with Islamic hardliners for political support. In Depok's socially conservative environment, candidates aimed to bolster their Islamist image, in part by opposing Ahmadiyah as a heretical sect and engaging with vigilante groups (Islamist hardliners) as brokers within a patronage network to secure votes during mayoral elections.

Political actors collaborated with local violent vigilante groups, using them as key intermediaries to persecute Ahmadiyah followers and mobilise votes. The partnership between PKS as a supporting party of Nurmahmudi Ismail and FPI stemmed from their shared mission of promoting *amar makruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) and the FPI's ability to attract conservative voters, particularly in the 2010 mayoral election. These vigilante organisations actively participated in election-related activities, helping to mobilise voters and secure support from the conservative electorate. Ultimately, the incumbent won the mayoral position and continued to receive political backing from these Islamist hardliners.

Secondly, this study found that the incumbent candidate needed the support of conservative *kiai* as a key mediator to win the mayoral race, due to intense competition among religious leaders and the marginalisation of moderate voices. The presence of both Islamist hardliners and conservative religious leaders has fuelled the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers as incumbent politicians seek their political backup. This is especially true for those conservative leaders who run large-scale Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*).

Lastly, in terms of Muslim civic associations as the last mediator, this research has found that the political party and incumbent candidate received a signal that they wouldn't lose too many votes if they imposed restrictions on the religious activities of Ahmadiyah followers due to the weak function of the Muslim civic organisation, particularly Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Depok. Due to two circumstances, NU Depok could not carry out its duties: the PKS's resounding victory in

political contests, particularly the mayoral election, and some NU activists and clerics being involved in several attacks against Ahmadiyah. The latter issue occurs because the local NU *kiai* manage their *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and issue their theological interpretations and *fatwas* (rulings) that their students and followers follow ultimate theological authority.

CHAPTER 5

LOCAL POLITICS DURING THE MAYORAL ELECTION AND RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN BOGOR CITY

5.1 Introduction

After reviewing the empirical evidence on religious persecution in Depok, which falls into the first category that explicitly focused on the presence of local legislation targeting Ahmadiyah and the subsequent persecution of its members, the discussion then shifts to Bogor. Bogor falls into the second category as it also has local regulations against Ahmadiyah; however, it is noteworthy that there have been no reported instances of further persecution against Ahmadiyah followers after implementing these regulations in Bogor.

Consequently, the present chapter analyses the empirical data to investigate the primary research inquiry within the context of this thesis: What were the underlying factors leading to the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers before the implementation of local regulations, and what was the subsequent impact of these regulations or other local dynamics in preventing further persecution of Ahmadiyah followers? This chapter examines the underlying factors that have contributed to the emergence of demand for anti-Ahmadiyah measures. It will delve into the roots of this pressure and explore the motivations of key individuals involved.

Additionally, this chapter will analyse the local dynamics that have prevented the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers by using three mediator components – political competition during mayoral elections, progressive local religious authorities, and affiliations with traditional Muslim civic associations. Therefore, this chapter's question is broken down into three sub-questions: (1) How has political competition, including patronage networks, affected the political incumbent to favour or oppose religious violence, and how do vigilante groups react? (2) Do local religious authorities tolerate or oppose religious persecution in response to the fierce political competition? (3) How do connections to longstanding civic organisations support religious discrimination?

The qualitative data interview from 32 stakeholders in Bogor was analysed using NVivo to address the sub-research questions. The research findings indicate that local politics during local elections played a significant role in either facilitating or impeding religious persecution against

Ahmadiyah members in the specific situation of Bogor. This observation serves as a pivotal argument in the study. To be more specific, the study highlights the influence of political competition on political candidates' stances regarding the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Bogor. Diani Budiarto, the mayoral candidate in the 2008 election, collaborated with Islamic hardliners to bolster his Islamic credentials in a competitive political landscape. This alliance facilitated the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, with local conservative religious leaders endorsing the partnership as these hardline factions played a crucial role in securing votes and mobilising the electorate. However, during Budiarto's tenure, following a mayoral decree that banned Ahmadiyah activities, no further incidents of persecution were reported. In contrast, Bima Arya, the mayoral candidate in the 2013 and 2019 elections, distanced himself from hardline Islamist factions, opting for a progressive campaign strategy aimed at younger and non-traditional urban voters. This approach, coupled with support from progressive local religious leaders, led to a significant reduction in persecution against Ahmadiyah followers during his tenure.

Furthermore, the study emphasises the critical role of local religious authorities and civic organisations like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in protecting Ahmadiyah followers from persecution in Bogor. The support of progressive *kiai* was essential for candidates like Bima Arya to counterbalance the influence of hardline factions and ensure electoral success. These religious leaders, particularly KH Mustafa Abdullah bin Nuh and KH Hasbullah, were pivotal in advocating religious moderation and fostering an inclusive environment in Bogor. In addition, NU's presence in the city has been instrumental in promoting religious pluralism and moderating municipal policies, ensuring that Ahmadiyah followers can practice their faith freely without facing persecution.

This chapter is structured as follows. It begins by examining the socio-economic and political context of Bogor, with a focus on local elections between 2005 and 2018, to provide a thorough understanding of the city and lay the groundwork for the theoretical discussion in this thesis. Next, the chapter presents empirical evidence on how local electoral politics have resulted in the absence of reported persecution against Ahmadiyah followers since the implementation of Ahmadiyah regulations in Bogor, analysed from three angles: political competition (including patronage networks and vigilante groups), the role of religious leaders, and connections with Muslim civic associations. The chapter concludes with an empirical analysis of the identified patterns in each area.

5.2 Setting the context: An overview of Bogor City

Bogor is situated approximately 60 km south of Jakarta. Its growth has been driven by its role as a supporting city for Greater Jakarta, known as the Jabodetabek region, which encompasses Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. Due to its strategic location, Bogor holds significant potential as a hub for socio-economic development and expansion. The city was officially established in 1950 under Law No. 16 of 1950 on the Formation of Cities within the Provinces of East Java, Central Java, West Java, and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Bogor comprises six districts and eleven sub-districts, as illustrated in Figure 6 below.

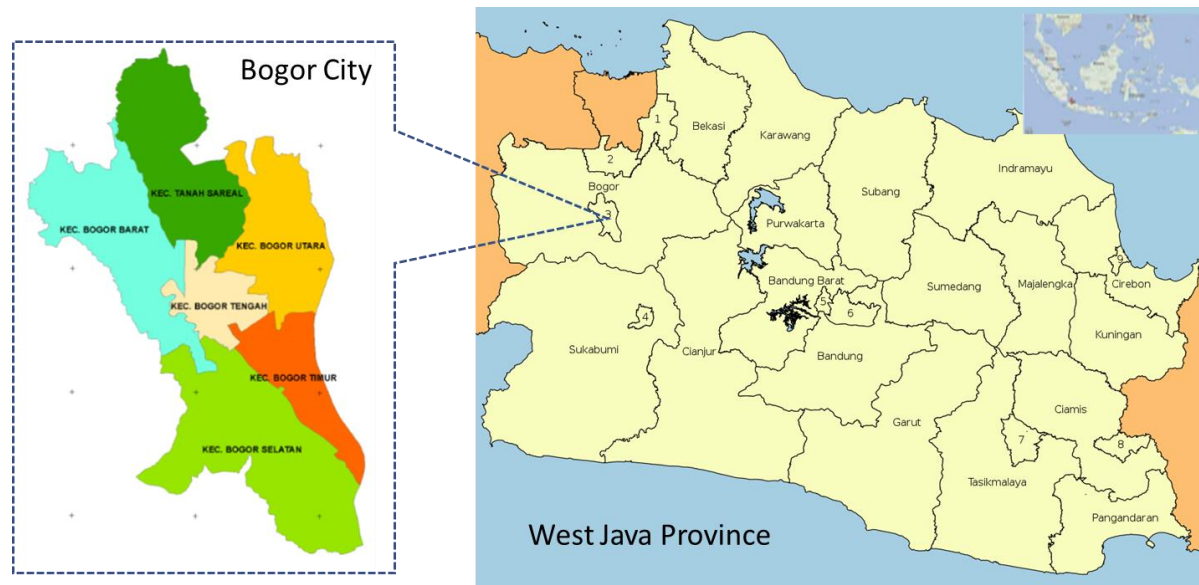


Figure 6
Administrative Map of Bogor

According to data from the Bogor Statistical Bureau, Bogor's population has seen significant growth, increasing from 1.043 million in 2020 to 1.114 million in 2022 (BPS Bogor, 2023). This population surge led to a rise in population density, which grew from 8,802 people per square kilometre in 2020 to 10,001 people per square kilometre in 2022. The government has shown a strong commitment to improving the well-being of its residents, as evidenced by the fact that less than 10% of the population lives below the poverty line. Data from BPS Bogor in 2023 indicates a slight decline in the impoverished population, from 80,090 people (7.24%) in 2021 to 79,500 people (7.1%) in 2022. The primary occupations in Bogor include office or industrial work, which comprise 59% of the workforce, followed by entrepreneurs at 20%, with the remainder being casual and family workers (BPS Bogor, 2023).

Furthermore, Bogor is recognised for its notable socio-economic progress, as reflected in its Human Development Index (HDI) score of 77.17 in 2022, surpassing the provincial average of 73.12 and the national average of 72.29 (BPS Bogor, 2023). The latest data from BPS Bogor (2023) classifies Bogor as an upper-middle-ranked city based on its development performance, quality of life, and government efficiency, as evidenced by its current HDI of 77.17 (BPS Bogor, 2023).

5.3 Political competition during the local election in Bogor from 2008-2018

After providing a general summary of the socio-economic overview of Bogor, this section elaborates on the political rivalry throughout the city's mayoral race from 2008 onward. Because no political party consistently dominates the acquisition of seats in the local parliament, the political dynamics in Bogor are quite volatile. This may be observed in the outcomes of the 2004 parliamentary election, won by the Golkar party with 11 seats (24%), the 2009 election, won by the Democratic party with 15 seats (33.3%), the 2014 election, won by PDI-P with 8 seats (17.8%), and finally, the 2019 election, won by PKS with 10 seats (20%).

Furthermore, every mayoral election features competitive political dynamics, including coalitions of political parties supporting candidate pairs (although political parties that win more than 15% of the local parliamentary seats can nominate mayoral candidates independently), more than three pairs of candidates, and a narrow margin of victory. The 2013 mayoral election saw the most heated struggle in the history of mayoral elections in Bogor, between Achmad Ru'yat, the incumbent, and Bima Arya, his opponent. The difference in vote acquisition between the two candidates was just 1,755 votes, or 0.4% of the total votes, which is extremely small given the high stakes of the election and the fact that both candidates had substantial support from their respective parties and coalitions.

5.3.1 The 2008 mayoral election

The 2008 mayoral election in Bogor, held on October 25, was the city's first direct mayoral election. Several independent and political party coalition candidates competed against the incumbent mayor, Diani Budiarto. Political parties were required to have received at least 15% of the vote in the general election to nominate candidates for the mayoral race. According to Table 13 below, only Golkar, PKS, and PD met this threshold and were allowed to field

candidates. Meanwhile, four other political parties that received less than 15% of the vote needed to form coalitions based on the 2004 general election results.

Table 13
Party composition in the Bogor Local House of Representatives (2004)

No	Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage of Total
1	Golkar: Golongan Karya (The Party of Functional Groups)	11	24
2	PKS: Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (The Prosperous Justice Party)	10	22
3	PD: Partai Demokrat (The Democratic Party)	8	18
4	PAN: Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party)	5	11
5	PPP: Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)	5	11
6	PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan) (The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)	5	11
7	PDS: Partai Damai Sejahtera (Prosperous Peace Party)	1	2
	Total	45	100%

Source: KPU Bogor, 2022

Golkar and PKS, the two largest parties in the House of Representatives, formed a broad coalition to support Diani Budiarto, the incumbent candidate, and Achmad Ru'yat, the former vice chairman of the West Java Regional Parliament. This coalition controlled 46% of the seats in the legislature. Another alliance, composed of PAN, PKB, and two non-legislative parties (PKB and PBR), backed Dody Rosady and Erik Irawan, holding 21% or ten seats in parliament. Additionally, the PD, along with two non-parliamentary parties (PKPB and PKNUI), supported businesswoman Iis Supriatini and Ahani, securing five parliamentary seats or 15.7% of the total vote. There were also two independent candidate teams in the mayoral race, as shown in Table 14 below, which included businessman Syafei Bratasenjaya and psychic Ki Gendeng Pamungkas.

Table 14
The 2008 Bogor mayoral candidates and supporting parties

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	% Number of Seats
Parties' Coalitions	Golkar, PKS, and PDI-P	Diani Budiarto Achmad Ru'yat	46% or 22 seats
	PAN, PPP, PKB and PBR	Dody Rosadi Erik Irawan	21% or 10 seats
	PD, PKPB dan PKNUI	Iis Supriatini Ahani	11% or 5 seats (but had 15.7% of the total vote in the 2004 general election)
Independent		Ki Gendeng Pamungkas Achmad Chusaeri	-
		Syafei Bratasesnjaya Akik Darul Tahkik	-

Source: KPU Bogor, 2022

The election was also remarkable for its high level of political participation, with 415,612 votes cast, representing 68.79% of eligible voters. This marked a significant increase from the 2004 mayoral election, where voter turnout was only 50% (KPU Bogor, 2023). The election was won by the incumbent candidates, Diani Budiarto and Achmad Ru'yat, who received 246,437 votes, or 63.8%. They were followed by former Bogor Regional Secretary Dody Rosadi and Erik Irawan, who garnered 15.6% of the votes. Independent candidates Syafei Bratasesnjaya and Akik Darul Tahkik came in third with 8.7%, as shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15
The 2008 Bogor mayoral election result

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	Number of votes obtained in the pools	%
Parties' Coalitions	Golkar, PKS, and PDI-P	Diani Budiarto Achmad Ru'yat	246,437	63.8
	PAN, PPP, PKB and PBR	Dody Rosadi Erik Irawan	60,040	15.6
	PD, PKPB dan PKNUI	Iis Supriatini Ahani	19,936	5.2

Independent	Ki Gendeng Pamungkas Achmad Chusaeri	26,117	6.8
	Syafei Bratasesjaya Akik Darul Tahkik	33,490	8.7
Total valid votes		386.020	100

Source: KPU Bogor, 2022

Diani's victory in the mayoral election was largely credited to his significant achievements during his previous term. He successfully guided Bogor through a period of economic growth and development. Additionally, he positioned himself as a candidate with a balanced and pragmatic approach, appealing to a wider range of voters. This contrasted sharply with his opponent, Dody, who was perceived as divisive, leading to less favourable support from certain voter groups.

5.3.2 The 2013 mayoral election

In the 2013 Bogor mayoral election, the coalition map for the mayoral candidate nomination was influenced by the makeup of the vote acquisition in the 2009 parliamentary election. Political parties must have received 15% or more of the general election vote to suggest candidates for the mayoral race. It's worth noting that only the Democratic Party and PKS could propose a candidate for mayor without establishing a coalition since they won 33.3% (15 seats) and 15.6% (7 seats) out of 45 parliamentary seats, respectively. In addition, the Golkar Party had won the most seats in the 2004 legislative elections with 24% (11 seats) in the local parliament; this time it only won 13.3% (6 seats), as shown in Table 16 below.

Table 16
Party composition in the Bogor Local House of Representatives (2009)

No	Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage of Total
1	PD: Partai Demokrat (The Democratic Party)	15	33.3
2	PKS: Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (The Prosperous Justice Party)	7	15.6
3	PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan) (The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)	6	13.3

4	Golkar: Golongan Karya (The Party of Functional Groups)	6	13.3
5	PPP: Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)	3	6.7
6	Hanura: Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat (The People's Conscience Party)	3	6.7
7	Gerindra (Gerakan Indonesia Raya) (the Great Indonesia Movement)	2	4.4
8	PAN: Partai Amanat Nasional (The National Mandate Party)	2	4.4
9	PBB: (Partai Bulan Bintang) (The Crescent Star Party)	1	2.2
	Total	45	100%

Source: KPU Bogor, 2022

Even though the Democratic Party and PKS can nominate their mayoral candidates independently, they work together with other parties to create a coalition. By allying with Gerindra, PAN, PBB, and PKB, the Democratic party chose Bima Arya Sugiarto and Usmar Hariman as candidates for mayor and deputy mayor, respectively, supported by 44% of the total seats in the legislature. Bima Arya, an activist and thinker, was a founding member of the National Mandate Party and currently holds the position of one of the Chairs of the PAN (The National Mandate Party) Central Executive Board. He held various positions before entering politics, including lecturer at the Department of International Relations at the University of Paramadina, executive director of the Lead Institute, lecturer at Parahyangan University, and visiting fellow at the Australian National University's Department of Social and Political Change. Additionally, he worked as a research fellow at the Jakarta office of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).⁴⁹ His running mate, Usmar Hariman, was a member of the Bogor parliament from the Democratic Party.⁵⁰

Additionally, PKS joined forces with PPP and Hanura to promote Achmad Ru'yat and Aim Hermana. Achmad Ru'yat was the incumbent candidate and PKS activist who served as Bogor's

⁴⁹ "Profil Bima Arya Sugiarto, Pengajar yang jadi Walikota Bogor ke-16", IDN Times Jabar, 22 December 2022, <https://jabar.idntimes.com/news/jabar/langgeng-irma-salugiasih-1/profil-bima-arya-sugiarto-wali-kota-bogor-ke16>, accessed 15 August 2023.

⁵⁰ "Gerak cepat Usmar Hariman", Demokrat.or.id, 1 October 2017, <https://www.demokrat.or.id/gerak-cepat-usmar-hariman/>, accessed 15 August 2023.

deputy mayor from 2009 to 2013.⁵¹ Aim Ahlim Hermana, meanwhile, was a bureaucrat who had most recently served as the regional secretary of Bogor City.⁵² This alliance supports 28 percent of the total number of seats in the assembly. The last coalition, which supported Dody Rosadi and Untung Maryono, was led by the PDI-P, Golkar, and PKPI. Dody Rosadi served as the Bogor City Regional Secretary and ran for the mayoral election 2008.⁵³ Meanwhile, Untung Maryono was Bogor's PDI-P Branch Leadership Council's Chairman and the Chairman of the Bogor House of Representatives.⁵⁴ This alliance supports 26 per cent of the total number of assembly seats, as shown in Table 17 below.

Table 17
The 2013 Bogor mayoral candidates and supporting parties

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	% Number of Seats
Parties' Coalitions	Demokrat, Gerindra, PAN, PBB, PKB	Bima Arya Sugiarto Usmar Hariman	44% or 20 seats
	PKS, PPP, Hanura	Achmad Ru'yat Aim Halim Hermana	28% or 13 seats
	PDI-P, Golkar, PKPI	Dody Rosadi Untung W Maryono	26% or 12 seats
Independent		Firman Halim Gartono	-
		Syaiful Anwar Muztahidin	-

Source: KPU Bogor, 2022

In this mayoral election, voter turnout decreased by 5.75% compared to the mayoral election in 2008. Despite having 678,474 registered voters, only 427,717 (or 63.72%) of them cast a ballot

⁵¹ "Profil Achmad Ru'yat, Ketua Bidang Pembinaan Wilayah Banten, Jakarta dan Jawa Barat PKS", *Tribunnews.com*, 12 Desember 2022, <https://www.tribunnews.com/mata-lokal-memilih/2022/12/12/profil-achmad-ruyat-ketua-bidang-pembinaan-wilayah-banten-jakarta-dan-jawa-barat-banjabar-pks>, accessed 15 August 2023.

⁵² "Mantan Sekda Bogor Aim Halim Hermana Pensiun", *Bogor-kita.com*, 1 August 2018, <https://bogor-kita.com/mantan-sekda-kota-bogor-aim-halim-hermana-pensiun/>, accessed 15 August 2023.

⁵³ "Cawalkot Bogor Dody Rosadi optimis menang satu putaran", *Megapolitan.kompas.com*, 14 September 2013, <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2013/09/14/1356548/Cawalkot.Bogor.Dody.Rosadi.Optimistis.Menang.Satu.Putaran>, accessed 15 August 2023.

⁵⁴ "Mantan Ketua DPRD Kota Bogor siap bertarung di Pileg Jabar", *rmoljabar.com*, 23 February 2023, <https://www.rmoljabar.id/mantan-ketua-dprd-kota-bogor-siap-bertarung-di-pileg-jabar>, accessed 15 August 2023.

in the 2013 mayoral election, which is fewer voters than there were in the mayoral election of 2008, totalling 415,612 persons (68.79%) (KPU Bogor, 2022).

Even though fewer people cast ballots, the 2013 mayoral election was very competitive compared to previous elections. Achmad Ru'yat, the incumbent candidate, and Bima Arya went head-to-head in their opposing political platforms and pledges to win over voters. The *Bogor Maju* card program, the incumbent candidate Ahmad Ruyat's hallmark initiative, gives the public access to free schooling.⁵⁵ According to Ruy'at, the monthly school tuition cost had grown to be a financial hardship for parents of kids over time.⁵⁶ As a result, the *Bogor Maju* card program aimed to eliminate education or school enrolment fees and allow locals to re-register and pay no monthly school costs. In addition, the *Bogor Maju* card offered economically disadvantaged areas free delivery services to lower maternal mortality during childbirth.⁵⁷

On the other hand, Bima Arya introduced several major initiatives, such as a 100-day plan to enhance public transportation, urban hygiene, bureaucracy, and civil administration, including managing street vendors.⁵⁸ One of Bima Arya's top concerns was fighting corruption by working with the Corruption Eradication Commission to enhance accountability around public spending.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Arya offered a 12-year free education program, more teaching staff, equal access to elementary, middle, and high schools in each sub-district, and up to 100 annual scholarships for teachers and students at primary and secondary levels. In the health sector, Bima intended to establish an inpatient primary health centre in each sub-district, construct a hospital, arrange for impoverished families to see physicians, enhance *Posyandu* services, and offer free medical care.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Ru'yat-Aim meluncurkan program Kartu Bogor Maju, <https://megapolitan.antaranews.com/berita/5826/ruyat-aim-luncurkan-program-kartu-bogor-maju>, accessed 14 August 2023.

⁵⁶ Ru'yat-Aim meluncurkan program Kartu Bogor Maju, <https://megapolitan.antaranews.com/berita/5826/ruyat-aim-luncurkan-program-kartu-bogor-maju>, accessed 14 August 2023.

⁵⁷ Kartu Bogor Maju Ru'yat-Aim gratiskan biaya persalinan, <https://megapolitan.antaranews.com/berita/5839/kartu-bogor-maju-ruyat-aim-gratiskan-biaya-persalinan>, accessed 14 August 2023.

⁵⁸ Jika terpilih, inilah janji Bima Arya untuk Warga Bogor, Kompas.com, 14 September 2013, <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2013/09/14/1324198/Jika.Terpilih.Inilah.Janji.Bima.Arya.untuk.Warga.Bogor>, accessed, 14 August 2023.

⁵⁹ "Bima Arya: Kita akan Kerjasama dengan KPK", Antara Megapolitan, 8 September 2013, <https://megapolitan.antaranews.com/berita/5911/bima-arya-kita-akan-kerjasama-dengan-kpk>, accessed 15 August 2023.

⁶⁰ "Bima Arya klaim telah realisasikan 22 janji kampanye". Dede Susanti. Media Indonesia. 29 January 2018. <https://mediaindonesia.com/megapolitan/142860/bima-arya-klaim-telah-realisasikan-22-janji-kampanye> Accessed 14 August 2023.

The competition between Achmad Ru'yat and Bima Arya was considered extraordinary, given the high stakes of the election and the fact that both candidates received significant support from their respective parties and coalitions. With a difference of 1,755 votes or 0.4% of the total votes, the Achmad Ru'yat-Aim Hermana duo lost to the Bima Arya-Usmar Hariman. As shown in Table 18 below, Bima-Usmar received 132,835 votes, beating Ru'yat-Aim, who received 131,080 votes, to win as the Mayor of Bogor.

Table 18
The 2013 Bogor mayoral election result

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	Number of votes obtained in the pools	%
Parties' Coalitions	Demokrat, Gerindra, PAN, PBB, PKB	Bima Arya Sugiarto Usmar Hariman	132,835	33.1
	PKS, PPP, Hanura	Achmad Ru'yat Aim Halim Hermana	131,080	32.7
	PDI-P, Golkar, PKPI	Dody Rosadi Untung W Maryono	67,715	16.89
Independent		Syaeful Anwar Muztahidin	43,448	10.84
		Firman Halim Gartono	25,793	25.8
Total valid votes			400,871	100

Source: KPU Bogor, 2022

5.3.3 The 2018 mayoral election

The outcomes of the 2014 parliamentary elections decided which parties could nominate candidates directly without needing to form a coalition, just like the previous mayoral elections. Results from the 2014 parliamentary election showed a very different political landscape to those from the 2009 election. This time, PDI-P won the most seats in parliament with eight seats (17.8%), beating the Democratic Party as the winner of the 2009 legislative elections, which won five seats (13.3%) and was ranked fifth after Golkar, Gerindra and PKS. Therefore, only PDI-P received more than 15% of the total votes/seats and was entitled to nominate the 2018 mayoral candidate without forming a coalition with other parties, as shown in Table 19 below.

Table 19
Party composition in the Bogor Local House of Representatives (2014)

No	Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage of Total
1	PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan) (The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)	8	17.8%
2	Golkar: Golongan Karya (The Party of Functional Groups)	6	13.3%
3	Gerindra (Gerakan Indonesia Raya) (the Great Indonesia Movement)	6	13.3%
4	PKS: Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (The Prosperous Justice Party)	5	11.1%
5	PD: Partai Demokrat (The Democratic Party)	5	11.1%
6	PPP: Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)	5	11.1%
7	Hanura: Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat (The People's Conscience Party)	4	8.89%
8	PAN: Partai Amanat Nasional (The National Mandate Party)	3	6.67%
9	Nasdem: Partai Nasional Demokrat (The National Democratic Party)	1	2.22%
10	PKB: Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (The National Awakening Party)	1	2.22%
11	PBB: (Partai Bulan Bintang) (The Crescent Star Party)	1	2.22%
	Total	45	100%

Source: KPU Bogor, 2023

Even though PDI-P can nominate mayoral candidates independently, they work together with other parties to create a coalition. By allying with PKB, the PDI-P chose Dadang Iskandar Danubrata and Sugeng Teguh Santoso as candidates for mayor and deputy mayor, respectively, supported by 20% of the total seat in the local parliament. Dadang Danubrata is a businessman as well as a PDI-P party activist who held the position of Chairman of the PDI-P branch of Bogor,⁶¹

⁶¹ "Dadang digadang-gadang masuk bursa calon walikota Bogor", PDI-Perjuangan-jabar.com, 5 September 2016, <https://PDI-Perjuangan-jabar.com/kabar-cabang/dadang-digadang-gadang-masuk-bursa-calon-walikota-bogor/>, accessed 16 August 2023.

while Teguh Santoso was also a PDI-P party activist who worked as an advocate and led the *Yayasan Satu Keadilan* (One Justice Foundation – YSK).⁶²

Furthermore, Golkar, the holder of the second-most number of seats after PDI-P, joined the Democratic Party, Hanura, PAN and Nasdem to promote incumbent candidates Bima Arya Sugiarta and Dedie A Rachim. Bima Arya was a running mayor and held the position of one of the Chairs of the PAN (The National Mandate Party) Central Executive Board. His running mate, Dedie A Rachim, was a bureaucrat working at the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), with his last position as Director of Network Development and Cooperation between Commissions and Agencies.⁶³ This alliance supported 41.9 per cent of the total number of seats in the assembly. The last coalition, which supported Dody Rosadi and Zaenul Mutaqin, was led by the Gerindra, PKS and PPP. Dody Rosadi served as the Bogor City Regional Secretary and ran for the mayoral elections in 2008 and 2013.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, Zaenul Mutaqin is a PPP politician who served as Chairman of the PPP branch of Bogor and a member of the Bogor parliament from 2009–2014. Besides that, Mutaqin is also an entrepreneur in the media sector who owns the *Harian Pakar* (Pakuan Raya) print media company.⁶⁵ This alliance supported 35.5 per cent of the total assembly seats as shown in Table 20 below. Last but not least, independent candidates participated in this mayoral election, Edgar Sutarman and Sefwelly Gynanjar. Edgar Sutarman was a bureaucrat who started his career as a village chief and had most recently served as Regional Assistant 1 Bogor;⁶⁶ while Sefwelly Gynanjar was a young entrepreneur in the textile, automotive and hajj travel businesses.⁶⁷

⁶² PDI-P dikabarkan usung Dadang Danubrata-Sugeng Santoso di Pilkada Kota Bogor 2018, [bogor.tribunnews.com](https://bogor.tribunnews.com/2018/01/08/pdi-p-dikabarkan-usung-dadang-danubrata-sugeng-teguh-santoso-di-pilkada-kota-bogor-2018), 8 Januari 2018, <https://bogor.tribunnews.com/2018/01/08/pdi-p-dikabarkan-usung-dadang-danubrata-sugeng-teguh-santoso-di-pilkada-kota-bogor-2018>, accessed 16 August 2023.

⁶³ “Biografi wakil walikota”, kotabogor.go.id, <https://kotabogor.go.id/index.php/page/detail/37/biografi-wakil-walikota>, accessed 16 August 2023.

⁶⁴ “Cawalkot Bogor Dody Rosadi optimis menang satu putaran”, [Megapolitan.kompas.com](https://megapolitan.kompas.com), 14 September 2013, <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2013/09/14/1356548/Cawalkot.Bogor.Dody.Rosadi.Optimistis.Menang.Satu.Putaran>, accessed 15 August 2023.

⁶⁵ “Lebih dekat dengan calon wakil walikota Bogor Zaenul Mutaqin”, mediabogor.co, <https://mediabogor.co/lebih-dekat-dengan-calon-wakil-walikota-bogor-no-urut-1-zaenul-mutaqin/>, accessed 16 August 2023.

⁶⁶ Edgar Sutarman, calon walikota Bogor jalur perseorangan, jayakartanews.com, 29 November 2017, <https://jayakartanews.com/edgar-suratman-calon-walikota-bogor-jalur-perseorangan/>, accessed 16 August 2023.

⁶⁷ Sefwelly Gynanjar calon termuda di Pilwalkot Bogor 2018, [Pikiran-rakyat.com](https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com), 27 Maret 2018, <https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/jawa-barat/pr-01295327/sefwelly-ginanjara-dijodongkan-calon-termuda-di-pilwalkot-bogor-2018-421937>, accessed 16 August 2023.

Table 20
The 2018 Bogor mayoral candidates and supporting parties

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	% Number of Seats
Parties' Coalitions	Golkar, Demokrat, Hanura PAN, Nasdem	Bima Arya Sugiarto Dedie A. Rachim	41.9% or 18 seats
	Gerindra, PKS, PPP	Achmad Ru'yat Zaenul Mutaqin	35.5% or 16 seats
	PDI-P, PKB	Dadang Iskandar Danubrata Sugeng Teguh Santoso	20% or 9 seats
Independent		Edgar Suratman Sefwelly Gyanjar D	-

Source: KPU Bogor, 2022

In this mayoral election, voter turnout increased significantly by 11.77% compared to 2013. There were 691,189 registered, and 521,765 (or 75.49%) of them cast a ballot in the 2018 mayoral election, which was more voters than there were in the mayoral election of 2013, totalling 427,717 votes (63.72%) (KPU Bogor, 2023). This mayoral election was a repetition of the competition between Bima Arya and Achmad Ru'yat in the 2013 mayoral election. Each candidate issued flagship programs; Arya prioritised converting public transportation into buses to reduce traffic jams, controlling street vendors in the city centre, and solving the waste problem, including constructing a plastic waste recycling centre.⁶⁸ The planned conversion would replace three *angkot* (mini public transport vehicles) with one bus or two minibuses, expanding routes to 68 urban villages. Meanwhile, Ru'yat prioritised infrastructure development, such as the construction of the Sukaresmi station and the Regional Ring Road that connects North and East Bogor. In addition, Ru'yat planned to create 'Bogor Digital' as an application to facilitate services related to immigration, civil registration, creative hubs, SME information, sub-district services and hospital services.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ "Unggul Quick Count, ini program prioritas Bima Arya pada periode kedua" inews.id, 20 June 2018, <https://www.inews.id/news/megapolitan/unggul-quick-count-ini-program-prioritas-bima-arya-pada-periode-kedua>, accessed 17 August 2023.

⁶⁹ "Achmad Ru'yat dan Zaenul Mutaqin beberkan program bogor digital", bogoronline.com, 13 March 2018, <https://bogoronline.com/2018/03/achmad-ruyat-dan-zaenul-mutaqin-beberkan-program-bogor-digital/>, accessed 17 August 2023.

The competition between Bima Arya and Achmad Ru'yat was considered extraordinary, given the high stakes of the election and the fact that both candidates received significant support from their respective parties and coalitions. The mayoral election was won by incumbent candidates Bima Arya and Dedie Rachim with 215,708 votes or 43.64%, followed by former Bogor Regional Secretary Achmad Ru'yat and Zaenul Mutaqin with 31.03% and PDI-P's candidates Dadang Danubrata and Sugeng Santoso with 12.81% in the third place as shown in Table 21 below.

Table 21
The 2018 Bogor mayoral election result

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	Number of votes obtained in the pools	%
Parties' Coalitions	Golkar, Demokrat, Hanura PAN, Nasdem	Bima Arya Sugiarto Dedie A. Rachim	215,708	43.64
	Gerindra, PKS, PPP	Achmad Ru'yat Zaenul Mutaqin	153,407	31.03
	PDI-P, PKB	Dadang Iskandar Danubrata Sugeng Teguh Santoso	63,335	12.81
Independent		Edgar Suratman Sefwelly Gyanjar D	61,871	12,52
Total valid votes			494,321	100

Source: KPU Bogor, 2022

5.4 Local politics and religious persecution

The preceding section delineates a period of heightened political competition, explicitly focusing on the regional elections held in 2008 and 2013. The competitive nature of the elections was evident in the presence of many party coalitions, including prominent candidates, numerous candidate pairings in each election, and the narrow margins of victory. This part will utilise the conceptual framework of local politics to analyse and elucidate the fieldwork's findings to address this thesis's sub-research question: What were the underlying factors leading to the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers before the implementation of local regulations,

and what was the subsequent impact of these regulations or other local dynamics in preventing further persecution of Ahmadiyah followers?

Therefore, this subchapter is further broken into three pieces to make the connection between local politics and religious persecution in the context of Bogor more understandable: (1) The political competition and patronage network, which explains how the incumbent candidate and the Islamist hardliners acted as brokers in the mayoral election process and the state of the patronage network at the time the mayoral regulation regarding Ahmadiyah was issued in 2011; (2) Influence of progressive religious authorities, which explains the role played by religious leaders in the mayoral election that prevented Ahmadiyah followers from being persecuted; and (3) CSO affiliations; detailing the role Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the most prominent Islamic organisation, played in the mayoral election campaign that either helped or hindered Ahmadiyah persecution.

5.4.1 Political competition and patronage network

This section will thoroughly analyse two significant mayoral election cycles, in 2008 and 2013, to address the sub-research question. Diani Budiarto won the 2008 mayoral election, but in 2013, Bima Arya took over the mayoral position. After becoming the mayor of Bogor, Diani Budiarto issued Mayor Regulation No. 300.45-122 of 2011, which is well-known for prohibiting the activities of Indonesian Ahmadiyah followers in Bogor. The regulation restricts the dissemination of interpretations and practices that deviate from Islamic teachings, specifically banning the verbal, written, and electronic dissemination of Ahmadiyah teachings, the display of Ahmadiyah symbols, the placement of nameplates identifying Ahmadiyah worship places and educational institutions, and the use of the Ahmadiyah logo in any form. This section will explore the reasons behind Diani's decision to enact this regulation and how the political competition in the 2008 mayoral election affected the followers of Ahmadiyah. Additionally, it will examine the actions Bima Arya took during his mayoral campaign to prevent the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Bogor up to the present day.

Given the intense competition seen in the Bogor mayoral election, discussing patronage networks becomes essential. Hillman (2014) highlights that patronage networks greatly impact local politics at all levels of grassroots government, from villages to larger cities. These networks are crucial in maintaining local state cohesion by facilitating administrative coordination and reducing internal political rivalries. Thus, they act as a complementary element to formal

governmental structures (Hillman, 2014). Additionally, Driscoll (2018) suggests that political competition can drive patronage practices, particularly in municipal elections where two dominant parties are engaged in a close race. In such situations, local governments often increase the number of public sector positions, especially at lower levels, to attract party activists. Driscoll describes a bottom-up process where volunteers within political parties push for the distribution of patronage. In closely contested elections, these volunteers exploit their party's weaknesses to secure rewards. Furthermore, Aspinall and As'ad (2015) argue that the wealthiest candidate does not solely determine local electoral competition in certain districts of Indonesia. Instead, it involves complex conflicts where candidates must build strong patronage networks to benefit constituents and ensure that beneficiaries return the favour by voting for them.

As a result, the growing importance of local networks and the interests of brokers in electoral competition intensified the political stakes. A key tactic for securing support involved the distribution of patronage goods, often referred to as vote buying (Aspinall and Sukmajati, 2016; Aspinall and Berenschot, 2019). Vote buying frequently serves as a financial contribution, granting individuals access to the campaign. Political backing can extend beyond monetary transactions, involving factors such as personal rapport or commitment to a particular cause. One strategy to gain the support of influential local groups was leveraging the Ahmadiyah issue, especially in areas where the threat posed by the Ahmadiyah was widely recognised (Soedirgo, 2020).

This study, based on empirical data, has identified a link between patronage networks and a political candidate's stance on the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Bogor. The contrasting patronage networks of Diani Budiarto, the incumbent in the 2008 mayoral election, and Bima Arya, a leading candidate in the 2013 election, are reflected in their distinct approaches, as shown in Figure 7 below. Facing fierce political competition, Diani Budiarto sought to bolster his Islamic credentials ahead of the local elections, seeking support from Islamic hardliners. The collaboration between political figures and aggressive local vigilante groups played a key role in enabling the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. This alliance was coordinated and endorsed by local conservative religious leaders, who viewed these actors as essential intermediaries and vote gatherers.

Additionally, hardline Islamist groups were actively involved in several election-related activities, effectively securing votes, particularly among conservative segments of the

population, and facilitating voter mobilisation. Ultimately, the incumbent candidate won a prominent position and maintained continued support from vigilante groups. Interestingly, after Diani issued a mayoral decree banning Ahmadiyah-related activities, there was no evidence of further persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. The next section will explore this in more detail.

In contrast, the patronage network during the 2013 and 2019 mayoral elections under Bima Arya was markedly different. He did not rely on Islamist hardline factions for political support, instead using progressive and strategic campaign methods to attract younger voters and non-traditional urban residents. After his election, he gained the backing of progressive local religious leaders. He maintained relationships with Islamist hardliners, which ultimately led to the absence of any repression against Ahmadiyah members in Bogor.

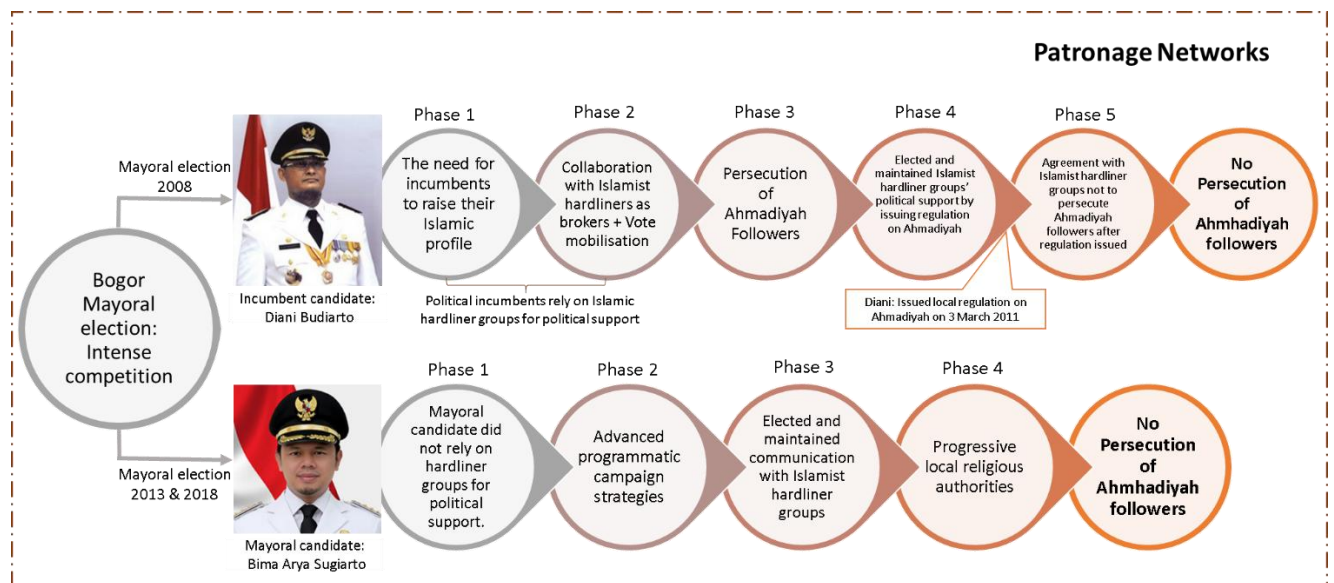


Figure 7

The correlation between patronage network and religious persecution in the case of Bogor

Political competition and patronage network of Diani Budiarto

Phase 1: The need for incumbents to raise their Islamic profile

In the face of fierce political competition during the 2008 Bogor mayoral election, incumbent candidate Diani Budiarto actively emphasised his Islamic identity to attract voter support and gain an electoral advantage. This strategy aligns with Wilcox and Sigelman's (2001) findings, which suggest that political elites under intense electoral pressure use religious appeals to mobilise their base for electoral gain. Additionally, in the context of heightened competition,

political leaders often strategically leverage religious identity to sharpen their profile and secure votes, though this can sometimes escalate social or sectarian tensions. Given Bogor's conservative cultural landscape, enhancing Islamic identities to secure voter support was a rational strategy for the candidates.

Two notable examples arise from Bogor's conservative cultural landscape. Firstly, Bogor has been a central hub for the *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* (HTI) movement, which opposes nation-states and their symbols, such as Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, aiming instead to establish a global caliphate. Secondly, between 2015 and 2018, Bogor became infamous for its incidents of religious intolerance.

Firstly, Bogor serves as the focal point for the HTI movement. This organisation espouses opposition against nation-states and associated symbols, such as Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. The primary aim of the HTI movement is to establish a worldwide caliphate. Mama Abdullah bin Nuh, a highly regarded and influential religious scholar from Bogor, had a significant role in facilitating the entry of Abdurrahman al-Baghdadi, the head of Hizbut Tahir International, into Indonesia during the early 1980s.⁷⁰ Consequently, Bogor holds considerable significance for members of HTI, commonly referred to as *hizbiyyin*. The sole entity subject to external governance that openly rejects democratic principles and perceives elections as contrary to Islamic values is HTI. Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) advocates for the practice of abstention, commonly referred to as *golput*, among its followers during electoral processes, aligning with the approach adopted by other Hizbut Tahrir chapters in different regions (Muhtadi, 2016).

Abdurrahman Al-Baghdadi, a Hizbut Tahrir activist from Australia, was invited to Bogor by Mama Abdullah bin Nuh, founder of the Al-Ghazali Islamic boarding school, where he stayed from 1982 to 1983. During this time, Al-Baghdadi played a key role in advancing the Hizbut Tahrir movement in Indonesia. Although his primary focus was on developing the Al-Ghazali school, he also engaged with activists at the Bogor Agricultural Institute (IPB) mosque, leading to the formation of a study group (*halaqah*) that explored the teachings of Hizbut Tahrir's founder, Taqiuddin al-Nabhani. These study groups helped spread Hizbut Tahrir's ideology in Bogor and other urban areas. Taqiuddin al-Nabhani's vision for establishing a global Islamic caliphate followed a three-phase strategy, starting with 'cultivation' (*marhalah al-tathqif*), which

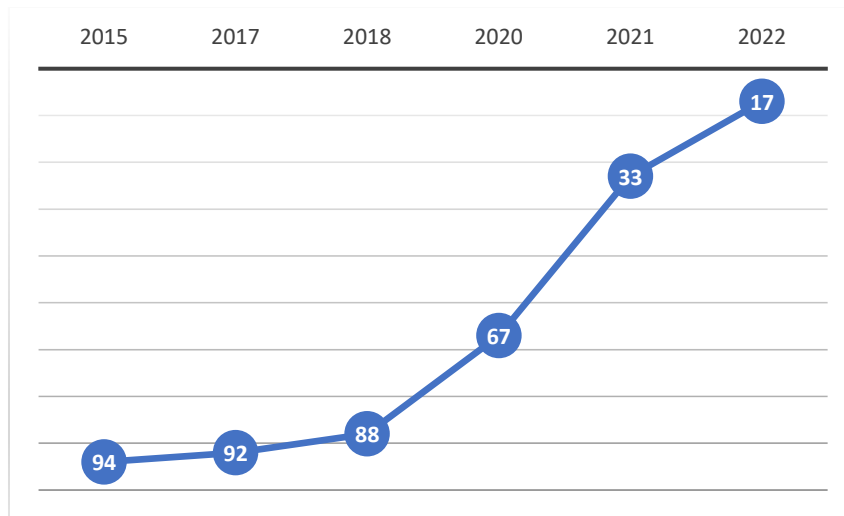
⁷⁰ 'The challenge from Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia' <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/the-challenge-from-hizbut-tahrir-indonesia/>, accessed 3 October 2023.

involved training and indoctrinating individuals. Under Suharto's New Order, HTI operated secretly, focusing on indoctrination, but after Suharto's fall in 1998, the group became more public. The second phase, 'interaction' (*marhalah tafaul maa al-naas*), began after HTI organised an international conference on the Islamic caliphate in 2000 to broaden its outreach. According to Muhtadi (2016), HTI's final phase, *istislam al-hukmi* (acquisition of power), will be pursued once it has enough support from the Muslim community.

Despite being officially disbanded by the government on July 19, 2017, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) has continued its political and religious efforts, particularly focusing on influencing students and promoting caliphate ideology under the guise of religious teachings.

Secondly, it is essential to highlight that Bogor's social structure displayed a similar level of conservatism as Depok. Bogor was ranked among the top ten most intolerant cities from 2015 to 2018; it even ranked last, 94th out of 94 cities, as shown in Graph 3. This index is based on the optimistic assumption that Indonesian cities are generally tolerant and peaceful. It uses a positive hypothesis scoring system on a scale from 1 to 7, with each number representing different levels of tolerance: very intolerant, intolerant, indifferent, moderately intolerant, neutral, fairly tolerant, tolerant, and very tolerant. Each city starts with a score of seven, which is then reduced if factors that decrease tolerance are identified (Setara Institute, 2023). From 2015 to 2018, Bogor was ranked among the ten most intolerant cities. In 2015, it was the lowest-ranked city in Indonesia, with a score of 1.47. By 2017, its score had increased to 3.05, moving it to 92nd place, and in 2018, it improved to 3.53, ranking 88th. Notably, Bogor's ranking improved significantly in 2020, reaching 67th place, and continued to rise, achieving 17th place in 2022 (Setara Institute, 2023).

Graph 3
Bogor's Tolerance City Index 2015–2022



Source: Setara Institute (2023)

Given the prevailing socially conservative environment, it is expected that the mayoral candidate would work to strengthen his Islamist image. This includes a greater emphasis on opposing Ahmadiyah as a heretical doctrine and building relationships with Islamist hardliners to secure votes for the mayoral election. According to a representative from JAI of Bogor:

Melihat kondisi kemasyarakatan Bogor yang sangat dinamis ini, seringkali kandidat calon walikota dan tim suksesnya memanfaatkan Ahmadiyah dijadikan dagangan politik terutama menjelang pemilihan walikota tahun 2008. Hal ini terlihat karena pilwali tersebut, terjadi persekusi terhadap jamaah Ahmadiyah di Sindang Barang pada periode kepemimpinan Diani Budiarto [Seeing the very dynamic social condition of Bogor, the mayoral candidate and his campaign team often use Ahmadiyah as political tools, especially on the 2008 mayoral election. Subsequently, under the leadership of Diani Budiarto, the Ahmadiyah congregation at Sindang Barang experienced persecution].⁷¹

Moreover, the issue of Ahmadiyah extends beyond religious concerns and includes underlying factors that could be triggered by rising political ambitions, particularly during mayoral

⁷¹ Interview with the spokesperson of JAI Bogor, 13 May 2019.

elections.⁷² Understanding the historical context of the supporting parties is crucial. Although Diani Budiarto received backing from the Golkar Party, which upholds democratic nationalist principles, his running mate, Achmad Ru'yat, belongs to the PKS party, which emphasises orthodox Islamic values. As an Islamist political party, PKS advocates for the state's implementation of Islamic law in areas such as proselytising, anti-apostasy, media, and family issues, as noted by Sazali (2015) Diani Budiarto and Achmad Ru'yat followed a similar strategy to achieve their electoral success.

From the PKS's standpoint, leveraging Ahmadiyah doctrines, which orthodox Muslim communities view as deviant, to win elections and appeal to conservative voters in Bogor can be justified. This view aligns with Fox and Menchik's (2023) findings, which suggest that Islamic parties' use of inclusive or exclusive strategies in their campaigns is determined by two key factors: First, candidates use exclusive Islamic appeals in conservative, predominantly Muslim districts to garner strong support from the Muslim community. Second, in urban areas, candidates tend to emphasise Islamic exclusivity, while in rural regions, they are more likely to appeal to nationalist sentiments.

Phase 2: Collaboration with the Islamist hardliner groups and vote mobilisation

During the 2008 Bogor mayoral election campaign, there was significant collaboration between political candidates and hardline Islamic groups, particularly regarding the Ahmadiyah issue. Anti-Ahmadiyah sentiments were strategically used to win the support of these conservative groups. As the incumbent, Diani Budiarto aimed to retain his mayoral position by working closely with the Bogor Muslim Family (Keluarga Muslim Bogor or KMB), led by Dr. H. Fahrudin Sukarno.⁷³

The Bogor Muslim Family (KMB) was founded in July 2000 by Dr. H. Fahrudin Sukarno, KH Muhidin Zunaidi (a Bogor MUI leader), and KH Khair Yunus (administrator of the Tarbiyatun Nisa Islamic boarding school). KMB acts as an umbrella organisation for various Islamic mass movements and advocates for the interests of Muslims in Bogor. KMB coordinated several hardline Islamist movements in the city, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Islamic Community Forum (FUI), GARIS, and Forkami, indicating that there were no independent hardline movements in Bogor, with KMB serving as the central coordinating body. The

⁷² Interview with Ahmadiyah followers, 14 May 2019.

⁷³ Interview with Coordinator of KMB 21 May 2019.

chairman of GARIS Bogor, one of the hardline groups, emphasised KMB's unique role in influencing religious and ideological dynamics in the region as follows:

KMB adalah keunikan dan kekhasan pergerakan ormas islam Bogor. Dimana dikota lain pergerakan ormas sangat sporadis dan jalan sendiri-sendiri. Namun, di Bogor semua pergerakan ormas islam dikoordinasikan oleh KMB. KMB menjadi komandan pergerakan dengan personil dilapangan berasal dari berbagai ormas yang ada termasuk FPI, Garis, Forkami dll. Selain itu, KMB juga berada di depan bila berurusan dengan media massa [The Bogor Muslim Family (Keluarga Muslim Bogor or KMB) represents the unique and distinguishing feature of the Islamic mass organisation movement in Bogor. Unlike in other cities where the activities of mass organisations tend to be sporadic and fragmented, Bogor stands out for its centralised coordination under the auspices of KMB. In Bogor, all Islamic mass organisations operate in a coordinated manner under the leadership of KMB, making it the chief orchestrator of these movements. KMB assumes the role of a field commander, drawing personnel from various existing mass organisations, including the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Garis, Forkami, among others. Moreover, KMB takes a prominent position in engaging with the mass media when addressing issues related to these mass organisations and their activities]⁷⁴

During the campaign on 13 June 2008, there was a noticeable expression of anti-Ahmadiyah sentiment, orchestrated by the incumbent candidate in collaboration with the Bogor Muslim Family (KMB). This sentiment was demonstrated through a protest led by KMB and several hardline groups in Bogor, including the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Forkami, GARIS, the Ummah Da'wah Council, and the Laskar Islam Command, opposing the Ahmadiyah community.⁷⁵ The demonstrators gathered outside the Al-Fadhil mosque, associated with the Ahmadiyah congregation, where they took several actions. They sealed the mosque and presented three main demands: (1) The cessation of Ahmadiyah congregation activities related to

⁷⁴ Interview with the chairman of GARIS Bogor, 17 June 2019.

⁷⁵ Ribuan orang segel masjid Ahmadiyah Bogor, News.okezone.com, 13 June 2008, <https://news.okezone.com/read/2008/06/13/1/118461/ribuan-orang-segel-masjid-ahmadiyah-di-bogor>. accessed 14 September 2023.

teachings about the existence of a prophet after Prophet Muhammad, alongside other Ahmadiyah practices; (2) A request that the Al-Fadhil Mosque should not be exclusively reserved for the Ahmadiyah congregation but should be open for use by other Muslims, including for recitation activities and Friday prayers; and (3) The prayer's Khatib (preacher) and Imam should be appointed by non-Ahmadiyah congregation members or designated by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). In addition to these demands, the KMB confiscated several books used for Ahmadiyah teachings inside the mosque. The protest didn't stop there; later that month, on 27 June 2008, hardline Islamist groups removed the mosque's nameplate, further escalating their opposition to the Ahmadiyah community. This event highlighted how, during election periods, Ahmadiyah often became a target of persecution as certain groups sought to capitalise on these actions to strengthen their influence in local politics.

KMB's central role in organising Islamic hardliners in Bogor was strongly connected to Fahrudin Sukarno, a highly regarded figure in the Islamic movement. Diani held Sukarno in high esteem due to his recognised expertise and knowledge. He had notable academic credentials, including serving as a postgraduate lecturer in Sharia Economics. He also held influential positions, such as assistant to the Chancellor of Ibnu Khaldun University and chairman of the Bogor City Sharia Economic Society, among other roles. His academic background underscored his contributions to the Islamic intellectual community. Beyond academia, Sukarno was a charismatic leader with a unique ability to unify different factions within the Islamic movement in Bogor. KMB administrators acknowledged his leadership and ability to bridge these diverse groups:⁷⁶

Fahrudin Sukarno merupakan tokoh sentral pergerakan ormas Islam, bahkan ketua MUI pun meminta pertimbangan beliau dalam masalah keumatan. Jadi tidak heran kalau dia dijadikan kunci dan icon pergerakan ormas Islam Bogor. Kemudian, bagaimana KMB bisa mengkoordinir dan mengendalikan ormas islam lainnya? Iya, ini adalah ini adalah kepiawaian Fahrudin Sukarno untuk bernegosiasi dan memberikan perhatian langsung kepada para anggota ormas (contoh FPI) tersebut. Kita tahu sendiri bahwa anggota ormas itu jarang orang yang berkecukupan, maka bila ada

⁷⁶ Interview with the KMB coordinator, 21 May 2019.

yang sakit pak Fahrudin langsung memberikan bantuan termasuk bingkisan lebaran. Sehingga hubungannya sangat personal dan intense. Jadi saat KMB memerintahkan sesuatu pasti diikuti oleh para anggota ormas-ormas itu [Fahrudin Sukarno was a very important person in the Islamic mass organisation movement. In fact, the head of the MUI asked him to think about important issues that affected the people. Because of this, it's not a surprise that he became the movement's leader and most famous figure. Then how does the KMB manage and organise other Islamic mass groups? In fact, Fahrudin Sukarno was very good at bargaining and giving direct attention to people who were part of mass organisations like FPI. We know that people who belong to mass organisations aren't usually wealthy, so if someone is sick, Mr. Fahrudin helps them right away and gives them gifts during Eid Mubarak. In other words, the connection is very close and personal. That is, when the KMB tells the mass organisations what to do, they have to do it.]

Moreover, regarding vote mobilisation, it is important to highlight that both KMB and numerous Islamic hardliners in Bogor publicly supported the renomination of Diani Budiarto as a mayoral candidate. This backing stems from his steadfast dedication to promoting the Islamic mass organisation movement within the city, as emphasised by the KMB Coordinator:⁷⁷

Kami lihat selama lima tahun pertama (2003–2008) dia menjabat sebagai walikota Bogor, Diani memberikan perhatian lebih terhadap pergerakan oramas Islam di Kota Bogor.

Pendekatannya dilakukan secara personal maupun organisasi sangat mumpuni dan diterima baik oleh semua kalangan. Oleh karena itu KMB mendukung penuh pencalonan Diani untuk periode kedua ini [We observed that during his initial tenure as the mayor of Bogor from 2003 to 2008, Diani placed a greater emphasis on engaging with Islamic organisations within the city. His approach, both on a personal level and through her

⁷⁷ Interview with the coordinator of KMB Bogor, 21 May 2019.

organisational efforts, was highly effective and garnered widespread approval from all quarters. Consequently, the KMB is wholeheartedly endorsing Diani's candidacy for a second term].

Consequently, KMB plays an active role in all election-related activities, working diligently to strengthen support for the candidate. This close alliance is essential for the incumbent to portray a devout image and build connections with religious leaders. KMB strategically leverages religious identity to appeal to Muslim voters, utilising its extensive networks and resources, significantly contributing to Diani Budiarto's success in the mayoral election.

By collaborating with Islamist hardliner groups and capitalising on their vote mobilisation efforts, Budiarto's vote share saw a noticeable increase from 48.8% in 2003 to 63.8% in the 2008 municipal elections. According to Nastiti and Ratri (2018), Islamic hardliners possess three key advantages over political actors in mobilisation: organisational capacity, moral authority, and patronage networks. As a result, the mobilisation led by KMB received positive responses from the electorate. Islamist hardliners' organisational capacity enables them to penetrate society more quickly due to their local-level networks. Additionally, their moral authority allows them to present Islam as both a political doctrine and a way of life, making it easier to sway Islamic voters. These moral and social foundations grant them access to a political patronage network, as their connections with elites allow Islamist organisations to access state power through formal and informal institutions while maintaining popular support (Nastiti and Ratri, 2018).

Phases 3 and 4: The persecution of Ahmadiyah followers persisted, and the incumbent mayor secured and retained political support from Islamist hardliner groups by enacting a local regulation targeting Ahmadiyah

After assuming the role of mayor of Bogor from 2008 to 2013, Diani Budiarto continued to strengthen his political support by maintaining ties with KMB and Islamist groups. The pressure from these Islamist groups against the Ahmadiyah community reemerged on 24 February 2011 at the Al-Mubarak Sindang Barang Mosque.⁷⁸ During this event, KMB and other Islamist groups demanded an end to all religious activities conducted by Ahmadiyah followers. In Bogor, two key places of worship serve the Ahmadiyah Congregation: the Mubarak Mosque in Sindang Barang Village, West Bogor, and the Al Fadhl Mosque on Jalan Perintis Independen in Central

⁷⁸ Interview with the chairman of GARIS Bogor, 19 June 2019.

Bogor. Among these, the Mubarak Mosque in Sindang Barang stands out, as it is situated in a residential area predominantly inhabited by Ahmadiyah members and serves as a central hub for Ahmadiyah teachings in Bogor. HM Haris, a prominent Ahmadiyah figure and former regional secretary for Depok City, leads the Sindang Barang Ahmadiyah Congregation.

On the same date, 24 February 2011, the Bogor Muslim Family (KMB) and several other Islamist organisations collectively issued a declaration on behalf of the Bogor Islamic Community. In this statement, they called on the Bogor City government to establish a local regulation prohibiting Ahmadiyah activities within the city. This demand was further supported by Bakorpakem, which issued a recommendation on 25 February 2011, urging the city government to implement regulations to address the Ahmadiyah issue.

The previously cooperative relationship between Diani Budiarto and KMB shifted toward increased pressure on the Ahmadiyah community. Under pressure from KMB, Islamist hardliner groups, and Bakorpakem's recommendations, Diani Budiarto issued Mayor Regulation No. 300.45-122 of 2011 on 3 March 2011. This well-known regulation reinforces the prohibition of activities by Indonesian Ahmadiyah followers in Bogor. It explicitly bans the dissemination of Ahmadiyah teachings through verbal, written, or electronic means, the display of Ahmadiyah symbols, the installation of nameplates identifying Ahmadiyah places of worship and educational institutions, and the use of the Indonesian Ahmadiyah Congregation's logo in any form. This move aligns with the stance of one of the Bogor MUI administrators:⁷⁹

Diani mengeluarkan Peraturan Walikota terkait Pelarangan Kegiatan JAI di Kota Bogor karena ada desakan dari Islamist groups yang diawali dengan demonstrasi besar besaran di depan Masjid Ahmadiyah di Sindang Barang, kemudian dituangkan dalam 'Pernyataan Sikap Bersama Umat Islam Bogor' tanggal 24 Februari 2011 disusul rekomendasi Bakorpakem pada tanggal 25 Februari 2011 yang meminta walikota mengeluarkan regulasi terkait Ahmadiyah agar suasana keamanan dan kemasyarakatan lebih kondusif [Diani responded to pressure from Islamist groups by issuing a Mayor's Regulation that prohibited the activities of JAI (Jamaah

⁷⁹ Interview with the chairman of MUI Bogor 13 May 2019.

Ahmadiyah Indonesia) in Bogor. This pressure initially began with a significant demonstration in front of the Ahmadiyah Mosque in Sindang Barang. It was later formalised in the 'Statement of Joint Attitude of the Bogor Islamic Community' on 24 February 2011 and further supported by *Bakorpakem's* recommendation on 25 February 2011. *Bakorpakem* urged the mayor to enact regulations related to Ahmadiyah to enhance security and foster a more conducive social atmosphere]

After issuing the local regulation on Ahmadiyah, to prevent any potential disorderly actions by Islamist hardline groups against the Ahmadiyah followers, the local government decided to seal the Al Mubarak Sindang Barang mosque on 4 April 2011.⁸⁰ This decision was made in response to residents' demands to resolve communal conflicts. The mosque was closed and sealed following a demonstration by hundreds of Sindang Barang residents protesting the continued use of the mosque for JAI activities despite the mayor's regulation banning Ahmadiyah activities in the city.

Following the mayor's regulation issuance, the community felt they had the legal authority to monitor and restrict Ahmadiyah's activities. As a result, Ahmadiyah activities in Sindang Barang and the Jalan Merdeka Mosque declined. This decline included the reduction of weekly recitations and congregation meetings, the removal of signboards identifying Ahmadiyah mosques, and the discontinuation of post-Eid al-Fitr prayer gatherings. After the regulation was enforced, Ahmadiyah followers in Sindang Barang relocated their religious activities to the Cihampea Ahmadiyah Mosque, seeking a more favourable environment.

Phase 5: Agreement with Islamist hardliner groups not to persecute Ahmadiyah followers after regulation issued

The city government sealing of the Al Mubarak Sindang Barang mosque on 4 April 2011, as mentioned above, marked the last incident of persecution against Ahmadiyah followers. This termination of persecution can be attributed to an agreement between Diani and the KMB, in which they viewed the mayor's regulation as a mutually beneficial solution to the Ahmadiyah

⁸⁰ Masjid Ahmadiyah di Bogor di Segel, Tempo.co, 4 April 2011. <https://metro.tempo.co/read/324976/masjid-ahmadiyah-di-bogor-disegel>. Accessed 3 October 2023.

issue. The KMB has assured that there will be no further persecution of Ahmadiyah, as they believe the regulation is sufficient to control the spread of Ahmadiyah teachings within their community without dissemination to other groups, as conveyed by the KMB management:

Jadi perwali kami anggap cukup untuk memberikan sanksi terhadap Ahmadiyah atas ajarannya yang menyimpang itu, maka kami bersepakat dengan walikota Pak Diani bahwa tidak ada lagi persekusi terhadap Ahmadiyah pasca regulasi itu dikeluarkan. Kami jamin itu [Therefore, we believe that the measures imposed by the trustees to address Ahmadiyah's divergent teachings are adequate. Consequently, we reached an agreement with Mayor Diani that there would be no further persecution of Ahmadiyah following the issuance of the regulation. We stand by this guarantee]

The KMB no longer prioritises the Ahmadiyah issue after the mayor's regulation issuance. Their subsequent focus is on countering Christianisation by opposing the construction of the GKI Yasmin Church, as indicated by the KMB administrators.

Pasca diterbitkannya peraturan walikota terkait Ahmadiyah, maka isu ahmadiyah kami pandang telah selesai. Prioritas kami selanjutnya adalah penolakan atas pembangunan gereja GKI yasmin karena jelas disitu ada unsur pelanggaran prosedur dalam proses izin pembangunannya. Tanda tangan masyarakat sekitar gereja yang mereka salahgunakan [Following the issuance of the mayor's regulation concerning Ahmadiyah, we view the Ahmadiyah issue as resolved. Our subsequent focus is on opposing the construction of the GKI Yasmin Church, primarily due to perceived procedural violations in the construction permit process, including alleged misuse of the signatures of the local residents around the church]

The controversy surrounding the rejection of the GKI Yasmin church's construction permit began in 2010 but escalated significantly after April 2011, following the resolution of the

Ahmadiyah controversy. The initiation of events may be traced back to the authorisation issued by the local government on 19 July 2006, which allowed for the construction of a church named GKI Yasmin. The church came to be generally referred to as GKI Yasmin due to its geographical placement within the Taman Yasmin housing neighbourhood. Diani Budiarto stopped the permission in response to protests raised by Islamist hardliners, some citizens, and a criminal prosecution related to the suspected manipulation of citizen consent. Diani's choice to suspend the construction permit for GKI Yasmin persisted, even though the Supreme Court had declared it legally invalid. These issues with the GKI Yasmin church continued until Diani Budiarto's tenure as mayor ended in 2014.

Political competition and patronage network of Bima Arya

Phases 1 and 2: The mayoral candidate refrained from relying on hardliner groups for political support, opting to implement advanced programmatic campaign strategies instead

In his mayoral campaign, Bima Arya deviated from his predecessor by intentionally steering clear of endorsements or support from Islamist hardliner groups. Instead, he focused on a more inclusive and moderate political approach designed to reach a wider array of constituents. His campaign employed advanced programmatic strategies that underscored unity, religious tolerance, and collaboration among Bogor's diverse religious and social groups. The main goal was to make his appeal to voters more tangible and measurable, thus garnering broader support.

During the 2013 mayoral election campaign, Bima Arya made several promises encompassing various programs. These pledges covered education, healthcare, anti-corruption efforts, and management of street vendors.⁸¹ Arya has introduced a comprehensive 12-year free education initiative in the education sector. This program includes several key components, such as increasing the number of teaching staff to help reduce teacher-student ratios, leading to more personalised attention and improved learning experiences for students, ensuring equal access to elementary, middle, and high schools in every sub-district, and reducing educational disparities, distributing student textbooks, enhancing the well-being of teachers, standardising the

⁸¹ Jika terpilih, inilah janji Bima Arya untuk Warga Bogor, Kompas.com, 14 September 2013, <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2013/09/14/1324198/Jika.Terpilih.Inilah.Janji.Bima.Arya.untuk.Warga.Bogor>, accessed 4 October 2023.

infrastructure of primary and secondary schools, and offering 100 scholarships each year to both teachers and students at primary and secondary levels.⁸² In the health sector, Bima intended to establish an inpatient primary health centre in each sub-district, construct a public hospital, arrange for impoverished families to see physicians, enhance *Posyandu* services, and offer free medical care.⁸³ In addition, Bima outlined plans to partner with the Corruption Eradication Commission to streamline the administrative system and combat corruption. This collaboration was intended to bolster transparency and accountability in the utilisation of public funds, thus reducing the likelihood of corruption within the government. Furthermore, in urban development and city planning, one of Bima's prominent initiatives involves organising and regulating street vendors in various areas within the city centre.⁸⁴ This program aims to establish a structured and orderly environment for street vendors, enhancing the aesthetics and functionality of these urban spaces.

Moreover, in the 2018 mayoral election, Bima presented his key initiatives as a continuation of his political commitments during the 2013 mayoral election. Arya made it a top priority to implement a series of initiatives to improve urban transportation and address critical issues within the city. These initiatives encompassed transforming existing public transportation modes into buses to alleviate traffic congestion, regulating street vendors in the city centre, and effectively managing waste, including establishing a plastic waste recycling facility.⁸⁵ Specifically, the transportation plan involved replacing either three *angkot* (mini public transport vehicles) with one bus or three *angkot* with two minibuses. This expansion aimed to significantly enhance the coverage of public transportation services by introducing bus routes to 68 urban villages throughout the city.⁸⁶ This comprehensive approach sought to improve transportation,

⁸² 'Bima Arya klaim telah realisasikan 22 janji kampanye'. Dede Susanti. Media Indonesia. 29 January 2018. <https://mediaindonesia.com/megapolitan/142860/bima-arya-klaim-telah-realisasikan-22-janji-kampanye> accessed 5 October 2023.

⁸³ 'Bima Arya klaim telah realisasikan 22 janji kampanye'. Dede Susanti. Media Indonesia. 29 January 2018. <https://mediaindonesia.com/megapolitan/142860/bima-arya-klaim-telah-realisasikan-22-janji-kampanye> accessed 5 October 2023.

⁸⁴ Jika terpilih, inilah janji Bima Arya untuk Warga Bogor, Kompas.com, 14 September 2013, <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2013/09/14/1324198/Jika.Terpilih.Inilah.Janji.Bima.Arya.untuk.Warga.Bogor>, accessed, 4 October 2023.

⁸⁵ "Unggul Quick Count, ini program prioritas Bima Arya pada periode kedua" inews.id, 20 June 2018, <https://www.inews.id/news/megapolitan/unggul-quick-count-ini-program-prioritas-bima-arya-pada-periode-kedua>, accessed 6 October 2023.

⁸⁶ Bima Kebut Realisasi Janji Kampanye di Pilkada 2018, Susilo Yekti, Rakyat merdeka.id., 3 January 2023, <https://rm.id/baca-berita/megapolitan/155586/jabatan-walkot-bogor-selesai-tahun-ini-bima-kebut-realisasi-janji-kampanye-di-pilkada-2018>. accessed 6 October 2023.

address urban congestion, regulate street vendors, and contribute to environmental sustainability through efficient waste management.

In addition to mobilising support from a broader spectrum of constituents, Bima Arya has implemented another advanced and programmatic campaign strategy – promoting religious moderation. The primary aim of this approach is to facilitate Bogor's transformation into a modern and inclusive urban centre. Under this specific framework, religious moderation is characterised by its strong emphasis on promoting unity, tolerance, and peace among all segments of society (Akhmadi, 2019). Besides that, religious moderation involves finding a middle ground between two opposing or extreme viewpoints (Ushama, 2014). In this context, it requires engaging with diverse interpretations of religious beliefs to address various challenges. Thus, it signifies a move away from radicalism (Akmadi, 2019).

The adoption of the religious moderation approach was driven by Bima's recognition of persistent challenges within the religious landscape of Bogor. Specifically, he identified issues affecting religious minority groups not enjoying the freedom to practice their faith without hindrance. Two notable examples were the Ahmadiyah Congregation and the GKI Yasmin Christian Congregation, the latter of which had encountered difficulties related to the construction of the GKI Yasmin church since 2010. Bima Arya articulated his perspective on this matter as follows:⁸⁷

Saya ingin menjadikan Bogor itu ramah bagi semua umat beragama dalam menjalankan ibadahnya, termasuk kaum minoritas termasuk Ahmadiyah. Selain itu, saya ingin sekali menyelesaikan permasalahan GKI Yasmin yang telah lama menjadi pekerjaan rumah kota Bogor [My goal is to create an inclusive and welcoming environment that enables all religious communities, including minorities like Ahmadiyah, to practice their faith without any hindrance. Additionally, I am deeply committed to resolving the longstanding issue surrounding the GKI Yasmin church, which has been a longstanding challenge for the city of Bogor].

⁸⁷ Interview with Bima Arya, 16 June 2019.

In response to these pressing challenges, Bima Arya emphasised adopting a more inclusive and tolerant approach to handling religious matters in Bogor. He recognised the importance of fostering unity, acceptance, and peaceful coexistence among all religious groups, irrespective of their beliefs. This recognition underscored his commitment to creating an atmosphere where all religious communities, including minorities, could freely practice their faith without impediments.

Through this comprehensive approach, Bima garnered significant support from his constituents, leading to his victory in the 2013 mayoral election. However, his win was closely contested, with a slim margin over the incumbent, Achmad Ru'yat. The difference between the two candidates was just 1,755 votes, representing a mere 0.4% of the total votes. Ultimately, Bima Arya secured the mayoral position with 132,835 votes, narrowly surpassing Achmad Ru'yat, who received 131,080 votes. In the 2018 mayoral election, the rivalry between Bima Arya and Achmad Ru'yat resurfaced. Bima Arya won again, receiving 215,708 votes, which accounted for 43.64% of the total votes. Achmad Ru'yat secured 31.03% of the votes in this closely watched regional election.

Phases 3 and 4: The mayoral candidate elected maintained communication with the Islamist hardliner groups, supported by progressive local religious authorities

As previously mentioned, the influence of Islamist hardliners in Bogor, including prominent groups like the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Islamic Community Forum (FUI), Garis, and Forkami, is arranged through the coordination of the KMB (*Keluarga Muslim Bogor / Bogor Muslim Family*). The KMB serves as an overarching organisation and a central point of reference for various Islamic mass movements, with a specific emphasis on advancing the interests of the Muslim community in Bogor. Unlike some regions where hardline Islamist movements operate independently, Bogor presents a unique situation where these groups work collectively under the coordination of KMB.

Consequently, even after Bima's election in both the 2013 and 2018 mayoral elections, he maintained communication with the KMB. This approach, as he stated:

Dalam berpolitik dan memimpin daerah saya menerapkan political thresholds, artinya sikap saya sebagai kepala daerah jangan terlalu keras yang mengakibatkan sulitnya menjalankan program pembangunan dan jangan terlalu lembek yang menjadikan kepala daerah dikendalikan

pihak tertentu. Oleh karena itu, menjaga komunikasi dengan berbagai pihak saya mutlak saya lakukan [In my role in politics and as a region leader, I adhere to the concept of political moderation, which means that I adopt a balanced approach. This involves not being overly strict, which could hinder the implementation of development programs and not being extremely accommodating, leading to undue influence from specific parties. Consequently, I need to maintain open communication with various stakeholders and parties to strike the right balance in my leadership].

Bima Arya's ability to "tame" Islamist hardliners in Bogor was rooted in a pragmatic balancing act that combined strategic engagement, coalition-building, and the promotion of religious moderation. Rather than directly opposing or marginalizing hardliner groups such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and the Islamic Community Forum (FUI), Bima adopted a nuanced approach that allowed him to maintain dialogue with these groups while simultaneously reinforcing his commitment to an inclusive governance model.

A key factor in this strategy was his engagement with the Keluarga Muslim Bogor (KMB), which coordinated various Islamist factions in the city. By keeping communication channels open, Bima Arya ensured that these groups did not feel entirely excluded from the political process. His approach was not one of capitulation but of calculated political moderation—where he avoided direct confrontation while ensuring that hardliner groups did not gain unchecked influence over municipal governance. This engagement helped mitigate the likelihood of these groups resorting to aggressive actions, including the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers.

At the same time, Bima strengthened his position by securing the backing of progressive religious leaders, particularly KH Mustofa Abdullah Bin Nuh (KH Toto) and KH Hasbullah, who held influential positions in the Bogor MUI and FKUB. These figures played a crucial role in shaping religious discourse in the city, and their endorsement of Bima's governance model added religious legitimacy to his policies. By aligning himself with these progressive voices, Bima Arya ensured that the dominant religious narrative in Bogor tilted toward moderation rather than extremism. This strategic alliance served as a counterweight to hardliner groups, limiting their ability to exert pressure on his administration.

Furthermore, Bima Arya's programmatic governance approach—focusing on education, healthcare, infrastructure, and anti-corruption efforts—helped shift the political discourse in Bogor away from sectarian concerns. By addressing concrete urban issues that resonated with the broader electorate, he reduced the political space for hardliner groups to mobilize support based on religious identity politics. In this way, he not only minimized the influence of Islamist hardliners but also strengthened his own political legitimacy among a diverse constituency.

Ultimately, Bima Arya's strategy was effective because it leveraged engagement without dependency. By maintaining communication with Islamist groups while simultaneously aligning with progressive religious authorities and emphasizing development-focused governance, he was able to neutralize potential conflicts and prevent the persecution of religious minorities like the Ahmadiyah. His leadership exemplifies how political actors can navigate complex religious dynamics without succumbing to the pressures of hardliner factions.

5.4.2 Religious authority/local religious leaders

Following the release of the mayor's order about Ahmadiyah on 3 March 2011 and the municipal government's closing of the Al Mubarak Mosque in Sindang Barang on 4 April 2011, as described above, this was the final instance of persecution that Ahmadiyah followers faced to date. Subsequently, no other cases of persecution by the KMB or other extremist Islamist factions have been reported. Diani and KMB concur that the local regulation represents a mutually beneficial resolution for the stakeholders involved in the Ahmadiyah matter. The KMB offered an assurance that there would be no further persecution of the Ahmadiyah community. This regulation is enough to manage Ahmadiyah teachings' growth exclusively inside their circles, without dissemination to other communities. Moreover, Bima Arya's campaign and leadership were characterised by implementing sophisticated programmatic campaigning techniques by introducing novel programs. His primary objective was to foster a sense of moderation and inclusivity among the residents of Bogor, irrespective of their religious affiliations.

Based on empirical findings, this research found that in the context of the Bogor mayoral election, the incumbent politician must get the support of progressive *kiai*. This backing is necessary to effectively compete for election votes and counterbalance the conservative

influence of Islamist hardliner factions. Hence, it becomes evident that religious authority can be understood as a role fulfilled by collectives or individuals who exert social power and control, as posited by Al-Astewani (2021), Barmania and Reiss (2021), and Pabbajah et al. (2020). These scholars contend that religious authority entails the inclination to assert expectations upon individuals or groups possessing cultural and structural influence within religious establishments. The government often involves religious leaders, community leaders, and owners of religious authorities in decision-making (Burhani, 2016). One indication of political parties or the government making concessions to ensure political stability is their interaction and cooperation with religious authorities.

5.4.2.1 The political stance of *kiai*

To comprehensively examine religious authority, it is essential to consider the classical categories of authority proposed by Max Weber, which include logical, conventional, and charismatic forms. The authority of *kiai* has a striking resemblance to charismatic authority. According to Weber's perspective, a religious authority may be characterised as a distinct attribute of an individual's personality, distinguishing them from the general population and recognising them as possessing supernatural, superhuman, or notably extraordinary attributes. The distinction between the idea of authority and the concept of power should be made clear. The concept of power may be characterised as the ability to exercise one's will without constraint in the face of opposition from people or collectives. In contrast, authority refers to the legitimate entitlement to take action, guide, or make decisions. Power is a concept that is not formally established within institutions and is consistently intertwined with acts of resistance and conflict. On the other hand, authority is a concept established officially within institutions and embodies a collection of norms, processes, and traditions intended to be executed within a social entity.

The Indonesian Islamic tradition showcases a wide array of religious leaders within the realm of religious authority, serving as a prime example of such authorities' widespread dispersion and typology. In Indonesia's framework of Islamic religious leadership, many titles are ascribed to those who occupy positions of power and influence. These titles include *kiai*, *ulama*, *imam*, *ustadzy mubaligh*, *da'i*, *penyuluh*, *tengku*, and *buya*. The necessity for political politicians to garner support among progressive *kiai* is motivated by several factors.

Firstly, *kiai* serve as cultural brokers or intermediaries facilitating the relationship between the national system and the local community. According to Geertz's (1960) research on *kiai* in Java,

he posits that *kiai* have a crucial position in society. They function as cultural intermediaries, facilitating interaction between the national system and the local community. However, Geertz suggests that the emergence of information and communication technology may render their job obsolete. In opposition to Geertz's notion of the cultural broker, Horikoshi (1987), who conducted an in-depth examination of the *kiai* and their correlation with social transformation inside Sundanese society, argues that *kiai* cannot be categorised as intermediaries or facilitators between the local community and the national system. Consequently, Horikoshi contends that the job of *kiai* will remain relevant and not become outdated. *Kiai* engage in the filtration of information that they deem significant and suitable for the local community. Additionally, they impede communication channels and agents of change and withhold information to avert the establishment of direct connections between disparate entities and safeguard their opposition. The *kiai*, in turn, assumes the role of an active actor in facilitating societal change and transformation. Consequently, the *ulama* can maintain their autonomous status in both economic and socio-cultural realms. According to Horikoshi, the *kiai's* ability to maintain societal status is contingent upon possessing charismatic qualities.

Secondly, *kiai* are indicative of political entrepreneurs. Dirdjosanjoto (1999) examines the social and political impact of *kiai* in Central Java by differentiating between the *kiai pesantren* (prominent religious scholars) and the *kiai langgar* (less influential religious scholars). In his scholarly investigation, the researcher endeavours to reconcile the dual functions of *kiai*, serving as cultural brokers as proposed by Geertz, and functioning as political entrepreneurs, as stated by Horikoshi. The argument is that *kiai* may be considered to be fulfilling the roles of both cultural brokers and political entrepreneurs. However, the author highlights that the role of the *kiai* as a cultural intermediary is not limited to periods of change and the mediation of local and national cultures but extends to a much broader scope. Furthermore, the *kiai* have a position that intersects both the secular and the religious realms and are tasked with interpreting the connections between these two spheres for villagers. Dirdjosanjoto emphasises the pivotal role of the *kiai* as a mediator in various dimensions of human existence, including the reconciliation of religious doctrines and practices, the facilitation of a connection between God and society, and the bridging of the universal Islamic civilisation with local Islamic traditions. This role is fundamental in establishing the *kiai's* authority within the Muslim community. According to Dirdjosanjoto, the efficacy of the *kiai* may be attributed to their dual positions as religious and political leaders, which they always uphold. However, he continues to distinguish between these

two positions and places greater emphasis on the political dimension of *ulama* rather than their religious dimension.

Thirdly, the phenomenon of *kiai* has facilitated the development of intricate networks comprising adherents and associates, ensuring the enduring stability of the leadership position in the context of societal and political transformations. Mansurnoor (1987) conducted research whereby he identified *kiai* as an integral component of the local social structure, and he argues that *kiai* hold a strategic position and fulfil significant functions across several areas, including a crucial role in fostering the development of intricate networks of followers and colleagues. These networks have effectively contributed to the preservation of the leadership position, particularly in the context of navigating societal and political transformations.

5.4.2.2 Progressive local religious leaders

Prior studies have emphasised the significant contribution of religious leaders, commonly referred to as *kiai*, in promoting peace by actively participating in conflict resolution efforts and mobilising voters during local elections. As a result, Bima Arya was strategically emphasising an advanced and systematic campaign strategy, which involved using progressive local religious leaders to garner extensive support for conflict reduction and gaining mass support. Regarding the position of a religious figure in local elections, in their study, Hashemi and Postel (2017) argued that a fundamental aspect of the sectarianisation thesis is a religious figure's pursuit of religious authority in the context of municipal elections. This refers to the dynamic processes through which political leaders exploit or fabricate religious identities to acquire political influence within the framework of mayoral elections. The sectarianisation thesis posits that identity is a flexible construct that may be utilised for political advantage and strategic manoeuvring. The authors emphasised that the sectarianisation process is continuous and is shaped by political players operating within particular contexts. These actors strategically pursue political goals involving mobilising public attitudes based on various identity markers. In addition, the sectarianisation process is influenced by other variables, including class dynamics, the vulnerability of governments, and geopolitical rivalry (Hashemi and Postel, 2017).

Moreover, when considering religious authority in mayoral elections it is worth noting that religious authorities or *kiai* possess dynamic attributes that are susceptible to co-optation and inherent competition (Pelletier, 2019). The emergence of new interpreters within the split of Sunni Islam perpetuates continuous competition for dominant positions as representatives of the

faith (Brubaker 2015). The contestation of religious authority is a prevalent phenomenon observed among Islamic leaders who actively participate in rivalry within the religious domain. Their primary objective is to establish their claims as the most legitimate representatives of Islam, therefore exerting influence on Islamic ideals in both social and spiritual realms. Nevertheless, this assertion does not hold true in the context of Bogor.

In the present context, the contestation for religious authority, characterised by ongoing competition within the religious domain, is not observable in the locality of Bogor. Bogor is home to two notable *kiai* individuals who promote progressive perspectives on the Ahmadiyah community. Their influential contributions have played a vital role in establishing the city as a sanctuary where Ahmadiyah followers are protected from persecution due to the application of local rules. In addition to their religious impact, these two *kiai* personalities have significant political power, particularly in the context of the 2013 mayoral race. Their endorsement was greatly coveted, notably by Bima Arya. When applying Dirdjosanjoto's (1999) categorisation, which distinguishes between *kiai pesantren* (prominent religious scholars) and *kiai langgar* (less influential religious scholars), it becomes clear that KH Toto assumes the role of *kiai pesantren*, while the young NU figure KH Hasbullah is classified as *kiai langgar*.

Currently, KH Toto holds the head position at the Al-Ghazaly Islamic Boarding School. The establishment of this institution dates back to 1970, under the leadership of KH Abdullah bin Nuh, who is the father of KH Toto. The expansion of this Islamic boarding school has exhibited notable progress, transitioning from a modest *diniah madrasah* (elementary Islamic school) to a multifaceted educational institution offering a wide range of academic programs spanning from basic to advanced levels. During its initial years, the educational institution saw a very limited enrolment of around 400 students. However, presently, it proudly showcases a substantial student population and an extensive network of alumni, reaching a count in the tens of thousands. Therefore, this *pesantren* is a prominent institution in Bogor, known for its significant size and role as a vital hub for moderate Islamic religious instruction. It acts as a focal point inside Bogor and throughout the wider West Java area – the progressive attitude of KH Toto on the issue of Ahmadiyah became apparent during an interview. He said:

Ahmadiyah ini memang secara aqidah memiliki perbedaan dengan kami sebagai penerus ajaran Ahli sunnah wal jamaah, namun saya tidak memusuhi Ahmadiyah tapi justru merangkul dan melindungi mereka

sebagai sesama warga negara demi terciptanya kondusifitas bermasyarakat [While Ahmadiyah may hold differences in faith from our perspective as adherents of the Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah, it's important to note that I do not harbour hostility towards Ahmadiyah. Instead, I advocate for their acceptance and protection as fellow citizens, all in the interest of fostering harmony within our society].

Additionally, KH Toto conveyed his perspective that Ahmadiyah primarily disseminates its teachings within its community and does not threaten the state's integrity, unlike Wahhabism and the HTI movement. This perspective is evident in his assertion:

Ahmadiyah bukanlah ancaman yang perlu dikhawatirkan, karena besarnya Ahmadiyah hanya untuk kalangannya sendiri berikut dakwah untuk internal mereka saja. Saya tidak menemukan propaganda yang dilakukan Ahmadiyah yang membahayakan NKRI yang tentunya berbeda dengan paham salafisme dan wahabisme yang jelas mengganggu kehidupan bernegara [Ahmadiyah does not pose a significant threat warranting concern, as its influence remains primarily confined to its internal circles and their own missionary efforts. I have not observed any propaganda campaigns by Ahmadiyah that jeopardise the Republic of Indonesia. This stands in stark contrast to ideologies like Salafism and Wahhabism, which, unequivocally, disrupt the nation's stability and way of life].

Another prominent *kiai* in the city is KH Hasbullah, a youthful and intellectual figure deeply committed to fostering religious harmony among the Bogor community. He actively participates as a *kiai langgar*, delivering religious sermons and playing a significant role in the religious milieu of the city – currently, KH Hasbullah has the prestigious position of Chairman of the FKUB (Forum for Religious Harmony) Bogor. His stance on Ahmadiyah in the city reflects the moderation of a *kiai langgar*, as articulated:

Walaupun berbeda pemahaman dengan muslim sunni secara umum, dalam bersosial Ahmadiyah tidak mencoba menyebarkan paham ajarannya kepada yang telah beragama. Oleh karena itu, saya terus mengupayakan ruang diskusi antar golongan dan pemangku kepentingan

untuk membuka pandangan dan perspektif satu sama lain untuk tidak saling mencurigai demi menjaga keamanan dan ketertiban [Despite their distinct beliefs compared to Sunni Muslims in the broader context, Ahmadiyah, in their social engagements, refrain from actively proselytising to those who are already religiously inclined. Consequently, I remain committed to fostering a platform for dialogue among various groups and stakeholders. This dialogue aims to facilitate the exchange of viewpoints and perspectives, mitigating any unwarranted suspicions and promoting an environment of security and order].

In addition to enlisting progressive local religious leaders to garner widespread support for conflict reduction and mass backing, Bima Arya has adopted another advanced and programmatic campaign strategy – religious moderation. The objective of this method is to facilitate the transition of Bogor into a contemporary and inclusive urban centre. Religious moderation, as defined under this particular framework, is distinguished by its emphasis on fostering unity, tolerance, and peace across all societal factions (Akhmadi, 2019). The phenomenon under consideration is observed in routine social exchanges and interpersonal connections, facilitating the cultivation of transparency, balance, and acceptance (Bachrong and Ansar, 2021). Religious moderation also embodies the concept of finding a middle ground between two opposing or extreme viewpoints (Ushama, 2014). In practice, it's essential to differentiate between religious moderation and religious understanding. Several studies have indicated that a firm grasp of religious principles does not necessarily equate to a deep comprehension and awareness of religious moderation. For instance, Adawiyah et al. (2021) found that adolescents in West Java, including Bogor, exhibit below-average understanding of religious moderation, even though their knowledge of religion is considered good. From this perspective, it becomes clear that an individual's level of religious understanding cannot reliably be correlated with their awareness of religious moderation.

The notion of religious moderation, a fundamental principle of Bima Arya's electoral campaign, continued to be a prominent focal point during his term as Mayor of Bogor. The primary objective from the outset was to strengthen the MUI institution and place his trusted *kiai*. In his statement, Bima articulated his viewpoint.

MUI sebagai rumah umat Islam perlu didukung pengembangannya khususnya terkait moderasi beragama dan perlu dipimpin oleh kiai yang progressive dan moderat, KH Toto sebagai salah satu kandidat terbaik untuk memimpin MUI yang sudah terlihat kemoderatan dan track recordnya [MUI, as the heart of our Muslim community, deserves unwavering support in its growth, particularly in promoting religious moderation. It should be led by a progressive and moderate figure, and KH Toto stands out as one of the most qualified candidates to lead MUI, given his demonstrated commitment to moderation and his track record].

During the initial phase of Bima Arya's leadership, KH Toto was elected as the chairman of Bogor MUI for the 2017–2022 term.⁸⁸ Remarkably aligned with the advanced and programmatic campaign strategy of religious moderation advocated by Bima, KH Toto articulated his primary objective as the head of MUI: to reestablish Bogor as a 'City of Guardians' by reinstating the practice of moderate Islamic teachings that were originally disseminated by the early guardians of Islam in the region. In his own words:

Saya akan mencoba mengembalikan marwah kota Bogor sebagai kota wali dengan cara mengembangkan pengajaran dan pemahaman Islam yang moderat sesuai dengan ajaran ahli sunah wal jamaah, dan mengembalikan kondusifitas beragama dan memberikan ruang regak yang sama bagi seluruh agama yang ada di Kota Bogor [I am dedicated to revitalising Bogor's reputation as a guardian city by promoting the growth of moderate Islamic teachings, rooted in the principles of Sunnah wal Jamaah experts. My mission includes reestablishing an atmosphere of religious harmony and ensuring equitable opportunities for all faiths within the city of Bogor].

Moreover, under the leadership of Bima Arya, KH Hasbullah was appointed as the FKUB (Forum for Religious Harmony) chairman for 2016–2021. Due to his commendable performance in fostering an environment favourable to religious harmony, he was re-elected for a second term spanning 2021–2026. FKUB is an organisation dedicated to promoting and facilitating interfaith

⁸⁸ Ketua Yayasan Islamic Center Al Ghazaly terpilih menjadi ketua MUI Kota Bogor, <https://bogor.tribunnews.com/2017/05/18/ketua-yayasan-islamic-center-al-ghazaly-terpilih-jadi-ketua-mui-kota-bogor>, accessed 20 September 2023.

conversation and cooperation across diverse communities. The Religious Harmony Forum is pivotal in cultivating harmony and promoting comprehension among the many religious communities. The primary aims of this endeavour often encompass the mediation and pursuit of peaceful settlements in response to religious disputes or tensions; engaging in partnerships with governmental entities and civil society organisations to advance the principles of religious freedom and foster harmonious cohabitation; and promoting interfaith talks and debates as a means of addressing shared challenges and concerns. This forum promotes tolerance and respect between diverse religious communities while coordinating various initiatives such as events, conferences, and workshops to cultivate religious peace.

The efforts to engage progressive local religious leaders and promote religious moderation during the mayoral election campaign and throughout Bima Arya's tenure have yielded a positive outcome in preventing persecution of the Ahmadiyah congregation in Bogor. The head of the Bogor Ahmadiyah congregation expressed this sentiment as follows.

Dalam dua periode kepemimpinan Bima Arya ini kami rasakan sangat positif ditambah dengan peran para progressive religious leader yang memberikan nuansa baru dalam kehidupan beragama di Bogor. Alhamdulillah hingga saat ini tidak pernah terjadi lagi persekusi ataupun hal-hal yang mengganggu kami beribadah khususnya jamaah Ahmadiyah yang terkonsentrasi di Masjid Mubarak di Sindang Barang dan Masjid Al Fadhl di Perintis Kemerdekaan [During both of Bima Arya's leadership terms, we have experienced a very positive transformation, greatly amplified by the contributions of progressive religious leaders who have injected fresh perspectives into religious life in Bogor. Gratefully, there has been no further persecution or disruptions to our worship, particularly for the Ahmadiyah followers concentrated at the Mubarak Mosque in Sindang Barang and the Al Fadhl Mosque in Perintis Kemerdekaan].

5.4.3 Muslim civic organisation ties

I have previously discussed how political competition did not compel the incumbent candidates to seek political support from hardline groups. Instead, they employed advanced programmatic campaign strategies to garner support in local mayoral elections. In the context of patronage

networks, incumbent candidates maintained communication with both hardline Islamic groups and progressive local religious authorities simultaneously. Now, I will elucidate how community organisational connections do not play a role in promoting persecution, particularly in the context of political competition, especially during mayoral elections in Bogor.

Scholars have contended that civic organisations are pivotal in electoral democracy and fostering religious diversity. They are seen as vital institutional checks on government power and promoters of social cohesion within society (Hefner, 2000; Menchik, 2016). In this regard, Brown (2019) distinguishes civic organisations as non-state entities with the functional capacity to shape policies, influence political discourse, and wield influence over political actors during conflicts. They serve as ideological instruments for upholding democratic and pluralistic principles. Furthermore, Kopecky and Muddle (2003) argue that civic organisations are characterised by performing specific tasks, including acting as intermediaries between the state and households, advocating for public policies outside of formal state structures, maintaining independence from the state, and potentially serving as a check on the powers of the state.

Based on Brown's (2019) classification outlined above, both NU and Muhammadiyah unquestionably align with the functional characteristics of a civic organisation. However, their alignment with the ideological aspect is less clear-cut. While they unequivocally reject the idea of an Islamic state, they favour Indonesia as a multi-religious state that grants equal rights to people of all faiths, as Brown (2019) describes. Members of NU and Muhammadiyah are willing to compromise their commitment to human rights, equal protection for religious minorities, and civil pluralism if they perceive a need to defend Islam against heresy, blasphemy, or encroachments by other faiths, as discussed by Menchik (2016; 2019). Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah and NU still play a distinct role in upholding democratic values, particularly when parliamentary legislation threatens Indonesia's pluralistic system of government. In such instances, they step in to safeguard the state's formal commitment to religious diversity, as Brown (2019) noted.

This research has uncovered a noteworthy absence of persecution directed towards the Ahmadiyah community in Bogor, a phenomenon attributed to the pivotal role played by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). In the context of Bogor, NU has emerged as a guardian of intra-religious harmony, gaining considerable popularity among political parties and incumbent candidates

seeking political support. NU's presence in Bogor has effectively counterbalanced municipal policies that lean towards moderation and prioritise religious pluralism.

The success of NU Bogor in fulfilling its role can be attributed to two key factors. Firstly, NU Bogor has actively promoted a climate of religious moderation that aligns with the inclinations of the incumbent candidate, Bima Arya. Secondly, NU Bogor serves as a counterweight to more hardline Islamic groups, thereby helping to maintain a delicate equilibrium in the city's religious landscape. These combined factors have ensured that Bogor remains a place where religious diversity is respected and the rights of all individuals, including the Ahmadiyah community, are upheld and protected.

5.4.3.1 NU Bogor has actively promoted a climate of religious moderation.

According to Manshur and Husni (2020), religious moderation is frequently defined as the embodiment of well-balanced religious viewpoints that cover several aspects, such as knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, ethics, and relationships. In contrast, religious extremism is distinguished by the presence of perspectives, attitudes, and actions significantly beyond the established norms and ideals connected with a particular religious belief system. At times, such extremism can lead to societal deviations within individuals and groups, as pointed out by Beelmann (2020). These terms, moderation and extremism, are often seen as opposed concepts. However, Saroglou (2011) argues that they constitute a unified continuum, with individuals or groups falling along this spectrum. Wibisono et al. (2019) discovered that the distinction between moderate and extreme religious attitudes can be delineated in various dimensions: theological, ritual, social, and political. This distinction helps clarify when a person or group is considered moderate in their religious beliefs and practices versus when they are perceived as exhibiting extreme tendencies.

Since its inception, NU has consistently adhered to and implemented the principles of *Islam wasatiyah* in its *da'wah* and activities, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity and non-discrimination towards individuals from diverse religious and organisational backgrounds. This means NU shares the common objective of promoting a peaceful interpretation of Islam that brings blessings to all (Faiqah and Pransiska, 2018). Islam is a significant source of inspiration, particularly in social and political engagement. The NU has restated its dedication to interpreting Islam as a framework for regulating daily interactions and fostering peaceful coexistence between Indonesia's Muslim majority and its religious minority groups. In addition, the NU

maintains that Islam should ideally serve as a global source of knowledge and prosperity, acting as a protective canopy for all individuals. Consequently, their worldview starkly contrasts with the prevailing formalistic and integralist paradigm prominent in recent discussions. While there may be variations in the exact approaches these organisations employ, their overarching objectives remain consistent (Alhidayatillah and Sabiruddin, 2018).

In the case of Bogor, KH Mustafa Abdullah bin Nuh or KH Toto articulately expressed NU Bogor's unwavering commitment to fostering religious moderation in his role as Rois Syuriah, the esteemed head of the supreme council of NU Bogor. In this pivotal leadership position, KH Toto emerged as a beacon of wisdom and a guiding light for the community, exemplifying the organisation's core values and principles. Through his articulate speeches, KH Toto emphasised the importance of striking a harmonious balance within the practice of Islam. He advocated for an approach that encourages tolerance, inclusivity, and peaceful coexistence among people of different faiths. His messages were not limited to religious gatherings but extended to various platforms, reaching individuals from all walks of life. He said⁸⁹:

Budaya dakwah yang dilakukan NU sangat dipengaruhi oleh fakta bahwa Islam hidup berdampingan dengan tradisi lokal dalam ruang yang menonjolkan nilai toleransi, gotong royong, moderasi, kesetaraan dan keadilan. Dimana nilai-nilai tersebut dalam NU dikaitkan dengan cita-cita tawassuth (moderasi), tawazun wa i'tidal (keseimbangan), tasamuh (toleransi), dan amar ma'ruf nahi munkar [The culture of da'wah practiced by NU is profoundly shaped by the unique context in which Islam coexists with local traditions. This context emphasises the cherished values of tolerance, mutual cooperation, moderation, equality, and justice. Within NU, these values are intricately linked to the ideals of tawassuth (moderation), tawazun wa i'tidal (balance), tasamuh (tolerance), and amar ma'ruf nahi munkar (enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong)]

The leadership of KH Toto played a pivotal role in establishing Bogor as a city renowned for its religious tolerance and inclusiveness. Under his guidance, NU Bogor actively engaged with local leaders, politicians, and the broader community to create an environment where diverse religious

⁸⁹ Interview with KH. Toto, supervisor of NU Bogor, 23 May 2019

beliefs were respected. With a deep understanding of the local context and a profound knowledge of Islamic teachings, KH Toto championed the cause of religious moderation within the Bogor region. His words and actions resonated with the members of NU and a broader audience, including the general public and local authorities.

In addition, KH Toto's excellent attitude and unwavering commitment to religious moderation are precisely what Bima Aria, as a mayoral candidate, requires for his forward-looking and programmatic campaign strategy. Bima Aria's vision for Bogor is nothing short of transformative, aiming to position the city as a contemporary and inclusive urban centre that stands as a beacon of progress and harmony. By embracing religious moderation, Bima Aria seeks to create an environment where people of all backgrounds can coexist peacefully and contribute to the city's growth and development. KH Toto's legacy of promoting tolerance, inclusivity, and mutual understanding can serve as a source of inspiration for Bima Aria's campaign. It provides a solid foundation upon which the candidate can build a vision of Bogor as a city where diversity is celebrated and where every resident feels valued and respected. As Bima said⁹⁰:

Permasalahan keagamaan di Kota Bogor menyangkut beragama, dari permasalahan intra maupun extra religious conflict. Intra religious conflict terjadi diantaranya terkait syiah dan ahmadiyah, dan inter religious conflict adalah terkait pembangunan Gereja GKI Yasmin dimana terjadi penolakan dari masyarakat sekitar yang hingga saat ini masih berlarut-larut. Komitmen KH Toto dalam moderasi beragama, telah menjadi inspirasi dalam membangun kota Bogor ke depan dan dukungan dari keluarga besar NU sangat diharapkan [The city of Bogor exhibits a range of religious issues, encompassing both intra-religious challenges and disputes that extend outside religious boundaries. The conflicts that transpired may be categorised as intra-religious and inter-religious in nature. The intra-religious issues mostly revolved on the Shia and Ahmadiyah sects, while the inter-religious conflict centred on the building of the GKI Yasmin Church. Notably, the neighbouring community has exhibited ongoing hostility towards

⁹⁰ Interview with Bima Arya, 16 June 2019

this construction project. The dedication of KH Toto to religious moderation has emerged as a source of inspiration for the future development of Bogor city, with great anticipation for assistance from the larger family of NU].

Bima Arya experienced a tangible connection to NU's perspective and its invaluable support for religious moderation. This connection became evident through his successful tenure as the mayor of Bogor, where he secured significant votes during his second term in office. NU's support, particularly under the guidance of KH Toto, played a pivotal role in helping Bima Arya address a longstanding and contentious issue: the rejection of the construction of the GKI Yasmin church. This controversy had persisted for a challenging 13 years.

During his time as mayor, Bima Arya demonstrated effective governance and forged a strong partnership with NU, an organisation deeply rooted in religious moderation. This partnership became a cornerstone in his efforts to resolve the protracted issue surrounding the church construction. With NU's guidance and support, Bima Arya navigated the complex social and political landscape, ultimately working towards a solution that fostered religious harmony and inclusivity within Bogor.

The successful collaboration between Bima Arya and NU is a testament to the power of leadership that values religious moderation and its role in overcoming longstanding challenges and promoting social cohesion. Their combined efforts addressed a contentious issue and exemplified the potential for cooperation between political leadership and religious organisations to create a more harmonious and inclusive community.

5.4.3.2 NU Bogor serves as a counterweight to more hardline Islamic groups

Two contrasting perspectives exist concerning the role of NU. On one hand, NU is viewed as a staunch advocate and defender of religious tolerance, pluralism, and democracy (Künkler and Stepan, 2013). Furthermore, Greg Fealy (1998) and Robin Bush (2009) have expressed critical perspectives on NU, suggesting that political motivations and material interests influence it; the predominant view in academic literature portrays NU as a reliable defender of democracy, moderation, and tolerance in Indonesia. Respected academics who espouse a favourable perspective on NU, such as Greg Barton (2002) and Robert Hefner (2000), have exhaustively recorded NU's significant contribution to the development of a pluralistic, tolerant, and 'civil'

manifestation of Islam. These respected academics have produced many publications that underscore NU's substantial role in moulding Indonesia's religious milieu, with a particular emphasis on promoting inclusion and diversity. The renowned scholar in political comparative analysis, Stepan and Menchik (2010), have expressed admiration for NU, characterising it as a fundamental pillar of a tolerant civic society. The acknowledgment highlights NU's significant influence in shaping Indonesia's religious and political landscape, promoting democratic values, religious tolerance, and social cohesion.

In contrast, Mietzner and Muhtadi (2020) provide a cautionary perspective on the idealisation of NU's role. The viewpoint, as inferred from the analysis of survey data, highlights a disturbing pattern of intolerance exhibited by adherents of NU towards religious minority groups at the local level. The authors contend that the discrimination observed at the NU can be attributed to the organisation's historical emphasis on engaging in conflicts with other Muslim organisations that are seen as potential challenges to its interests. This focus on confrontation has overshadowed any deliberate endeavours to actively promote tolerance initiatives that have the potential to bring about significant changes in the religious and political attitudes of its members. In furthering this scholarly conversation, Pelletier's (2020) recent study highlights the role of religious market dynamics in shaping instances of religious prejudice towards marginalised and less influential Islamic communities. Pelletier's comparative analysis, carried out in East Java and West Java, illustrates that the mobilisation of Islamists tends to transpire in contexts marked by the heightened struggle for religious authority, mainly when prevailing Muslim leaders are viewed as lacking in strength.

In practice, the fieldwork reveals that NU Bogor consistently upholds its role as a staunch defender of religious tolerance, pluralism, and democracy. Furthermore, it is a critical counterweight to more hardline Islamic groups operating in the region. The finding aligns with what Jati (2022) calls the 'traditionalist turn', a phenomenon where traditionalist Muslims have reclaimed their rightful place within the religious landscape, pushing back against the influence of conservative factions. NU has been particularly effective in curtailing the sway of conservative elements as part of its overarching campaign for religious moderation. NU Bogor's efforts in this regard are notable and include several key initiatives.

Firstly, one of their key initiatives involves implementing a comprehensive deradicalisation program to address the root causes of radicalism and extremism within Islamic discourse,

particularly within the context of Bogor. This program strongly emphasises presenting a counter-narrative to mitigate the influence of radical Islamic organisations like the FPI (Islamic Defenders Front) and others operating in the region. Central to this deradicalisation effort is the utilisation of NU's distinctive concept known as 'Islam Nusantara', which translates to 'Islam of the Archipelago'. This framework is robust in challenging extremist ideologies and promoting religious moderation. Two main themes underpin Islam Nusantara: Appreciation of Local Traditions and tolerance and diversity. Appreciation of Local Traditions means that NU advocates for recognising and appreciating local traditions and cultural practices that nurture Islamic values. By emphasising the compatibility of Islam with indigenous customs and traditions, NU seeks to create a harmonious synthesis that reinforces the moderation inherent in Indonesian Islam. Tolerance and diversity mean that NU encourages the idea that Islam can coexist peacefully with other faiths and beliefs, fostering an environment of inclusivity and mutual respect. In addition, NU's deradicalisation program extends to the realm of education. Many Islamic higher education institutions in Bogor have integrated NU's program into their curriculum to instil religious moderation in the city's youth. This approach underscores the organisation's commitment to reaching young minds and cultivating a generation that embraces the values of tolerance and diversity.

Secondly, NU Bogor involves the mobilisation of GP Ansor, the youth wing of the NU Movement, to promote tolerance and support religious minorities, such as Ahmadiyah and Shia. GP Ansor has embarked on a significant mission known as the Humanitarian Islam movement. This initiative is designed to address and counteract interpretations of Islam that have, over time, given rise to conflicts, including acts of terrorism. The core objective of the Humanitarian Islam movement is to reframe and contextualise the foundational teachings of Islam, thereby creating an alternative understanding that encourages critical examination. Within this alternative perspective, Muslims are prompted to confront elements within their faith that can potentially be sources of conflict. The movement aims to stimulate introspection and dialogue among Muslims, fostering an environment where they feel empowered to engage with these complex and sensitive issues.

GP Ansor actively assists and supports minority groups through a multifaceted approach that includes interfaith dialogue and the protection of places of worship for these minority communities. One noteworthy aspect of this effort is providing security for these places of prayer, a responsibility shouldered by Banser (*Barisan Ansor Serbaguna* /Ansor Multipurpose

Unit), particularly during specific religious celebrations and events. What sets GP Ansor, operating through Banser, apart is its evident commitment to preserving multiculturalism and ensuring the safety of religious minorities. Many scholars have employed the concept of 'paramilitary' to describe security units or squads with similar functions to Banser. This concept parallels historical paramilitary groups, such as those utilised during the New Order regime, notably Pemuda Pancasila and Pemuda Pancamarga. These groups were often recruited from street gangs and *preman* (thugs) and were known for employing physical and psychological intimidation to enforce various government policies (Wilson, 2006). Additionally, the ethnic-based paramilitary group known as *Forum Betawi Rempug* (FBR, Forum for Betawi Solidarity) shares similarities with these security units (Brown and Wilson, 2007). These groups historically played roles that sometimes involved coercion and intimidation. Therefore, the presence of GP Ansor through this *santri*-based Banser has proven effective in maintaining religious cohesion in the city of Bogor.

5.5 Conclusion

This thesis is primarily concerned with investigating the factors responsible for the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. This chapter shows that Bogor is among the regions that have implemented local regulations against Ahmadiyah. However, there have been no reported instances of continued persecution against Ahmadiyah followers since the regulation was issued. Consequently, this chapter delves into the empirical data to examine the sub-research question of the thesis: 'What were the underlying causes that led to the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers before the enforcement of local regulations, and what has been the subsequent impact of these regulations or other local dynamics in preventing further persecution of Ahmadiyah followers?'

To answer those questions, the conceptual framework of local politics and religious persecution serves as the fundamental basis for understanding and assessing the factors influencing whether or not Ahmadiyah followers are persecuted. The research employs three intermediary factors: political competition and patronage networks, local religious authorities, and Muslim civic organisations, to critically investigate the link between local politics and religious persecution.

Firstly, the empirical findings revealed a connection between political competition and patronage networks that show the inclination of political candidates to either support or oppose the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Bogor. This connection becomes evident when examining the distinct political competition and patronage networks of two key mayoral candidates, Diani Budiarto in the 2008 election, and Bima Arya in the 2013 election.

During the 2008 mayoral election, Diani Budiarto needed to reinforce his Islamic image due to the intense political competition. Strengthening his Islamic profile helped him secure political support from Islamic hardliners. Aligning with these groups and leveraging the Ahmadiyah issue was a strategic move for Diani to enhance his political support. His collaboration with local vigilante groups, backed by conservative religious leaders, played a significant role in his electoral victory but also contributed to the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. Local Islamist factions actively participated in various election-related activities, securing votes and aiding in voter mobilisation. After winning the 2008 election, Diani fulfilled his political promises to these vigilante groups by issuing a regulation in 2011 that significantly restricted Ahmadiyah activities in Bogor, including banning the spread of their teachings and the display of their symbols. This partnership between political leaders and aggressive local vigilante groups was crucial in facilitating the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. Interestingly, after Diani issued the mayoral decree prohibiting Ahmadiyah-related activities, there were no further reports of persecution against Ahmadiyah adherents, as local Islamist hardliners considered the regulation sufficient and shifted their focus to other religious issues requiring attention.

Conversely, the patronage network observed during the 2013 and 2019 mayoral elections under Bima Arya had notable distinctions from its predecessors. Bima Arya did not rely on hardline Islamist factions for political support; instead, he employed progressive and strategic campaign tactics to appeal to a younger electorate and non-traditional urban residents. Following his election, he garnered support from progressive local religious authorities and actively cultivated relationships with Islamist hardliners. Consequently, there were no reported instances of repression against Ahmadiyah members in Bogor during his tenure.

Secondly, in the context of local religious authority, this study reveals that the incumbent politician must secure the support of progressive religious leaders known as *kiai*. This support is crucial for effectively competing for election votes and countering the conservative influence of Islamist hardliner factions. In the case of Bogor, there was a notable absence of religious

authority contestation within the locality. Instead, two prominent *kiai* figures within Bogor advocated progressive perspectives on the Ahmadiyah community. Their influential contributions have been instrumental in making Bogor a sanctuary where Ahmadiyah followers are shielded from persecution due to the implementation of local regulations. These two *kiai* personalities, besides their religious influence, also wield significant political power, particularly in the context of the 2013 mayoral race. Their endorsements were highly sought after, notably by Bima Arya. Those two *kiai* are KH Mustafa Abdullah bin Nuh and the young NU figure KH Hasbullah. In addition to enlisting the support of progressive local religious leaders to garner widespread backing for conflict reduction and mass support, Bima Arya adopted another advanced and programmatic campaign strategy, namely religious moderation. This strategy aimed to facilitate Bogor's transformation into a contemporary and inclusive urban centre.

Finally, within the realm of connections with Muslim civic organisations, this study underscores the substantial contribution of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in ensuring that Ahmadiyah followers in Bogor can worship freely without facing persecution. NU's presence in Bogor has effectively counterbalanced municipal policies that lean towards moderation and prioritise religious pluralism. The success of NU Bogor in fulfilling this role can be attributed to two key factors. Firstly, NU Bogor actively promotes a climate of religious moderation that aligns with the inclinations of the incumbent candidate, Bima Arya. Secondly, NU Bogor acts as a counterweight to more hardline Islamic groups, thus helping to maintain a delicate balance in the city's religious landscape.

CHAPTER 6

LOCAL POLITICS DURING THE MAYORAL ELECTION AND RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN BANDUNG CITY

6.1 Introduction

A clear distinction emerges after thoroughly examining empirical data on religious persecution in Depok and Bogor, with a specific focus on local regulations targeting the Ahmadiyah community. Persecution is evident in Depok, while in Bogor, Ahmadiyah followers have not faced similar mistreatment. This analysis then shifts to Bandung, which falls into a unique category. Although Bandung lacks local regulations explicitly aimed at Ahmadiyah, persecution of this group has occurred. Therefore, this chapter aims to analyse empirical data to explore the central research question within the thesis, investigating the factors contributing to religious persecution, explicitly targeting Ahmadiyah followers, in the absence of local rules. The goal is to explore the role of various local dynamics in exacerbating this persecution, examining the underlying issues and key individuals' motivations. Additionally, the chapter evaluates regional factors that have contributed to the persecution of Ahmadiyah community members.

The conceptual framework linking local politics and religious persecution continues to be actively employed to understand and assess the factors driving the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. This chapter focuses on local dynamics, providing a comprehensive and analytical evaluation of how local politics during mayoral elections impacts religious persecution, particularly in Bandung. The study uses three intermediary components as analytical tools: political competition and patronage networks, local religious leaders, and ties with Muslim civic organisations. Therefore, this chapter's question is broken down into three sub-questions: First, it examines how political competition and patronage networks influence the incumbent's stance on religious violence and the reactions of vigilante groups. Second, it analyses whether local religious authorities tolerate or oppose persecution amid intense political competition. Finally, it investigates how affiliations with longstanding civic organisations contribute to religious discrimination. Qualitative interviews with 32 stakeholders in Bandung were meticulously analysed using NVivo to uncover underlying sub-themes.

The research findings indicate that local politics during local elections played a significant role in either facilitating or impeding religious persecution against Ahmadiyah members in the specific

situation of Bandung. Notably, during the 2008 and 2013 mayoral elections, Islamist hardliners actively targeted Ahmadiyah followers to strengthen their influence within patronage networks, seeking to demonstrate their power and gain support by showcasing militant factions to ensure political candidates acknowledged their stance by persecuting Ahmadiyah followers. This strategy was particularly evident among groups like FPI and GARIS, given their relatively weaker numerical strength and political influence in Bandung than their counterparts in Depok, Bogor, and other parts of West Java. The fieldwork and interviews also revealed a significant increase in violence and persecution against Ahmadiyah followers during the 2008 and 2013 mayoral election periods, with a noticeable decline in such acts post-2013 in Bandung. Three primary motivations drove the persecution of Ahmadiyah by Islamist hardliners during the mayoral elections: (1) Testing internal unity among Islamist hardliners by using Ahmadiyah and other religious minorities to demonstrate their ability to secure votes for mayoral candidates; (2) Hostile reactions to Ahmadiyah's annual events, aimed at disrupting these activities; (3) Anticipating a reciprocal response from the local government, using their responsiveness to religious concerns as leverage to involve Islamist groups as stakeholders in policymaking related to the city's religious landscape.

Conversely, during the 2008 mayoral election, both incumbent Dada Rosada and newcomer Ridwan Kamil in the 2013 election avoided exploiting anti-Ahmadiyah sentiments to secure votes from conservative Muslims. They notably refrained from seeking support from Islamist hardliners to bolster their campaigns, instead using progressive and strategic campaign tactics to connect with younger voters and non-traditional urban residents. Consequently, post-elections, they effectively garnered support from progressive local religious authorities, ultimately contributing to the prevention of further persecution against Ahmadiyah members in Bandung.

The chapter is structured as follows. It begins by providing a detailed overview of the socio-economic and political environment in Bandung, particularly focusing on local elections in 2008, 2013, and 2018, to contextualise the case study within the theoretical framework. The empirical data is then presented from three perspectives: examining political competition and patronage networks, the roles of religious leaders, and ties with Muslim civic organisations. This presentation aims to demonstrate how local politics during local elections can facilitate the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Bandung. The chapter concludes with an experimental analysis of the emerging patterns within each of these elements.

6.2 Setting the context: An overview of Bandung City

Bandung City, with a recorded population of 2.53 million persons, is Indonesia's third most populated urban centre, behind Jakarta and Surabaya (BPS Bandung, 2023). This city serves as the capital of the West Java Province and is located around 140 kilometres from the national capital, Jakarta. Bandung was first built as a resort destination by the Dutch Indies government in the 1800s, primarily because of its immense natural splendour and agreeable weather conditions. Bandung has transformed into a vast urban region spanning 168 square kilometres and has become a prominent centre for political, economic, and social endeavours in Indonesia (Tarigan et al., 2016). Bandung has 30 sub-districts with 151 villages/*kelurahan* as shown in Figure 8 below.

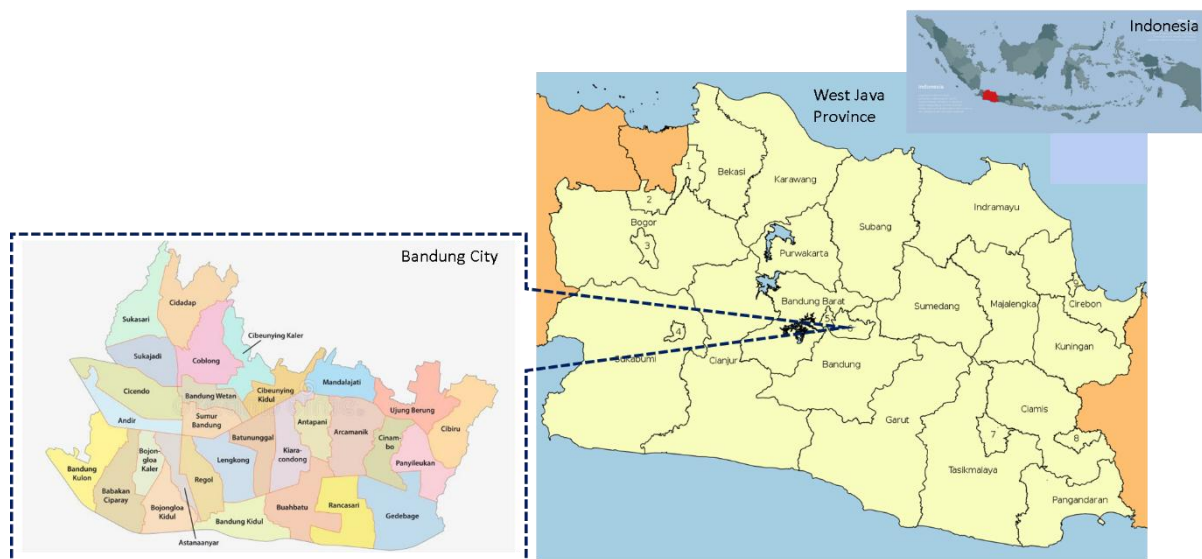


Figure 8
Administrative Map of Bandung

According to data provided by the Bandung Statistical Bureau, the population of Bandung has experienced significant growth, increasing from 2.48 million people in 2019 to 2.53 million people in 2022 (BPS Bandung, 2023). This growth was accompanied by an average annual population growth rate of 0.35% (BPS Bandung, 2023). Consequently, there was a corresponding increase in population density, which rose from 14,549 people per square kilometre in 2019 to 14,713 people per square kilometre in 2022. The government has successfully improved the well-being of its citizens, with less than 4.5% of the total population living below the poverty line. Data from BPS Bandung in 2023 reveals a slight reduction in impoverished individuals, decreasing from 112,500 individuals or 4.37% in 2021 to 109,820

individuals or 4.25% in 2022 (BPS Bandung, 2023). Regarding primary professions in Bandung, the majority, 76.5%, or 908,121 people, are employed in the service sector, while 22.64%, or 268,459 people, work in the manufacturing sector. A small percentage, 0.007%, or 9,043 people, are engaged in agriculture (BPS Bandung, 2023).

In addition, the region's development level may be measured by analysing the Human Development Index (HDI), which evaluates the degree to which individuals have access to enhanced living conditions, healthcare, and education. The Human Development Index (HDI) encompasses three fundamental dimensions: longevity, education, and style of living. Bandung is recognised as a municipality that has achieved notable advancements in socio-economic development, as seen by its remarkable Human Development Index (HDI) score of 82.50 in 2022. This figure exceeds the average HDI for the province, which stands at 73.12, and the national average of 72.29 (BPS Bandung, 2023).

6.3 Political competition during the local election in Bandung from 2008-2018

This section delves into the political competition throughout Bandung's mayoral elections starting in 2008, following a brief assessment of the city's socio-economic situation. Due to the absence of a single political party that continuously holds the majority of seats in the local parliament, the political dynamics in Bandung are characterised by instability and unpredictability. This was witnessed in the results of the 2004–2019 parliamentary elections. The PKS party emerged winning in 2004 with 11 seats, representing 24% of the total. In 2009, the Democratic party triumphed with 20 seats, accounting for 40% of the total. In 2014, PDI-P secured victory with 12 seats, representing 24% of the total. Finally, in the 2019 election, PKS once again emerged as the winner with 13 seats, accounting for 26% of the total.

In addition, each major election showcases intense political dynamics, with coalitions of political parties endorsing candidate pairs (although parties that secure over 15% of the local parliamentary seats can independently nominate mayoral candidates), multiple pairs of candidates, and a slim margin of victory. The 2013 mayoral election in Bandung had an unprecedented level of intensity, as it included a total of eight pairs of candidates vying for the position. Party coalitions sponsored four pairs, while the remaining four were independent candidates. Nevertheless, the outcome of the votes favoured the newcomer Ridwan Kamil-Oded

Danial, who secured 45.24% of the vote. This surpassed the incumbent candidate Ayi Vivananda, who previously served as Deputy Mayor of Bandung from 2008 to 2013, and Edi Siswadi, who held the position of Regional Secretary for Bandung.

6.3.1 The 2008 mayoral election

Bandung's inaugural direct mayoral election took place on 10 August 2008. To propose candidates for the mayoral election, political parties must meet one of two criteria: either they must have received 15% or more of the votes in the general election, or they must have obtained at least 15% of the seats in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) (KPU Bandung, 2023). Only PKS and PDI-P, as indicated in Table 22 below, were authorised to nominate candidates in the mayoral election. Additionally, six other political parties that received less than 15% of the seats could form a coalition based on the political party vote composition results in the 2004 general election.

Table 22
Party composition in the Bandung Local House of Representatives (2004)

No	Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage of Total
1	PKS: Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (The Prosperous Justice Party)	11	24.4
2	PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan) (The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)	7	15.6
3	Golkar: Golongan Karya (The Party of Functional Groups)	6	13.3
4	PD: Partai Demokrat (The Democratic Party)	6	13.3
5	PAN: Partai Amanat Nasional (The National Mandate Party)	6	13.3
6	PPP: Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)	4	8.6
7	PDS: Partai Damai Sejahtera (Prosperous Peace Party)	3	6.7
8	PBB: (Partai Bulan Bintang) (The Crescent Star Party)	2	4.4
	Total	45	100%

Source: KPU Bandung, 2023

PKS and PDI-P, the two dominant parties in the local house of representatives, have the ability to propose candidates for mayorship without the need to form alliances with other political parties. However, only PKS chose to nominate mayoral candidates independently. Conversely, PDI-P decided to establish a coalition with five other political groups. PKS nominated Dr. Taufikurahman, a senior lecturer at the Bandung Institute of Technology, and Deni Triesnahadi, a politician and vice treasurer of PKS, for the 2008 mayoral election. On the other hand, the PDI-P-led coalition, comprising of PDI-P, Golkar, PAN, PPP, PD, and PBB, nominated the incumbent candidate, Dada Rosada, who now serves as the mayor of Bandung with Ayi Vivananda, a PDI-P politician and member of the DPRD of West Java. In addition, a pair of independent candidates, Endang Hudaya and Nahadi, were both engaged in entrepreneurial pursuits, as shown in Table 23 below.

Table 23
The 2008 Bandung mayoral candidates and supporting parties

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	% Number of Seats
Single Party	PKS	Taufikurahman Deni Triesnahadi	24.4% or 11 seats
Parties' Coalition	PDI-P, Golkar, PAN, PPP, PD, PBB	Dada Rosada Ayi Vivananda	68% or 31 seats
Independent		Endang Hudaya Nahadi	-

Source: KPU Bandung, 2023

The election was also characterised by a relatively modest level of political engagement, with voter turnout falling below 75%. Out of the 1,537,074 voters listed on the Permanent Voter List (DPT), only 1,026,465 voters cast valid ballots, representing a turnout of 66.7% (as per KPU Bandung, 2023). The mayoral election was clinched by the incumbent candidates, Dada Rosada and Ayi Vivananda, who secured 667,026 votes, equivalent to 64.96% of the total vote share. Following them were the candidates from PKS, Taufikurahmah and Deni Triesnahadi, with 25.69%, and the independent candidates, Endang Hudaya and Nahadi, who secured the third position with 9.33%, as displayed in Table 24 below.

Table 24
The 2008 Bandung mayoral election result

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	Number of votes obtained in the pools	%
Single Party	PKS	Taufikurahman Deni Triesnahadi	263,711	25.69
Parties' Coalition	PDI-P, Golkar, PAN, PPP, PD, PBB	Dada Rosada Ayi Vivananda	667,026	64,98
Independent		Endang Hudaya Nahadi	95,728	9.33

Source: KPU Bandung, 2023

Rosada's victory in the mayoral election may be attributed to his performance during his previous tenure in office. He oversaw significant economic expansion and progress in Bandung, which was well-received by a large number of people. The city witnessed concrete advancements and enhancements during his tenure, boosting his reputation as a competent and efficient leader. This had a crucial role in influencing people in his favour, as they acknowledged his capacity to promote economic stability and progress. In addition, Rosada's campaign was characterised by its inclusive and pragmatic strategy. He presented himself as a candidate who highly regarded the many viewpoints and requirements of the city's inhabitants. By embracing a comprehensive position, he established a rapport with a diverse spectrum of voters, attracting support from conservatives and progressives. This inclusive approach set him apart from his opponent, Taufikurahman.

6.3.2 The 2013 mayoral election

The nomination of mayoral candidates in the 2013 Bandung mayoral election was significantly shaped by the voter dynamics observed in the preceding 2009 legislative election. The criteria for political parties to nominate a mayoral candidate were clear-cut: they needed to meet one of two conditions. First and foremost, a political party must have obtained a minimum of 15% of the overall votes in the last general election. Alternatively, they might meet the qualification criteria by securing at least 15% of the seats in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) (KPU Bandung, 2023). It is worth mentioning that just two political parties, namely the Democratic Party and PKS, can nominate a mayoral candidate alone, without creating a

coalition. This exemption was granted based on their performance in the 2009 parliamentary election, as depicted in Table 25 below. The Democratic Party garnered 40% of the votes, corresponding to 20 parliamentary seats, while the PKS secured 18%, equivalent to 9 out of 50 available seats.

Table 25
Party composition in the Bandung Local House of Representatives (2009)

No	Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage of Total
1	PD: Partai Demokrat (The Democratic Party)	20	40
2	PKS: Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (The Prosperous Justice Party)	9	18
3	PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan) (The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)	7	14
4	Golkar: Golongan Karya (The Party of Functional Groups)	6	12
5	PPP: Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)	3	6
6	Gerindra (Gerakan Indonesia Raya) (the Great Indonesia Movement)	3	6
7	PAN: Partai Amanat Nasional (The National Mandate Party)	1	2
8	PDS: Partai Damai Sejahtera (Prosperous Peace Party)	1	2
	Total	50	100%

Source: KPU Bandung, 2023

Furthermore, the 2013 mayoral election in Bandung might be described as the most hotly contested in the city's electoral history. The election had a total of eight candidate pairs, consisting of four pairs affiliated with political party coalitions and four pairs of independent candidates. Despite having the autonomy to select their candidates, the Democratic Party and PKS opted to establish an alliance with other political groups. By allying with PBB, PPP, and Hanura, the Democratic Party chose Edi Siswadi and Erwan Setiawan as candidates for mayor and deputy mayor, respectively, supported by 46% of the total seats in the legislature. Edi Siswadi possesses a professional history as a seasoned administrator, having previously held the

position of Regional Secretary for Bandung City. Erwan Setiawan is a politician affiliated with the Democratic Party and serves as the Chairman of the Bandung's House of Representatives (DPRD).⁹¹ However, a complication occurred during the campaign when Edi Siswadi was called a witness by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). This summons pertained to his position as the Regional Secretary and was linked to a corruption case concerning social assistance inside the Bandung City Government and accusations of bribing Judge Seyabudi Tejocahoyono about this specific case.⁹² Edi Siswadi and former Bandung Mayor Dada Rosada were summoned to provide testimony in the same corruption case.

Furthermore, the PKS (Prosperous Justice Party) partnered with Gerindra to support Ridwan Kamil and Oded M. Danial as its candidates. Ridwan Kamil is recognised as a social activist and a skilled architect. He is renowned for his expertise in developing notable buildings in Indonesia and other Asian nations through his company, Urbane Architecture, and he teaches at the Department of Architecture at the Bandung Institute of Technology.⁹³ Oded M. Danial was a businessman and a notable PKS politician. He served as the PKS DPD (Regional Executive Board) Chairman and was also a member of the Bandung City DPRD (Regional People's Representative Council).⁹⁴

The subsequent coalition, backed by PDI-P and PAN, consisted of the current candidates Ayi Vivananda and Nani Suryani Rosada. Ayi Vivananda held the position of Deputy Mayor of Bandung from 2008 to 2013, working with Nani Suryani Rosada, the spouse of Dada Rosada, who served as the Mayor of Bandung from 2008 to 2013. Before assuming the role of Deputy Mayor, Ayi Vivananda worked as a lawyer and had a seat as a member of the West Java provincial House of Representatives, representing the PDI-P.⁹⁵ Nani Suryani Rosada has a strong

⁹¹ Daftar pilwakot, Erwan harus mundur dari ketua DPRD Bandung, 16 March 2013, <https://news.okezone.com/read/2013/03/16/526/776789/daftar-pilwalkot-erwan-harus-mundur-dari-ketua-dprd-bandung>, accessed 14 October 2023.

⁹² Suap hakim KPK kembali periksa Edi Siswadi, iniliah.com, 25 June 2013, <https://www.inilah.com/suap-hakim-kpk-kembali-periksa-edi-siswadi>, accessed 14 October 2023.

⁹³ Siapa Ridwan Kamil?, voi.id, 2 March 2013, <https://voi.id/berita/4584/siapa-ridwan-kamil>, accessed 14 October 2023.

⁹⁴ Profil singkat Oded M Danial, Bandung.bisnis.com, <https://bandung.bisnis.com/read/20211210/549/1476173/profil-singkat-wali-kota-bandung-oded-m-danial>, accessed 14 October 2023.

⁹⁵ Profil Ayi Vivananda, merdeka.com, <https://www.merdeka.com/ayi-vivananda>, accessed 15 October 2023.

background as a dedicated social activist, mainly focused on the empowerment of women and children within the city of Bandung.⁹⁶

The last coalition pair consisted of M. Qudrat Iswara and Asep Dedy Ruyadi. They received support from Golkar, PDS, and 16 non-parliamentary seat parties with 15% of the total parliamentary seats. These candidates were affiliated with the Golkar party and held multiple public positions. Iswara, for instance, was a member of West Java's Local House of Representatives and had been involved in various youth organisations.⁹⁷ Asep Dedy Ruyadi served as the deputy chairman of Bandung's Local House of Representatives as well as the Chairman of the Golkar DPD (Regional Executive Board).

The four sets of independent candidates vying for the position of mayor originated from a wide range of backgrounds. Wahyudin Karnadinata, a former Air Force officer, made a career shift into entrepreneurship after retiring.⁹⁸ Wawan Dewanta, a bureaucrat, recently served as the Head of Youth Affairs at the Bandung City Youth and Sports Agency.⁹⁹ Budi Setiawan, a singer and actor, has an extensive filmography, having played leading roles in several feature films.¹⁰⁰ Finally, Bambang Setiadi served as a previous member of the Bandung Regency DPRD.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Nani Suryani Rosada: Pasrah saja enggak usah tegang, detik.com, 23 June 2013, <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-barat/d-2281509/nani-suryani-rosada-pasrah-aja-enggak-usah-tegang>, accessed 15 October 2023.

⁹⁷ KPU tetapkan 8 pasang calon pilwakot Bandung, regional.kompas.com, 7 May 2013, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2013/05/07/17043048/~Regional~Jawa>, accessed 15 October 2023.

⁹⁸ Profile Wahyudin Karnadinata, https://www.goldenplantation.com/our_company/detail/board_of_directors_commissioners, accessed 15 October 2023.

⁹⁹ Ini alasan pasangan Wawan-Sayogo maju pilwakot Bandung, news.detik.com, 13 February 2013, <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-barat/d-2169102/ini-alasan-pasangan-wawan-sayogo-maju-pilwalkot-bandung>, accessed 15 October 2023.

¹⁰⁰ Mengenal biografi Budi Dalton, Kompasnia.com, 3 November 2022, <https://www.kompasnia.com/elpiana2002/6363dc0490169203c1727aa2/mengenal-biografi-singkat-budi-dalton-dan-seniman-muda-galih-adika-paripurna-dari-kota-bandung>, accessed 15 October 2023.

¹⁰¹ Pasangan Bambang-Alex usung jargon Bandung Super, news.detik.com, 30 January 2013, <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-barat/d-2156773/pasangan-bambang-alex-usung-jargon-bandung-super>, accessed 15 October 2023.

Table 26
The 2013 Bandung mayoral candidates and supporting parties

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	% Number of Seats
Parties' Coalitions	PD, PBB, PPP, Hanura	Edi Siswadi Erwan Setiawan	46%
	PKS, Gerindra	M. Ridwan Kamil Oded M. Danial	24%
	PDI-P, PAN	Ayi Vivananda Nani Suryani Rosada	16%
	Golkar, PDS and 16 non-parliamentary seat parties	M. Qudrat Iswara Asep Dedy Ruyadi	15%
Independent		Wahyudin Karnadinata Tonny Aprilani	-
		Wawan Dewanta Sayogo	
		Budi Setiawan Rizal Firdaus	
		Bambang Setiadi Alex Tahsin Ibrahim	-

Source: KPU Bandung, 2023

In this mayoral election, voter turnout decreased by 6.3% compared to the previous one. The voter turnout was 60.4%, with only 1,002,511 of 1,658,808 registered voters casting a ballot. There were fewer voters than in the 2008 mayoral election, totalling 1,026,465 out of 1,537,074 registered voters (66.7%) (KPU Bandung, 2023). Although the voter turnout was lower, the 2013 mayoral election demonstrated significant competitiveness in the number of candidates. While there were eight pairs of mayoral candidates in the race, the election essentially boiled down to a fierce competition between three pairs of candidates. These included the incumbent, Ayi Vivananda, the senior Bandung regional secretary, Edi Siswadi, and the newcomer, Ridwan Kamil.

During his campaign, the incumbent Vivananda expressed his intention to continue and build upon the programs initiated during the tenure of the previous mayor, Dada Rosada. These initiatives encompassed revitalising traditional markets to enhance Bandung's status as a thriving service and trade city. Additionally, he initiated infrastructure enhancement projects such as improving public street lighting, repairing damaged roads, and addressing traffic congestion and

waste management issues.¹⁰² Edi Siswandi's campaign focused on improving public services and enhancing community welfare through entrepreneurship. One of the proposed central programs included allocating IDR 1 billion per sub-district for poverty alleviation and aiming to raise the well-being of 62,000 impoverished residents through food assistance and capital for small businesses. He also planned to expand internet access networks to every neighbourhood and implement a tuition-free elementary to high school education program.¹⁰³

A newcomer in the mayoral race, Ridwan Kamil, introduced three prominent programs, often referred to as the 'three-card breakthroughs'. These initiatives included the Bandung Champion Card, the 'I Love Bandung CSR' Card and the masjid.net Card.¹⁰⁴ The Bandung Champion Card was intended to be distributed to every underprivileged citizen, offering them access to free healthcare services. The 'I Love Bandung CSR' Card was designed for entrepreneurs and corporations willing to allocate their corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds for the betterment of the community, and the masjid.net Card focused on providing internet access at every mosque, intending to draw young people to these places of worship. In addition, he also placed a strong emphasis on community empowerment through the Regional Development Empowerment Innovation Program. This program allocated funds of IDR 100 million for each neighbourhood or *Rukun Warga* (RW) to support and enhance the local community's welfare.

The rivalry among the three alliance candidates was intense. Ayi Vivananda enjoyed a favourable position as the current contender, benefiting from solid and widespread support among the population. Nevertheless, Ridwan Kamil emerged as the winner in the election by triumphing in all 30 city sub-districts, with 434,130 votes, representing 45.24% of the total vote share¹⁰⁵. Edi Siswadi garnered 169,526 votes, accounting for 17.67% of the total votes. Lastly, the incumbent candidate, Ayi Vivananda, earned 145,513 votes or 15.16% of the total votes, as shown in Table 27 below.

¹⁰² Para calon walikota janji benahi Bandung, Tribunnews.com, 6 June 2013. <https://www.tribunnews.com/regional/2013/06/06/para-calon-wali-kota-janji-benahi-bandung>. Accessed 18 October 2023

¹⁰³ Para calon walikota janji benahi Bandung, Tribunnews.com, 6 June 2013. <https://www.tribunnews.com/regional/2013/06/06/para-calon-wali-kota-janji-benahi-bandung>. Accessed 18 October 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Tiga senjata Ridwan Kamil, news.republika.co.id, 21 May 2013, <https://news.republika.co.id/berita/mn54m6/tiga-senjata-ridwan-kamil>. Accessed 18 October 2023.

¹⁰⁵ Ridwan Kamil walikota terpilih Bandung, regional.kompas.com, 28 June 2013, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2013/06/28/1618054/Ridwan.Kamil.Wali.Kota.Terpilih.Bandung>. Accessed 18 October 2023.

Table 27
The 2013 Bandung mayoral election result

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	Number of votes obtained in the pools	%
Parties' Coalitions	PD, PBB, PPP, Hanura	Edi Siswadi Erwan Setiawan	169,526	17.67
	PKS, Gerindra	M. Ridwan Kamil Oded M. Danial	434,130	45.24
	PDI-P, PAN	Ayi Vivananda Nani Suryani Rosada	145.513	15.16
	Golkar, PDS, PIS	M. Qudrat Iswara Asep Dedy Ruyadi	73,617	7.67
Independent		Wahyudin Karnadinata Tonny Aprilani	79,728	8.31
		Wawan Dewanta Sayogo	17,901	1.87
		Budi Setiawan Rizal Firdaus	26,064	2.72
		Bambang Setiadi Alex Tahsin Ibrahim	13,168	1.37

Source: KPU Bandung, 2023

After the outcomes were declared, all candidate pairs except Iswara-Asep lodged complaints about the election results, alleging anomalies in the electoral procedure.¹⁰⁶ The objections were formally lodged with the Constitutional Court on 2 July 2013.¹⁰⁷ On 23 July 2013, the court affirmed the election results, validating Ridwan Kamil and Oded Danial as the legitimate

¹⁰⁶ 6 pasangan calon walikota Bandung tolak kemenangan Ridwan Kamil, merdeka.com, 28 June 2013, <https://www.merdeka.com/politik/6-pasangan-calon-wali-kota-bandung-tolak-kemenangan-ridwan-kamil.html>. Accessed 19 October 2023.

¹⁰⁷ Hasil pilkada walikota Bandung digugat, beritasatu.com, 2 July 2013, <https://www.beritasatu.com/nasional/123234/hasil-pilkada-walikota-bandung-digugat>, Accessed 19 October 2023.

winner.¹⁰⁸ Kamil and Danial were officially sworn in as the mayor on the designated day of 16 September 2013.¹⁰⁹

6.3.3 The 2018 mayoral election

The legislative elections notably influenced the parties' ability to nominate candidates independently, without the need for alliances. The outcome of the 2014 parliamentary election revealed a significantly different political scenario compared to the 2009 election. The PDI-P obtained the highest number of parliamentary seats in this case, with twelve seats, or 24% of the total. This surpassed the Democratic Party, which had previously held the position of ruling party. However, in the 2014 election, the Democratic Party secured only six seats, representing 12% of the total seats, and ended up ranking third, trailing behind Gerindra. Moreover, by having only seven seats (14%), Gerindra could not meet the necessary threshold to nominate a mayoral candidate independently without forming a coalition. Therefore, only the PDI-P obtained a voting and seat share of over 15% and had the exclusive right to select the mayoral candidate for 2018 without requiring a partnership with other political parties, as shown in Table 28 below.

Table 28
Party composition in the Bandung Local House of Representatives (2014)

No	Political Parties	Number of Seats	Percentage of Total
1	PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan) (The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)	12	24
2	Gerindra (Gerakan Indonesia Raya) (the Great Indonesia Movement)	7	14
3	PD: Partai Demokrat (The Democratic Party)	6	12
4	PKS: Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (The Prosperous Justice Party)	6	12
5	Golkar: Golongan Karya (The Party of Functional Groups)	6	12

¹⁰⁸ MK tolak gugatan pilkada Bandung, Ridwan Oded tetap jadi Walikota, liputan6.com, 24 July 2013, <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/648382/mk-tolak-gugatan-pilkada-bandung-rido-tetap-jadi-walikota>, Accessed 19 October 2023.

¹⁰⁹ Ridwan Kamil resmi dilantik jadi Walikota Bandung periode 2013–2018, news.republika.co.id, 16 September 2013, <https://news.republika.co.id/berita/mt7p8h/ridwan-kamil-resmi-dilantik-jadi-wali-kota-bandung-periode-2013-2018>, accessed 19 October 2023.

6	Hanura: Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat (The People's Conscience Party)	6	12
7	Nasdem: Partai Nasional Demokrat (The National Democratic Party)	4	8
8	PPP: Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)	2	4
9	PKB: Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (The National Awakening Party)	1	2
	Total	50	100%

Source: KPU Bandung, 2023

Even though the PDI-P could nominate mayoral candidates independently, they collaborated with other political parties to form a coalition. This alliance involved Hanura, Nasdem, and PPP. Within this coalition, the PDI-P selected Yossi Irianto as their mayoral candidate and Aries Supriatna as the candidate for deputy mayor. Together, they were supported by 48% of the total seats in the local parliament. Yossi Irianto has a background as a senior bureaucrat, with his most recent position being the Regional Secretary of Bandung. Aries Supriatna is an activist within the PDI-P party, having previously served as Bandung's Vice Chairman of the PDI-P and as a member of Bandung's local house of representatives (DPRD).¹¹⁰

Golkar, the political party with the second-highest number of seats after PDI-P, allied with the Democratic Party and PKB to endorse Nurul Arifin and Chairul Yaqin Hidayat. Nurul Arifin, a Golkar politician from Bandung, served as a member of the DPR for two consecutive terms, from 2004 to 2009 and from 2009 to 2014. Apart from that, Arifin received the Young Global Leaders award from the World Forum-Switzerland in January 2015. His running mate, Chairul Yaqin Hidayat, is a businessman from Bandung and a Democrat party politician, whose previous position was as a Deputy Treasurer of the Democratic Party DPP (Central Management Board).¹¹¹ This alliance supported 26 percent of the total number of seats in the assembly.

¹¹⁰ Profil cawalkot Bandung 2018: Yossi Irianto and Aries Supriatna, seputarbandungraya.com, 5 February 2018, <https://www.seputarbandungraya.com/2018/02/profil-cawalkot-bandung-2018-yossi.html>, accessed 19 October 2023.

¹¹¹ Profil Cawalkot Bandung 2018: Nurul Arifin dan Chairul Yaqin Hidayat, seputarbandungraya.com, 5 February 2018, <https://www.seputarbandungraya.com/2018/02/profil-cawalkot-bandung-2018-nurul.html>, accessed 20 October 2023.

The final alliance, supporting the incumbent candidates Oded M Danial and Yana Mulyana, was led by the political parties Gerindra and PKS. Oded Danial, a member of PKS, had previously served as Bandung's deputy mayor from 2013 to 2018 and was a member of the Bandung City DPRD from 2004 to 2013. In addition, Yana Mulyana was a member of Gerindra and a real estate entrepreneur with connections to a well-known radio station in Bandung.¹¹² This collaboration supported 26% of the total assembly seats, as shown in Table 29 below.

Table 29
The 2018 Bandung mayoral candidates and supporting parties

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	% Number of Seats
Parties' Coalitions	PDI-P, Hanura, Nasdem, PPP	Yossi Irianto Aries Supriatna	48%
	Golkar, PD, PKB	Nurul Arifin Chairul Yaqin Hidayat	26%
	Gerindra and PKS	Oded M. Danial Yana Mulyana	26%

Source: KPU Bandung, 2023

The 2018 mayoral election saw a substantial 18.3% increase in voter turnout compared to the 2013 election. Out of the 1,659,017 registered voters, 1,305,872 voted, representing a turnout rate of 78.7%. This was a higher voter turnout than in the 2013 mayoral election, where 1,002,511 out of 1,658,808 registered voters cast their ballots, accounting for a 60.4% participation rate (KPU Bandung, 2023).

During their campaign, Yossi Irianto and Aries Supriatna pledged to enhance the well-being of the citizens of Bandung City through various initiatives. They vowed to establish *koperasi*/cooperatives in every *kelurahan*/village to support small and medium-sized businesses. Additionally, the pair committed to providing affordable housing in urban slum areas. In the healthcare sector, they outlined plans to construct 24-hour community health centres in each *kelurahan*/village, complete with inpatient facilities and ambulance services. To improve local

¹¹² Profil Cawalkot Bandung 2018: Oded M Danial dan Yana Mulyana, seputrabandungraya.com, 5 February 2018, <https://www.seputrabandungraya.com/2018/02/profil-cawalkot-bandung-2018-oded-m.html>, accessed 21 October 2023.

services, this duo also pledged to raise the monthly salary of RT/RW heads from IDR 300,000 to IDR 2 million.¹¹³

The following duo, Nurul Arifin-Chirul Yaqin Hidayat, offered a distinct approach compared to Yossi-Aries regarding addressing urban slum areas. Instead of relocating residents to flats, they opted to revitalise and upgrade the slum areas, enhancing the appearance of these villages. This revitalisation was seen as a means to unlock the tourism potential of these areas since they hold cultural significance for the city, a strategy similarly implemented in countries like Thailand and Brazil.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, they pledged to establish 100 childcare centres in various workplaces and bustling locations, staffed by experienced professionals to assist working mothers in caring for their children.¹¹⁵

The incumbent pair, seeking re-election, aimed to build upon the accomplishments of their previous term. Throughout their campaign, this duo pledged to enhance public services by introducing one-day service options by adding service offices and online population services, including birth and death registrations and change of address notifications. In environmental sustainability, they vowed to construct a recycling centre in Cicabe, establish micro-scale waste management facilities, and increase number of central waste banks and recycling units. Furthermore, to boost community welfare, they intended to establish cooperatives in every *kelurahan*/village to provide capital assistance for small and medium-sized businesses and to form an anti-loan shark task force.¹¹⁶

The competition between the incumbent candidate and the other two contenders was highly intense regarding garnering votes. Both opponents received substantial backing from their affiliated parties and coalitions. Ultimately, in the mayoral election, the incumbent candidate, Oded Danial-Yana Mulyana, emerged victorious with 634,682 votes, equivalent to 50.1%. In

¹¹³ Yossi-Aries janji perbaiki kualitas hidup warga Kota Bandung, news.republika.co.id, 29 April 2018, <https://news.republika.co.id/berita/p7xu7x354/yossiaries-janji-perbaiki-kualitas-hidup-warga-kota-bandung>, accessed 21 October 2023.

¹¹⁴ Nurul Arifin tak ingin janjikan proram muluk, news.republika.co.id, 20 April 2018, <https://news.republika.co.id/berita/p7h6pi330/nurul-arifin-tak-ingin-janjikan-program-muluk>, accessed 21 October 2023.

¹¹⁵ Jika terpilih, Nurul Arifin janji bakal perhatikan kaum perempuan, jabar.inews.id, 2 April 2018, <https://jabar.inews.id/berita/jika-terpilih-nurul-arifin-janji-bakal-perhatikan-kaum-perempuan>, accessed 21 October 2023.

¹¹⁶ Pemkot Bandung terus kebut realisasi janji politik Oded-Yana, rmljabar.id, 2 January 2022, <https://www.rmljabar.id/pemkot-bandung-terus-kebut-realisisi-janji-politik-oded-yana>, accessed 21 October 2023.

second place was the former Bogor Regional Secretary Yossi Irianto-Aries Supriatna with 26.1%. In the third position, Golkar's coalition candidate, Nurul Arifin-Chairul Hidayat, secured 23.8% of the vote, as indicated in Table 30 below.

Table 30
The 2018 Bandung mayoral election result

	Supporting Parties	Candidates	Number of votes obtained in the pools	%
Parties' Coalitions	PDI-P, Hanura, Nasdem, PPP	Yossi Irianto Aries Supriatna	330,730	26.1
	Golkar, PD, PKB	Nurul Arifin Chairul Yaqin Hidayat	301,418	23.8
	Gerindra, PKS	Oded M. Danial Yana Mulyana	634,682	50.1

Source: KPU Bandung, 2023

6.4 Local politics and religious persecution

The previous section outlines a period characterised by increased political rivalry, explicitly focusing on the regional elections in 2008 and 2013 in Bandung. The competitive aspect of these elections was evident through the presence of multiple party coalitions, prominent candidates, numerous candidate pairings in each election, and the slim victory margins. This section will employ the theoretical framework of local politics to examine and clarify the findings in this field to address the following sub-research question of the thesis: What were the underlying reasons for the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, even in the absence of local regulations in Bandung specifically targeting Ahmadiyah, and what were the other local dynamics that either encouraged or prevented further persecution of Ahmadiyah followers?

Regarding local politics that encouraged persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, Soedirgo (2020) claims that the religious persecution and anti-Ahmadiyah mobilisation in specific locations in Indonesia are driven by changes in the institutional incentive structure, leading to increasing engagement of players at the district level in anti-Ahmadiyah activity. Indonesia's extensive decentralisation efforts resulted in two significant outcomes: firstly, politicians became more dependent on local political networks, and secondly, it created opportunities for emerging

political actors, such as Islamic hardliner groups, to enhance their social standing and acquire new sources of income (Soedirgo, 2020). In regions where Ahmadiyah populations were perceived as a significant and tangible danger, local players at the district level were motivated to use this threat to serve their interests (Soedirgo, 2020).

As awareness of the Ahmadiyah danger spread among Indonesian Muslims, an increasing number of political entrepreneurs chose to take advantage of the situation. Although some of these entrepreneurs deemed the Ahmadiyah problem futile, the extent of its impact varied based on the local existence of a noticeable and inherent threat. Nevertheless, even these isolated endeavours had a role in intensifying the overall feeling of threat at the national level. When political entrepreneurs were motivated to exaggerate the danger posed by Ahmadiyah, the frequency of both mobilisation and repression against the religious group increased significantly (Soedirgo, 2020).

Escalation of competition at the local level is linked to a rise in persecution or religious conflict. This correlation was emphasised by Hadiz (2010), who points out that the newfound status and benefits associated with holding political office at the district level led to heightened political rivalry within districts. Additionally, he contends that the newfound possibilities brought about by decentralisation serve as a catalyst for the frequently high levels of conflict that arise in the competition for control over crucial local governing institutions (Hadiz, 2010).

This section will comprehensively examine two significant electoral cycles, the 2008 mayoral election won by Dada Rosada and the 2013 election that brought Ridwan Kamil to power, addressing the aforementioned sub-research question. To enhance the clarity of the connection between political competition and religious persecution in the context of Bandung, this subchapter is subdivided into three parts: (1) **The Political competition and patronage network:** This section elucidates how the incumbent candidate and the Islamist hardliners served as intermediaries during the mayoral election and explain the reason the incumbent candidate (Dada Rosada) refrained from using the Ahmadiyah issue as a means to gain votes. Additionally, it will scrutinise Ridwan Kamil's initiatives during his mayoral campaign aimed at preventing continued persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Bandung; (2) **Local Religious Authorities:** This part delves into the role of religious leaders in the mayoral election and their contributions to preventing the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers; (3) **CSO Affiliations:** It will provide a detailed account of the involvement of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the prominent Islamic

organisation, in the mayoral election campaign and its impact on either supporting or hindering the persecution of Ahmadiyah. This approach aims to facilitate a more comprehensive and understandable analysis of the relationship between these factors in Bandung.

6.4.1 Political competition and patronage network

Given the intense competition observed in the Bandung mayoral election, discussing the imperative role of patronage networks is essential. Various scholars have explored the connection between political competition and patronage networks. For example, Aspinall and Asad (2015) argue that the candidate with the highest wealth does not solely determine local electoral competition in certain districts of Indonesia. Instead, it involves a complex conflict where candidates must establish robust patronage networks. These networks play a crucial role in delivering benefits to constituents and ensuring that beneficiaries reciprocate by casting their votes in favour of the candidate.

Furthermore, Driscoll (2018) suggests that political competition has the potential to promote patronage practices, especially in municipal elections where the two dominant political parties are engaged in a closely contested race. In such scenarios, local governments often increase the number of public sector positions, especially those at lower levels that are sought after by party activists. Driscoll describes a process known as 'bottom-up' where individuals who are voluntary members of political parties apply pressure for the distribution of patronage. In closely contested electoral scenarios, volunteers proactively exploit the vulnerabilities within their respective political parties to assert their claims for rewards.

Discussing the significance of patronage networks inherently involves considering the role of local networks and intermediaries. As Aspinall and Sukmajati (2016) pointed out, the trade of patronage networks has contributed to the increasing importance of local networks and brokers in the electoral process. An essential method for securing support in this context involves the exchange of patronage resources, which is sometimes referred to as 'vote buying'. It's crucial to acknowledge that political support is frequently motivated by factors beyond mere financial transactions, such as interpersonal relationships or policy commitments (Aspinall and Berenschot, 2019). In certain situations, exploiting the Ahmadiyah issue has garnered political support from influential local groups, especially where concerns related to Ahmadiyah are deemed legitimate (Soedirgo, 2020). Islamist hardliners often politicise Ahmadiyah for political purposes. In the current scenario, these extremist Islamists have two avenues for accessing

patronage resources: 1) serving as intermediaries or adopting the role of beneficiaries, or 2) forging alliances with other intermediaries to amplify their electoral significance collectively (Soedirgo, 2020).

Based on empirical evidence, this study has uncovered a correlation between political competition including the patronage network and the political candidate's preferences in supporting or opposing the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in the context of Bandung. Notably, during the 2008 mayoral election, the incumbent candidate Dada Rosada and the newcomer Ridwan Kamil in the 2013 mayoral election refrained from exploiting anti-Ahmadiyah issues to secure votes from conservative Muslims. Moreover, they did not rely on support from Islamist hardliners to bolster their electoral campaigns. In contrast, Islamist hardliners sought to expand their reach within patronage networks by actively targeting Ahmadiyah followers both during the campaign periods and after the local elections. These actions aimed to demonstrate their influence and mobilise support by showcasing the presence of militant factions and the political candidates should hear their voices. This strategy was particularly pronounced among groups like FPI and GARIS, primarily because their numerical strength and political influence in Bandung were comparatively weak. For instance, the Bandung branch of FPI remained smaller in scale when compared to their counterparts in places like Depok, Bogor, and other parts of West Java Province (Soedirgo, 2018). While GARIS had political importance in certain areas of West Java (Buehler, 2016), its influence in Bandung remained marginal. Members of GARIS in Bandung frequently maintained associations with diverse hardline organisations, presumably to optimise their access to patronage networks.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that both Dada Rosada and Ridwan Kamil adopted an approach that did not rely on hardline Islamist factions for their political support. Instead, they implemented progressive and strategic campaign tactics designed to resonate with the younger electorate and non-traditional urban residents, as Figure 9 below exemplifies. As a result, post-election, they successfully secured backing from progressive local religious authorities, ultimately contributing to the absence of any form of repression against Ahmadiyah members in Bandung.

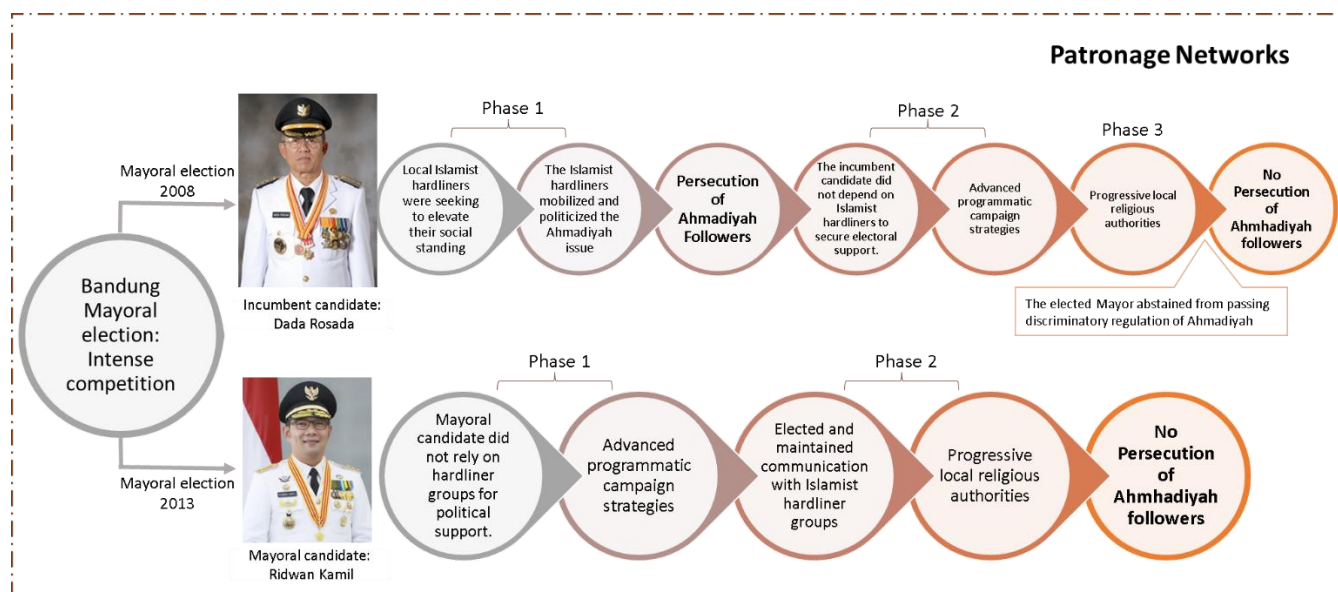


Figure 9

The correlation between patronage networks and religious persecution in the case of Bandung

Political competition and patronage network of Dada Rosada

Phase 1: Local Islamist hardliners were seeking to elevate their social standing, and they mobilised and politicised the Ahmadiyah issue

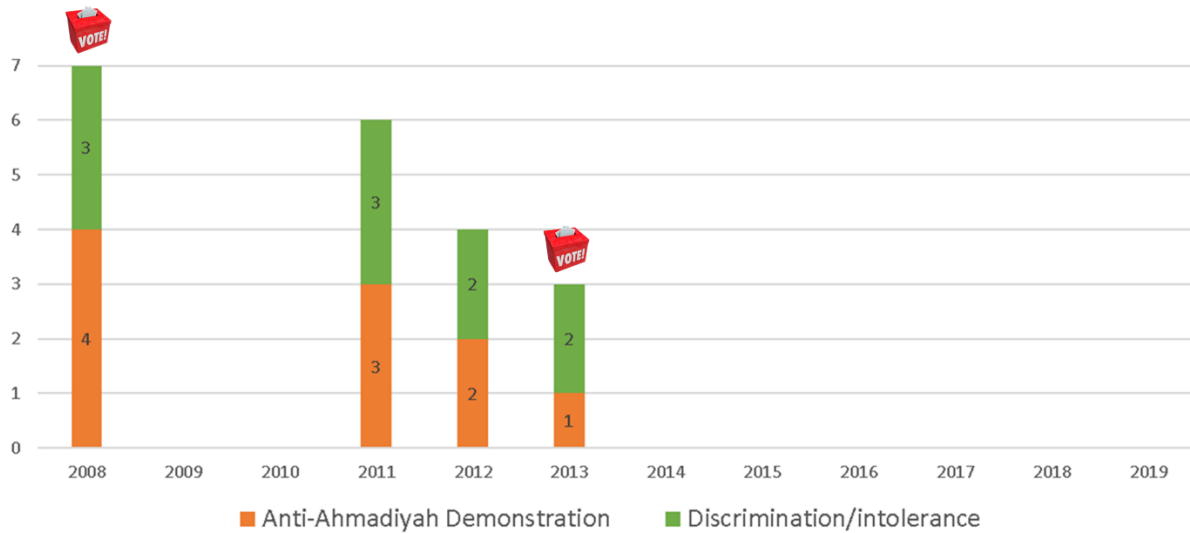
The presence of local Islamist hardliner groups in Bandung, including FPI and GARIS, is not as prominent as in other regions in which their influence and network are relatively weak from a political standpoint (Soedirgo, 2018). For instance, the Bandung branch of FPI, with only 400 active members spread across 30 sub-districts,¹¹⁷ is notably smaller than its counterparts in places like Depok or other branches within the West Java Province. Additionally, while GARIS holds political significance in some regions of West Java, its influence in Bandung is minor (Buehler, 2016). Consequently, these groups are compelled to maximise their access to patronage from mayoral candidates or local political elites.

To optimise their access to patronage networks, Islamist hardliners strategically leveraged and mobilised the Ahmadiyah issue. The fieldwork and interview findings revealed that incidents of violence and persecution against Ahmadiyah followers were particularly prominent during the 2008 and 2013 mayoral election periods. However, after 2013, there was a notable decline in acts

¹¹⁷ Interview with FPI Bandung chairman, 8 August 2019.

of persecution or violence against the Bandung Ahmadiyah followers, as depicted in Graph 4 below.

Graph 4
Persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Bandung



Source: Fieldwork data

During that period, there were four significant incidents of persecution and violence against Ahmadiyah followers that garnered widespread public attention. The first incident occurred on 15 January 2008, eight months before the crucial election vote on 10 August 2008. On that day, the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and GARIS joined forces with the West Java Islamic Ummah Alliance (ALUMI) to organise a large demonstration in front of the Mubarak Mosque, one of the main mosques of the Bandung Ahmadiyah followers located at Jalan Pahlawan 71, Bandung. During the rally, which attracted hundreds of participants, they called for the dissolution of Ahmadiyah and issued threats to seal the Ahmadiyah mosque if it continued to be used for worship and the dissemination of Ahmadiyah teachings.

Two months after the 2008 mayoral election, FPI organised a demonstration in front of the Bandung Mayor's office and the West Java Governor's office on 27 October 2008. The purpose of this protest was to call upon the Bandung city government to establish specific regulations concerning the treatment of Ahmadiyah within the city. Additionally, they urged the President to issue a Presidential Decree addressing the Ahmadiyah matter, which would supersede the existing SKB issued by three ministers. The purpose of these acts was to exhibit their power and

rally support by highlighting the existence of militant groups to make sure that the mayoral and political candidates heard the views of these groups.

The actions taken by FPI and GARIS during these two events did not draw the attention of Dada Rosada, the incumbent candidate, or the two mayoral candidates in the 2008 election for Bandung. These candidates did not exploit the Ahmadiyah issue to garner mass support from traditional voters. Dada Rosada, in particular, opted not to rely on Islamist hardliners for political backing, as he firmly rejected the use of religious issues to incite violence.

A similar incident recurred before the 2013 mayoral election when, on 25 October 2012, FPI and GARIS staged a protest. During this episode, FPI and GARIS went as far as invading and causing damage to the An-Nasir Mosque, which belonged to the Ahmadiyah Congregation located on Jalan Sapari Cibadak. It is worth noting that this act took place on the eve of the religious holiday of Eid al-Adha. The incident began with FPI Bandung leader Asep Abdurahman, also known as Utep, approaching Ahmadiyah followers that night. He asked them to cancel the Eid al-Adha celebration the following day. However, the Ahmadiyah followers refused this request, and negotiations proved unsuccessful. Approximately two hours later, Utep returned with other FPI members and proceeded to vandalise the mosque by breaking windows, damaging the mosque gate, and destroying items inside the mosque. As a result of this distressing incident, on 26 October 2012, the Ahmadiyah congregation refrained from celebrating Eid al-Adha and conducted their sacrificial animal slaughter (*Qurban*) in secret.

In the lead-up to the 2013 mayoral election, FPI organised a significant demonstration outside the Bandung Police Headquarters on 15 January 2013, approximately five months before the 2013 election date. During this demonstration, they called upon the police to intervene and put an end to any Ahmadiyah activities, citing allegations of blasphemy against Islam as their justification.

Despite FPI and GARIS' attempts to gain the attention of prominent candidates and political figures in the lead-up to the 2013 mayoral election through their actions against minority rights, their efforts did not yield a favourable response. One of the mayoral candidates, Ridwan Kamil, did not seek political support from Islamist hardliners. Instead, he continued the *Bandung Agamis* program, following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Dada Rosada. This program aimed to promote religious freedom, allowing adherents of all faiths to practice their beliefs freely and rejecting violence in the name of religion.

Another tactic employed by the FPI to infiltrate this patronage network involves presenting an integrity pact to the mayoral candidates. Should the pact be accepted, the FPI expresses willingness to rally masses and garner support from FPI sympathisers for one of the mayoral candidates. The integrity pact proposed by FPI included three demands:¹¹⁸ (1) The expulsion of Ahmadiyah and Shia followers from Bandung; (2) Ceasing the circulation of alcohol and putting an end to all prostitution activities in Bandung; and (3) Prioritising the employment of local residents. By cultivating strong ties with candidates, the FPI can manoeuvre during the election campaign and mobilise votes for the candidate in return. This approach by FPI Bandung mirrors the strategy adopted by FPI Depok. However, the response received differs from Depok as both mayoral candidates, Dada Rosada and Ridwan Kamil, rejected these propositions, particularly those concerning the rights of religious minorities.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that there were three motivations underlying Islamist hardliners' persecution of Ahmadiyah before the mayoral elections: (1) Testing internal unity among Islamist hardliners by using Ahmadiyah and other religious minorities to showcase their ability to gather votes for mayoral candidates; (2) Displaying hostile reactions to Ahmadiyah's annual events, with the aim of disrupting these activities; (3) Anticipating a reciprocal response from the local government. The government's responsiveness in addressing religious concerns becomes a bargaining tool, engaging Islamist groups as stakeholders in policymaking related to the city's religious landscape.

¹¹⁸ Interview with the Chairman of FPI Bandung, 5 July 2019.

Phase 2: The incumbent candidate did not depend on Islamist hardliners to secure electoral support; instead, the candidate promoted advanced programmatic campaign strategies

The attempts of Islamist hardliners to integrate themselves into the patronage network of mayoral candidates and political elites in Bandung faced obstacles. The actions taken by Islamist groups like FPI and GARIS, including incidents of persecuting minority rights to assert their presence and influence, failed to capture the attention of Dada Rosada, the incumbent candidate, or the two mayoral candidates in the 2008 Bandung election. These candidates refrained from exploiting the Ahmadiyah issue to mobilise mass support from conventional voters. Notably, Dada Rosada made a conscious choice not to depend on Islamist hardliners for political support, as he vehemently opposed the manipulation of religious matters to incite violence.

In the 2008 mayoral election, Dada Rosada implemented a campaign strategy to mobilise votes. This strategy involved pledging to maintain a program recognised as successful in the preceding term. Instead of enacting a legal framework that formalised Islamic standards as the guidelines for public conduct, Dada Rosada was dedicated to upholding the Bandung: A Religious City concept, which he has been promoting since his initial mayoral term from 2003 to 2008, starting in 2004. This initiative aims to create an inclusive atmosphere in Bandung that recognises and represents the various religious beliefs held by its inhabitants. This strategic decision served a twofold purpose for incumbent candidate Dada Rosada. It not only addressed concerns that he might be seen as overly secular, given his extensive background in public service and his association with Golkar, a nationalist-oriented party, but also eased the concerns of specific Islamic leaders regarding the potential marginalisation of Islam in the city's public life (Milie and Safei, 2010).

Despite Muslims constituting about 96 percent of the city's population, the civic enhancement program in Bandung is based on a more inclusive religious framework beyond just Islam. Using 'Bandung Agamis' instead of 'Bandung Islami' intentionally prevented divisive debates about the program's openness. 'Agamis' carries a neutral and non-sectarian meaning, reducing the likelihood of objections from any religious group. Furthermore, it acknowledges the rich and diverse heritage that Bandung has cultivated throughout its history. Before the program was put into action, there were extensive public consultations. Five Islamic organisations, including Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, Islamic Unity (Persatuan Islam), The Pesantren Communication Forum (FKPP), and the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI), played pivotal

roles in these consultations. Additionally, non-Islamic groups actively participated in this process and gathered at the NU headquarters in Sancang, where they jointly formulated the 'Sancang Declaration'. This declaration underscored the significance of mutual tolerance and respect and demonstrated a shared commitment to collectively addressing social and environmental challenges (Milie and Safei, 2010).

The Bandung Agamis program received positive feedback from both current and potential voters, thanks to its tangible benefits for the local community. During Dada Rosada's previous tenure, this initiative fostered an environment where individuals of all faiths, including Ahmadiyah followers, could practice their religion freely and securely. As part of this effort, Dada Rosada issued Mayor's Decree No. 223/Kep.249-BKKPM/2011 on April 12, 2011, which established a special team to address issues related to the Ahmadiyah community in Bandung. Unlike mayoral regulations in Depok and Bogor, this internal decree emphasized dialogue and social engagement. The team facilitated community outreach and interactions with Ahmadiyah members, enabling them to conduct religious activities aligned with Bandung's vision as a religiously harmonious city. Initiatives included joint religious studies, communal prayers, and celebrations of Islamic holidays involving both Ahmadiyah followers and the broader community. Additionally, the decree sought to educate Islamic organizations opposed to Ahmadiyah, urging them to avoid actions contrary to legal norms, while also conducting early detection efforts regarding the presence of Ahmadiyah followers in the city. This approach starkly contrasted with the regulations in Depok and Bogor, which explicitly prohibited the propagation of Ahmadiyah teachings, banned the use of their symbols, and restricted their religious activities.

To secure political office, politicians must assemble coalitions of intermediaries capable of delivering the required constituents for a successful election campaign. In Bandung, particularly in significant electoral fluctuations, politicians must exercise caution to prevent potential repercussions (Paskarina, 2016). Dada Rosada has made a deliberate decision not to exploit the Ahmadiyah issue to attract conservative Muslim voters, despite the fact that the Islamic identity network is essential, considering that 96% of Bandung's population is Muslim. Firstly, the religious authority network in Bandung is highly dynamic, meaning that *pesantrén* or Islamic boarding school networks are not the sole influential factor, as they lack dominance in securing votes. Secondly, gaining support from prominent local Islamic institutions such as NU and Muhammadiyah would provide Rosada with a significant edge in attracting the compassion and

votes of the population. Lastly, Golkar and the five other parties backing Rosada opted not to address the issue of religious minorities, deeming it ineffective in mobilising voter support.

Phase 3: Progressive local religious authorities

Due to Rosada's dedication to the implementation of Bandung Agamis and the backing of influential local Islamic organisations such as NU and Muhammadiyah, he refrained from enacting legislation that would restrict the rights of Bandung's Ahmadiyah community during his tenure as mayor of Bandung from 2008 to 2013. Local leaders from NU and Muhammadiyah supported Rosada on this matter. These leaders generally did not perceive the Ahmadiyah issue as a top priority because they did not view the group as a significant threat (Soedirgo, 2020). A prominent leader of NU Bandung communicated this perspective:¹¹⁹

Kami memandang bahwa isu Ahmadiyah bukanlah suatu ancaman atau permasalahan yang perlu diatur dalam satu aturan tersendiri, karena ada kalanya aturan tersebut sering digunakan oleh pihak-pihak tertentu untuk melakukan tindak kekerasan mengatasnamakan agama. Dengan tidak dikeluarkannya aturan tersendiri terkait Ahmadiyah, hal ini sejalan dengan program Bandung Agamis yang dicanangkan Dada Rosada dengan memberikan kebebasan dan keleluasaan bagi seluruh pemeluk agama untuk menjalankan ibadah sesuai dengan keyakiannya masing-masing [We believe that the Ahmadiyah matter doesn't pose a threat or an issue that necessitates specific regulations. Often, such regulations are exploited by certain groups to justify acts of violence in the name of religion. Choosing not to enact separate regulations concerning Ahmadiyah aligns with the principles of the Bandung Agamis program introduced by Dada Rosada. This approach underscores the importance of granting freedom and flexibility to all religious practitioners to worship in accordance with their individual beliefs].

This perspective may be interpreted differently because NU Bandung did not openly express strong opposition against Ahmadiyah and abstained from issuing formal pronouncements on the matter, unlike other branches of the organisation in various places. The cause of this

¹¹⁹ Interview with NU Bandung leader, 18 July 2019.

phenomenon is the comparatively limited public presence of Ahmadiyah in Bandung, as confirmed by the leadership of Ahmadiyah Bandung:¹²⁰

Kegiatan-kegiatan jamaah Ahmadiyah Bandung memang dilakukan hanya untuk kalangan internal saja, sehingga cenderung tertutup dan tidak tampak oleh kalangan luar. Hal ini dilakukan untuk menjaga keamanan dan kenyamanan kami beribadah [The activities of the Bandung Ahmadiyah followers are conducted exclusively within the internal community and, therefore, tend to be discreet and concealed from external observers. This approach is adopted to ensure the safety and tranquillity of our worship].

Furthermore, in recent years, the Bandung Ahmadiyah followers have refrained from engaging in activities that draw public attention, such as constructing or renovating mosques and organising annual gatherings. As a result, their minimal public visibility has led religious authorities to view Ahmadiyah's beliefs with less concern, as the group's activities have not posed a significant threat.

Political competition and patronage network of Ridwan Kamil

Phase 1: Mayoral candidate did not rely on hardliner groups for political support and promoted advanced programmatic campaign strategies

Despite the efforts made by hardline Islamist groups such as FPI and GARIS to gain the attention of prominent candidates and political figures leading up to the 2013 mayoral election through their actions targeting minority rights, their endeavours did not receive a positive response. Ridwan Kamil chose not to seek political support from these hardline Islamists. Instead, he continued with the *Bandung Agamis* program, following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Dada Rosada. This program aimed to promote religious freedom, allowing adherents of all faiths to practice their beliefs freely and rejecting violence in the name of religion. In addition to continuing the religious program in Bandung, Ridwan Kamil implemented advanced campaign strategies to appeal to young voters and mobilise the masses.

During his campaign, Ridwan Kamil, often called Kang Emil, expressed his commitment to ushering in substantial changes in transparent governance, equitable spatial planning, and

¹²⁰ Interview with the chairman of Ahmadiyah Bandung, 13 July 2019.

fostering a self-reliant society with a robust economy.¹²¹ He believed that the role of a leader revolves around two essential tasks: effecting change and expediting progress. Bringing change entails transforming something from nothing, while accelerating progress involves turning an ordinary situation into something extraordinary.

Firstly, to enhance transparent government management, Kang Emil planned to implement several key measures.¹²² He would transition government procurement of goods and services to an online platform, ensuring the tender process is open and accountable. This online platform will enable public access to the city government's revenue and expenditure allocations. Additionally, he aimed to boost innovation within the local working unit by reducing mayoral authority in over 100 areas, and delegating these responsibilities to the sub-district heads (*camat*) and village heads (*lurah*). This decentralisation is intended to expedite the decision-making process at the sub-district and village levels, allowing local leaders to be more responsive to the community's needs without waiting for directives from the mayor's office.

Secondly, in his endeavour to establish fair spatial planning, Kang Emil would implement the Building Area Coefficient (KLB). This measure is taken to anticipate the projected growth of Bandung's population, which is expected to increase from 2.8 million people in 2013 to 4 million by 2030. As a result, every Building Permit (IMB) will undergo thorough scrutiny, ensuring equitable spatial planning by considering the requirements for housing, offices, markets, and schools. Furthermore, as part of his spatial planning initiatives, Kang Emil has proposed relocating the government centre, which is currently dispersed across various regions, to a consolidated area in East Bandung, like the Putra Jaya Malaysia government district. Subsequently, the former government buildings in the city centre will be repurposed into hotels or restaurants, generating tourism revenue for the city government.¹²³

Thirdly, as part of his commitment to improving the welfare of the people of Bandung, Kang Emil recognises that 55% of the city's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is generated by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). To enhance the overall well-being of its citizens, he

¹²¹ Kisah sukses Ridwan Kamil tahun 2013–2018 [1] Bandung Juara, pepnews.com, 10 July 2019, <https://pepnews.com/sketsa/p-7156227211373a4/kisah-sukses-ridwan-kamil-1-tahun-20132018-bandung-juara>, accessed 2 November 2023.

¹²² Kisah sukses Ridwan Kamil tahun 2013–2018 [1] Bandung Juara, pepnews.com, 10 July 2019, <https://pepnews.com/sketsa/p-7156227211373a4/kisah-sukses-ridwan-kamil-1-tahun-20132018-bandung-juara>, accessed 2 November 2023.

¹²³ Kisah sukses Ridwan Kamil [2] God is in Detail, pepnews.com, 11 July 2019, <https://pepnews.com/sketsa/p-3156c27201482bb/kisah-sukses-ridwan-kamil-2-god-is-in-detail>, accessed 2 November 2023.

intends to expand the market for MSME products, not only at the national level but also on an international scale. Already, he has explored the establishment of 'Little Bandung' offline stores in several cities in Malaysia and South Korea. In developing MSMEs, Kang Emil also plans to revitalise and redesign traditional markets while promoting Sundanese culinary specialties to stimulate the creation of culinary hubs that will benefit multiple stakeholders. Moreover, he strongly emphasises community empowerment through the Regional Development Empowerment Innovation Programme. Under this initiative, IDR 100 million will be allocated to each neighbourhood or *Rukun Warga* (RW) to support and improve the welfare of local communities. These funds can be utilised based on the community's specific needs, such as constructing badminton courts, futsal facilities, or little mosques (*mushalas*). This work will be carried out independently to enhance the well-being of the residents in 1,500 RWs throughout Bandung.¹²⁴

Furthermore, in his efforts to enhance the well-being of Bandung residents, particularly those residing in densely populated areas, Kang Emil has initiated a residential open land program. The concept involves the city government purchasing a house to convert it into open land for various community activities, focusing on children. These activities may include dance training, *pencak silat* (traditional martial arts), sports, and musical endeavours.¹²⁵ Additionally, Kang Emil is dedicated to promoting a culture of literacy, reading, and writing. Given that Indonesians, on average, read only 27 pages of books per year, ranking 60th out of 61 countries worldwide, he has launched the 'one village, one library' program. This initiative also engages book enthusiasts within the community to encourage a love of reading.¹²⁶

Moreover, Ridwan Kamil introduced three flagship programs, often called the 'three-card breakthrough'. These initiatives include the Bandung Champion Card, the 'I Love Bandung CSR' Card and the masjid.net Card.¹²⁷ The Bandung Champion Card was intended to be distributed to every underprivileged citizen, offering them access to free healthcare services. The 'I Love

¹²⁴ Kisah sukses Ridwan Kamil [3] memberdayakan warga kota Bandung dengan segala cara, Pepnews.com, 13 July 2019, <https://pepnews.com/sketsa/p-91568272d1515f3/kisah-sukses-ridwan-kamil-3-memberdayakan-warga-kota-bandung-dengan-segala-cara>, accessed 2 November 2023.

¹²⁵ Kisah sukses Ridwan Kamil [2] God is in Detail, pepnews.com, 11 July 2019, <https://pepnews.com/sketsa/p-3156c27201482bb/kisah-sukses-ridwan-kamil-2-god-is-in-detail>, accessed 2 November 2023.

¹²⁶ Kisah sukses Ridwan Kamil [3] memberdayakan warga kota Bandung dengan segala cara, Pepnews.com, 13 July 2019, <https://pepnews.com/sketsa/p-91568272d1515f3/kisah-sukses-ridwan-kamil-3-memberdayakan-warga-kota-bandung-dengan-segala-cara>, accessed 2 November 2023.

¹²⁷ Tiga senjata Ridwan Kamil, news.republika.co.id, 21 May 2013, <https://news.republika.co.id/berita/mn54m6/tiga-senjata-ridwan-kamil>. Accessed 18 October 2023.

Bandung CSR' Card was designed for entrepreneurs and corporations willing to allocate their corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds for the betterment of the community, and the masjid.net Card focused on providing internet access at every mosque, intending to draw young people to these places of worship.

Through this comprehensive approach, Kamil garnered significant support from his constituents, leading to his victory in the 2013 mayoral election. The rivalry among the three alliance candidates was intense. Ayi Vivananda enjoyed a favourable position as the current contender, benefiting from solid and widespread support among the population. Nevertheless, Ridwan Kamil emerged as the winner in the election by triumphing in all 30 city sub-districts, with 434,130 votes, representing 45.24% of the total vote share.¹²⁸ Edi Siswadi garnered 169,526 votes, accounting for 17.67% of the total votes. Lastly, the incumbent candidate, Ayi Vivananda, earned 145,513 votes or 15.16% of the total votes.

Phase 2: Elected and maintained communication with Islamist hardliner groups and supported by progressive local religious authorities

As previously stated, it's worth noting that the presence of local hardline Islamist groups in Bandung, such as FPI and GARIS, is less significant compared to other regions where their political clout and networks are relatively weaker (Soedirgo, 2018). To illustrate, the Bandung branch of FPI has only 400 active members spread across 30 sub-districts, which is notably smaller than their counterparts in areas like Depok or other branches within West Java Province. Furthermore, while GARIS has political importance in specific parts of West Java, its influence in Bandung is minimal (Buehler, 2016). Consequently, these groups are compelled to maximise their access to patronage from mayoral candidates or local political elites.

The Ahmadiyah issue was a strategic tool used by Islamist hardliners to mobilise and maximise their access to patronage networks. Because of this, on 15 January 2013, almost five months before the 2013 election, FPI organised a big rally outside the Bandung Police Headquarters. They used accusations of blasphemy against Islam as the reason for calling for the authorities to step in and put an end to any Ahmadiyah activity during this demonstration. In spite of FPI and GARIS' endeavours to attract the interest of prominent candidates and political figures before the

¹²⁸ Ridwan Kamil walikota terpilih Bandung, regional.kompas.com, 28 June 2013, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2013/06/28/1618054/Ridwan.Kamil.Wali.Kota.Terpilih.Bandung>. Accessed 18 October 2023.

2013 mayoral election, mainly through their actions against minority rights, their initiatives did not receive a positive response. Ridwan Kamil, in his bid for electoral support, did not seek backing from Islamist hardliners. Instead, he continued the Bandung Agamis program during his campaign, following the path set by his predecessor, Dada Rosada. This program was designed to advocate for religious freedom, allowing individuals of all faiths to practice their beliefs without restrictions and firmly opposing religious violence.

Following his election as the mayor of Bandung from 2013 to 2018, Ridwan Kamil continued to engage in communication with these Islamist hardliner groups to promote and preserve harmony within the city, as confirmed by Ridwan Kamil's special envoy:¹²⁹

Pak Ridwan Kamil dalam memimpin Bandung selalu mendengar dan melibatkan semua pihak dalam setiap keputusannya. Termasuk dalam hal keagamaan, dia selalu mendengarkan dua belah pihak, baik yang progressive maupun yang conservative groups [In leading Bandung, Ridwan Kamil always listens and involves all parties in his decisions. Including in religious matters, he always listens to both progressive and conservative groups].

Ridwan Kamil's successful communication with Islamist hardliners, marked by constructive dialogues, can be primarily attributed to the crucial involvement of supportive progressive religious leaders. Kamil has implemented a well-thought-out and systematic campaign strategy, actively engaging local progressive religious leaders to mobilise extensive support for conflict mitigation and expanding a wide-ranging supporter base.

Two prominent progressive religious leaders in the region are KH Miftah Faridl and KH Maftuh Kholil. KH Miftah Faridl is a senior religious figure renowned for his progressive stance. He has been at the helm of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) since 1978 and currently serves as the Chairman of MUI Bandung. On the other hand, KH Maftuh Kholil wields significant influence within Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and has previously held the position of Chairman of NU in Bandung. Their roles are pivotal in shaping and guiding the religious discourse and practices within the region.

The support provided by these progressive religious leaders has not only aided Ridwan Kamil's efforts but has also empowered him to implement the *Bandung Agamis* or religious moderation

¹²⁹ Interview with Ridwan Kamil's special envoy, 14 June 2019.

program more effectively. This program has delivered tangible results, making it easier for Ahmadiyah followers to practice their faith without fearing persecution. The encouragement and endorsement from these influential figures have played a pivotal role in creating an atmosphere of religious harmony and acceptance, ensuring that all religious communities, including minorities, can peacefully coexist and freely exercise their beliefs.

6.4.2 Religious authority/local religious leaders

As previously mentioned, Islamist hardliners like FPI and GARIS strategically exploited the Ahmadiyah issue to enhance their access to patronage networks. Fieldwork findings indicate that incidents of violence and persecution against Ahmadiyah followers were particularly pronounced during the 2008 and 2013 mayoral election periods. Over that period, four significant incidents of persecution and violence against Ahmadiyah's followers captured widespread public attention. The first incident occurred on 15 January 2008, precisely eight months before the crucial election vote on 10 August 2008. Two months after the 2008 mayoral election, FPI organised a demonstration in front of the Bandung Mayor's office and the West Java Governor's office on 27 October 2008. The purpose of this protest was to press the Bandung city government to establish specific regulations regarding the treatment of Ahmadiyah within the city. These actions aimed to underscore their influence and rally support by highlighting the presence of militant groups, ensuring that mayoral and political candidates acknowledged their perspectives. Notably, the actions taken by FPI and GARIS did not attract the attention of Dada Rosada, the incumbent candidate, or the two mayoral candidates in the 2008 Bandung election. Dada Rosada refrained from exploiting the Ahmadiyah issue to secure mass support from traditional voters. He, in particular, chose not to rely on Islamist hardliners for political endorsement, as he firmly rejected the use of religious issues to incite violence. He refrained from passing discriminatory legislation and actively protected the Ahmadiyah community during his tenure.

A similar incident recurred before the 2013 mayoral election when, on 25 October 2012, FPI and GARIS organised a protest. During this episode, FPI and GARIS went as far as invading and causing damage to the An-Nasir Mosque, which belonged to the Ahmadiyah Congregation on Jalan Sapari Cibadak. It's worth emphasising that this act took place on the eve of the religious holiday of Eid al-Adha. As a result of this distressing incident, on 26 October 2012, the Ahmadiyah congregation refrained from celebrating Eid al-Adha and conducted their sacrificial animal slaughter (*Qurban*) in secret. Despite FPI and GARIS' attempts to gain the attention of

prominent candidates and political figures in the lead-up to the 2013 mayoral election through their actions against minority rights, their efforts did not receive a favourable response. One of the mayoral candidates, Ridwan Kamil, chose not to seek political support from Islamist hardliners. Instead, he continued the Bandung Agamis program, following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Dada Rosada. This program aimed to promote religious freedom, allowing adherents of all faiths to practice their beliefs freely and rejecting violence in the name of religion. After 2013, there was a notable decline in acts of persecution or violence against the Bandung Ahmadiyah.

Based on empirical results, this research concludes that the incumbent politician in the Bandung mayoral election would be better off seeking the support of progressive *kiais* rather than depending on the political endorsement of Islamist hardliners. This backing is vital to successfully fight for election votes and offset the conservative influence of hardline Islamist factions. Thus, it is clear that religious authority can be interpreted as a function performed by groups or individuals with social power and control (Astewani, 2021; Barmania & Reiss, 2021; Pabbajah et al., 2022). According to these academics, religious authority is the propensity to place demands on people or groups with structural and cultural power inside religious institutions. In decision-making processes, the government frequently consults with community leaders, religious authorities, and religious leaders (Burhani, 2016). Political parties and the government's cooperation with religious authorities sign that they will make concessions to maintain political stability.

6.4.2.1 Religious authority and Islamist hardliners: Competitive religious market

Before delving into the reasons why the incumbent politician in the Bandung mayoral election would benefit more from garnering support from progressive *kiais* as opposed to relying on the political endorsement of Islamist hardliners, it is crucial first to explore the theoretical underpinnings behind the emergence of Islamist hardliners in a given region in connection to the presence of religious authority. Why do specific Islamist hardliners thrive while others falter? A seminal study conducted by Pelletier (2020) investigates the mobilisation efforts of Islamist groups operating openly to reshape the existing political and social framework following Islamic laws and institutions. In his study, Pelletier defines 'success' for Islamists as the capacity to expand a dedicated following and engage in coordinated collective actions, whether they be nonviolent or involve acts of violence.

To gain a comprehensive grasp of the mobilisation dynamics of Islamist groups, it becomes imperative to delve into the local institutional environment where Islamist groups can establish roots. Islamist organisations do not function in isolation; instead, they navigate a complex landscape populated by entrenched Muslim clerics, intellectuals, networks, and institutions. Much like their counterparts in the Muslim community, Islamists operate as religious entrepreneurs engaged in a competition for 'sacred authority' (Pelletier, 2020).

The idea of a 'religious market' is a useful theoretical instrument to comprehend this context. Within the religious economics literature, a prominent proponent highlights the supply-side element of religious endeavours, focusing on the 'firms' that manufacture religious 'goods' and their interactions with a religious market made up of both present and prospective consumers (Stark and Finke, 2020). This viewpoint contends that the competitive or monopolistic nature of the religious market influences religious leaders' and organisations' actions. It is believed that open religious markets encourage more rivalry among religious organisations to survive, which forces them to be more adaptable and sensitive to the demands of their members (Pelletier, 2020). Smaller businesses or recent arrivals are likewise viewed as more entrepreneurial than establishments with substantial assets, strong fan bases, or more tenure security. This method of studying religion has provided insightful information about how religious organisations behave politically (Gill, 2008; Trejo, 2009).

Although the notion of a religious economy has been beneficial, its primary flaw is its unyielding adherence to economic logic (Pelletier, 2020). Academics have often maintained, for example, that religious rivalry promotes moderation by forcing all religious groups to move toward the middle ground where most consumers are assumed to be found (Stevens, 2011). Stable preferences and utility maximisation are prerequisites for this competition model. However, the evaluation of 'value' in religious concerns cannot be handled objectively; instead, it is always attributed to and contested by the parties involved (Bruce, 2008). As an alternative theoretical perspective, Pierre Bourdieu sees religious conduct as taking place within a field of production, exchange, and competition, refuting the notion that the religious market is predicated on economic assumptions (Bourdieu, 1971). According to Bourdieu, religious leaders do more than only act as salespeople who add value for their clients. They compete with one another for followers, but at their core, they fight for religious authority or the right to decide which kinds of

religion are acceptable (Rey, 2004).¹³⁰ Competition in this power battle does not necessarily lead to moderation. Religious entrepreneurs can utilise diverse symbolic and discursive resources, including components that facilitate violence, to establish legitimacy for their authority (Brubaker, 2015).

Examining the correlation between Islamist hardliners and religious authorities in the context of the religious market, a study conducted by Pelletier (2020) reveals that the rise of Islamist hardliners is contingent upon the dynamics of the religious market within which they function. This religious market serves as a social arena where old and new religious figures and organisations vie for followers and religious authority. Pelletier contends that Islamist hardliners tend to thrive in environments where established Muslim leaders are weakened and competition for religious authority is fierce. Conversely, their influence gets smaller when established Muslim leaders exhibit strength, and the competition for religious authority is less intense (Pelletier, 2020). These religious markets create favourable conditions for Islamist success due to several factors: 1) they reduce entry barriers for new religious entrepreneurs, 2) they encourage support for Islamist mobilisation from established leaders, and 3) they compel moderate leaders to remain silent (Pelletier, 2020).

In the context of Bandung, where certain Islamist hardliners such as FPI and GARIS did not thrive and instead utilised the Ahmadiyah issue to bolster their access to patronage networks, indicates a less competitive religious market. In this context, the religious market is where religious entrepreneurs and organisations interact, cooperate, and compete for religious authority. This observation aligns with Pelletier's theory (2020), suggesting that Islamist groups face more significant challenges in environments where clerics and networks are robust and religious markets are less competitive. Such conditions tend to discourage entrepreneurial activities, limit space for Islamist groups, and promote anti-Islamist mobilisation. The religious markets in Bandung are less competitive due to the influence of two prominent ulama, namely KH Miftah Faridl and KH Maftuh Kholil. Both hold significant sway and serve as reference points for various groups. KH Miftah Faridl, a key figure in MUI, has been the Chairman of MUI since 1978. On the other hand, KH Maftuh Kholil, associated with NU, has been PCNU Bandung's

¹³⁰ Terry Rey, "Marketing the Goods of Salvation: Bourdieu on Religion," *Religion*, 34 (February 2004).

Chairman and holds various strategic positions. This dominance was also highlighted by a social activist in Bandung who stated:¹³¹

Kota Bandung relatif lebih sejuk dalam kehidupan sosial dan beragama karena Islamist hardliners diantaranya FPI, GARIS dan FUI tidak begitu berkembang dan memperoleh dukungan luas masyarakat, bila dibandingkan di beberapa kota lainnya di Jawa Barat. Hal ini karena aktifnya dan disegani para tokoh progressive Islam diantaranya KH Miftah Fardh dan KH Maftul Kholil [The city of Bandung maintains a relatively tranquil social and religious atmosphere, with Islamist hardliners such as FPI, GARIS, and FUI having limited development and less extensive public support compared to several other cities in West Java. This can be attributed to the presence of active and respected figures within the realm of progressive Islam, notably KH Miftah Fardh and KH Maftul Kholil].

Both *ulama* are acknowledged as moderate or progressive by socio-religious activists in Bandung.¹³² They find it more convenient to unite against Islamist hardlines because of their prominent number of supporters, more influential position in the market, and consequently, greater legitimacy. Pelletier (2020) emphasises the predicament that moderate clerics confront when confronting Islamist extremists: taking action against them carries the risk of provoking competitive rhetoric or scapegoating, being labelled as apostates, and being perceived as betrayers by their supporters; for priests who do not have a significant presence in the religious market, attempting to mobilise on a moderate scale might be risky. Leaders against Islamists are less likely to participate if they are in a weak position in a competitive setting. As a result, numerous leaders exercise caution when engaging their limited religious influence in such disputes and instead choose a more cautious approach. In Bandung, however, the careful setting does not alleviate the risks or reduce the costs of anti-Islamist activism.

6.4.2.2 Progressive local religious leaders

The religious landscape in Bandung showcases less competitive dynamics within the religious market, influenced mainly by two prominent clerics, KH Miftah Faridl and KH Maftuh Kholil. To gain votes, mayoral candidates tend to engage more with progressive local religious figures

¹³¹ Interview with WG 20 July 2019.

¹³² Interview with WG 20 July 2019.

rather than aligning themselves with hardline Islamic groups. This strategic approach resonates with Soedirgo's research in 2018, highlighting the enduring significance of *kiai* in garnering votes. Notably, individuals with networks affiliated with local branches of national Islamic mass organisations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, or Persis hold greater importance as city constituents than those linked to hardline Islamic groups (Soedirgo, 2018).

Previous research has highlighted the notable role of religious leaders, often known as *kiai*, in fostering peace by engaging in conflict resolution and rallying voters during local elections. Consequently, Dada Rosada and Ridwan Kamil, as mayoral candidates in separate elections, strategically emphasised an advanced and systematic campaign approach. This approach involved leveraging progressive local religious leaders to amass widespread support for conflict reduction and to gain substantial public backing. Furthermore, regarding the position of a religious figure in local elections, Hashemi and Postel (2017) examined the complex correlation between religious authorities and municipal elections in their research. They emphasised the importance of religious authority pursued by these individuals within the framework of local elections. Their research focused on the intricate mechanisms political leaders use or fabricate religious identities to influence mayoral elections. The sectarianisation thesis posits that identity is flexible and can be manipulated for political and strategic gain. The authors emphasised the continuous process of sectarianisation, influenced by political actors in particular circumstances. These individuals strategically utilise different identity markers to accomplish political goals and rally popular sentiment. Moreover, the process of sectarianisation can be influenced by various elements, including class dynamics, vulnerabilities of the administration, and geopolitical rivalries (Hashemi and Postel, 2017).

Regarding religious authority in mayoral elections, it is worth noting that religious authorities or *kiai* possess dynamic attributes that are susceptible to co-optation and inherent competition (Pelletier, 2019). The emergence of new interpreters within the split of Sunni Islam perpetuates a continuous competition for the dominant positions as representatives of the faith (Brubaker, 2015). The contestation of religious authority is a prevalent phenomenon observed among Islamic leaders who actively participate in rivalry within the religious domain. Their primary objective is to establish their claims as the most legitimate representatives of Islam, therefore exerting influence on Islamic ideals in both social and spiritual realms. Nevertheless, this assertion does not hold in the context of Bandung.

In Bandung, pursuing religious authority, characterised by continual competition within the religious realm, is less prominent than in neighbouring areas such as Depok and Bogor. Political strategies in these areas frequently centre around gaining the support of *pesantren* networks. However, the Muslim community in Bandung offers a more complex and divided situation. While *kiai*, or religious leaders, are still valued for their influence, their power is less dominant than in other places (Soedirgo, 2018). The influential voting groups in Bandung are derived from the local divisions of significant national Islamic mass organisations: NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persatuan Islam (Persis) (Soedirgo, 2018). The minimal impact of *pesantren* in Bandung can be linked to their modest presence. Bandung has fewer *pesantren* than Bogor, with 91 units as opposed to Bogor's 149 units, without considering the varying capacity of respective student populations.¹³³ The limited number of *pesantren* highlights the transfer of power to these significant Islamic organisations, underscoring their importance in the political and religious realms of the city.

This research identifies two influential *kiai* in Bandung regarding religious authority and *pesantren*. Despite not directly overseeing *pesantren*, they wield substantial influence through their congregations and political clout. Additionally, they hold differing perspectives on religious minority groups, notably Ahmadiyah. These figures are KH Miftah Faridl and KH Athian Ali. In the stance against Ahmadiyah's presence in Bandung, KH Athian Ali has embraced a more conventional or conservative approach. Conversely, KH Miftah Faridl has adopted a more moderate stance, welcoming Ahmadiyah adherents in Bandung as integral community members.

In light of two influential *kiai* figures with differing views on Ahmadiyah, the response from mayoral candidates varies. From the findings of interviews and fieldwork, it became evident that both mayoral contenders, Dada Rosada and Ridwan Kamil, leveraged the influence of progressive religious leaders, especially KH Miftah Faridl, to secure public support and assist in fulfilling their political commitments upon taking office as mayor.

The leveraging of the influence of progressive religious leaders became particularly evident in 2008 when the Ahmadiyah persecution issue surged after the issuance of a joint ministerial decree restricting Ahmadiyah activities. At that time, persecution and violence against Ahmadiyah members happened in various locations outside Bandung. Dada Rosada's position

¹³³ Jumlah pondok pesantren berdasarkan kabupaten/kota di Jawa Barat, [opendatajabarprov.go.id, https://opendata.jabarprov.go.id/id/dataset/jumlah-pondok-pesantren-berdasarkan-kabupatenkota-di-jawa-barat](https://opendata.jabarprov.go.id/id/dataset/jumlah-pondok-pesantren-berdasarkan-kabupatenkota-di-jawa-barat), accessed 20 November 2023.

was notably not to exploit the Ahmadiyah issue to gain votes from conservative constituents, despite facing pressure from hardline Islamist groups like FPI, GARIS, and ALUMI.

Two instances highlighted pressure exerted by Islamist hardliners. Eight months before a crucial election vote, on 15 January 2008, the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and GARIS organised a significant demonstration at the Mubarak Mosque in collaboration with the West Java Islamic Ummah Alliance (ALUMI). Their demands included the dissolution of Ahmadiyah, accompanied by threats to seal the Ahmadiyah mosque if it persisted in religious activities and teachings. Following this, two months after the 2008 mayoral election, FPI staged a demonstration at the Bandung Mayor's office, urging the city government to establish specific regulations regarding the treatment of Ahmadiyah within the city. These moves aimed to exhibit their influence and gather support, emphasising the presence of militant groups to ensure that mayoral and political candidates took note of their perspectives.

Dada Rosada deliberately avoided exploiting the Ahmadiyah issue to gather extensive support from traditional voters. He explicitly refrained from seeking political support from Islamist hardliners, firmly rejecting the use of religious matters to incite violence. In practice, Dada Rosada prioritises the advice of KH Miftah Faridl to abstain from involvement in the Ahmadiyah persecution. Additionally, Dada Rosada is committed to implementing the 'Bandung Agamis' program. The initiation of this program stems from the recognition that a considerable segment of Bandung's population strongly upholds religious beliefs and practices. Therefore, the potential of religious diversity can be harnessed as a strength among the citizens of Bandung. This could serve as a means to gain support during the mayoral election while fostering a tolerant, harmonious, and peaceful religious atmosphere in the city's development. A special envoy of Dada Rosada relayed this information:¹³⁴

Iya memang kedekatan antara KH Miftah Faridl dan Pak Dada Rosada telah terjalin sejak periode pertama Pak Dada menjadi walikota Bandung. Pak Dada sangat mendengarkan masukan dan saran KH Miftah Faridl dalam pengelolaan keagamaan di Bandung termasuk dengan masalah Ahmadiyah ini. Selain itu, dalam program bandung agamis yang digagas pak Dada, KH Miftah Faridl menjadi penasehat pelaksanaan program ini.

[The bond between KH Miftah Faridl and Dada Rosada has been solidified

¹³⁴ Interview with a special envoy of Dada Rosada, 6 June 2019.

since Rosada's initial tenure as the mayor of Bandung. Mr. Dada greatly appreciates the insights and counsel provided by KH Miftah Faridl oversees religious matters in Bandung, encompassing the Ahmadiyah issue. Furthermore, in Rosada's launch of the Bandung Agamis program, KH Miftah Faridl assumes the role of an advisor for its execution].

During the 2013 mayoral election, a situation similar to the 2008 mayoral election unfolded. Ridwan Kamil adopted Dada Rosada's strategy of abstaining from using the Ahmadiyah issue to gather or rally support from conservative constituents. However, a few months before the 2013 mayoral election, precisely on 25 October 2012, FPI and GARIS organised a protest that resulted in an invasion and damage to the An-Nasir Mosque. FPI members vandalised the mosque, breaking windows, damaging the gate, and destroying items inside. Additionally, FPI orchestrated a significant demonstration outside the Bandung Police Headquarters on 15 January 2013, approximately five months ahead of the 2013 election. During this protest, they urged the police to intervene and halt any Ahmadiyah activities, citing allegations of blasphemy against Islam as their justification.

Ridwan Kamil did not seek political support from Islamist hardliners. Instead, he crafted the tagline 'Bandung Juara', which was quite similar to the Bandung Agamis program, following the path set by his predecessor, Dada Rosada. Ridwan Kamil opted for the 'Bandung Juara' spirit as the primary tagline, emphasising Bandung as a 'home for all' religious communities. Ridwan Kamil consciously refrained from using religious language in the public sphere. With the 'Bandung Juara' tagline, the focus leaned towards the essence of incorporating religious spirit without employing formal religious language.

Furthermore, KH Miftah Faridl's role was significant during the transition period from Dada Rosada's leadership to Ridwan Kamil's after the 2013 mayoral election. Alongside serving as the Chairman of MUI Bandung, KH Miftah Faridl held a unique position at that time. He had been a lecturer at ITB (Bandung Institute of Technology), where Ridwan Kamil was an alumnus and was a student of KH Miftah Faridl during his academic years. Hence, KH Miftah Faridl was a religious scholar whose words were highly regarded by Ridwan Kamil.

Realising this position, KH Miftah Faridl then advised Ridwan Kamil to continue the programs that were considered beneficial and had been initiated by the previous mayor, including handling the Ahmadiyah issue. Subsequently, Ridwan Kamil followed the advice by continuing

the programs conducted during Dada Rosada's tenure, giving weight to the 'Bandung Juara' program related to religious life without explicitly labelling it as a religious program. As expressed by a special envoy of Ridwan Kamil:¹³⁵

Dalam penanganan kehidupan keagamaan termasuk Ahmadiyah, Pak Ridwan Kamil sangat mendengarkan masukan dan saran dari KH Miftah Faridl termasuk meneruskan program-program walikota sebelumnya yang dianggap baik untuk keberlangsungan kehidupan keagamaan di Bandung dengan memberikan kesempatan untuk Pak Ridwan Kamil untuk melakukan perubahan bila diperlukan [In handling religious affairs, including the Ahmadiyah issue, Ridwan Kamil highly values the input and advice from KH Miftah Faridl. This involves continuing the programs initiated by the previous mayor that were deemed beneficial for the continuity of religious life in Bandung. Additionally, it allows Mr. Ridwan Kamil the opportunity to make changes if necessary].

For a more comprehensive view, here are the profiles of KH Miftah Faridl and KH Athian Ali. KH Miftah Faridl is a progressive and influential Islamic scholar in Bandung. Despite not directly overseeing a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), he came from a Muhammadiyah family background and graduated with a bachelor's degree from Muhammadiyah University Surakarta in 1969. His academic journey culminated in a Doctorate in Islamic Religious Studies from the State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2000, graduating with honours (*Cum Laude*). Since completing his bachelor's degree, KH Miftah Faridl has been actively delivering sermons to various religious communities in Bandung and has held teaching positions at multiple universities, notably the Islamic University of Bandung and the Bandung Institute of Technology. Among his notable accomplishments, he was appointed a Professor of Islamic Studies at the Islamic University of Bandung in 2009 and a Professor of Social and Community Sciences at the Bandung Institute of Technology in 2010.¹³⁶

Furthermore, KH Miftah Faridl is characterised by his gentle, calming, and relatable approach when delivering sermons on diverse topics. His extensive presence as a speaker in electronic media predates the current dominance of social media, having hosted TV programs and

¹³⁵ Interview with a special envoy of Ridwan Kamil, 9 July 2019.

¹³⁶ Profil KH. Miftah Faridl, laduni.id, 5 April 2022, <https://www.laduni.id/post/read/74771/biografi-dr-kh-miftah-faridl.html>, accessed 3 December 2023.

interactive discussions since the 1990s. He has been featured on SCTV, ANTV, TVRI, and Indosiar for TV programs and has engaged in interactive dialogues on radio channels like MQFM Bandung, RRI Nasional Pro2 FM, KLCBS, and PRFM Bandung. His articles and speeches are prevalent in various publications such as Media Dak'wah, Tabloid Hikmah, Pikiran Rakyat, and Republika.¹³⁷ Besides, he has authored over 37 books since 1995, covering topics like contemporary preaching, family, Islam's role in life, Hajj and Umrah, and the modern Muslim experience. His substantial following and recognition as a reference among Islamic scholars, especially regarding religious matters within Islam, is no surprise.

Moreover, KH Miftah Faridl's adeptness in handling the intricacies of religious matters is evident through his remarkable 45-year tenure as the Chairman of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) in Bandung. Holding this position since 1978, he remains a respected figure, known for his progressive stance and wide acceptance across diverse circles within the Muslim community and other faiths.¹³⁸ Consequently, he is frequently sought out to offer guidance and advisory roles in numerous community organisations and within the municipal government framework. The leadership abilities of KH Miftah Faridl guides the MUI (Indonesian Ulama Council), recognised by numerous other Islamic organisations, as articulated by one of the prominent members of Persis Bandung, in the following statement:¹³⁹

Di daerah lain mungkin terasa MUI sangat konservatif dan cenderung sangat kaku. Namun, hal ini tidak kita merasakan MUI Kota Bandung. Figur KH Miftah Faridl yang sangat progressive menjadikan MUI Bandung menjadi sangat menyenangkan dan menjadi rujukan umat atas berbagai masalah yang muncul [In other areas, the MUI (Indonesian Ulama Council) might be seen as highly conservative and inflexible. However, this doesn't apply to the MUI in the city of Bandung. The presence of KH Miftah Faridl, renowned for his progressive stance, has rendered the MUI Bandung approachable and a guiding reference for the community on various emerging issues].

¹³⁷ Profil KH. Miftah Faridl, laduni.id, 5 April 2022, <https://www.laduni.id/post/read/74771/biografi-dr-kh-miftah-faridl.html>, accessed 4 December 2023.

¹³⁸ Profil MUI Kota Bandung, muikotabandung.com, 30 November 2021, <https://muikotabandung.com/index.php/profil/>, accessed 4 December 2023.

¹³⁹ Interview with a prominent member of Persis Bandung, 2 June 2019.

Regarding Ahmadiyah, KH Miftah Faridl's stance is quite clear and straightforward. In principle, he views Ahmadiyah as having deviated from Islamic teachings, but that does not justify persecuting or mistreating Ahmadiyah followers. In an interview, he expressed:¹⁴⁰

Keberadaan Ahmadiyah di Bandung bagi saya bukan merupakan satu masalah yang perlu dikhawatirkan, memang secara prinsip mereka telah menyimpang dari ajaran Islam yang kita pahami semua. Namun, hal ini janganlah dijadikan alasan untuk memperlakukan kekerasan dan persekusi terhadap pengikut Ahmadiyah. Tugas kami sebagai kiai perlu memberikan bimbingan, arahan dan merangkul mereka. Bila mereka masih pada keyakinan mereka, itu adalah hak mereka [The existence of Ahmadiyah in Bandung, to me, isn't a worrisome issue. Admittedly, in principle, they've strayed from the commonly understood teachings of Islam. Nevertheless, this shouldn't validate any violence or persecution towards Ahmadiyah followers. As religious scholars, our responsibility is to provide guidance, direction, and extend our support. If they remain steadfast in their beliefs, that's their prerogative].

Additionally, in practical terms, KH Miftah Faridl is conscious of the persecution faced by Ahmadiyah in Bandung, orchestrated by various hardline Islamists who purport to act in the name of religious interests. However, he acknowledges the presence of local political influence behind each act of violence, as he has highlighted:¹⁴¹

Kekerasan terhadap minority right termasuk Ahmadiyah memang paling keras dilakukan oleh kelompok salafism ataupun kelompok lainnya. Menurut pandangan saya, politik lokal terutama masa menjelang pemilihan umum atau pemilihan kepala daerah memiliki korelasi terhadap terjadinya kekerasan terhadap Ahmadiyah di Bandung [Violence against minority rights, including Ahmadiyah, is predominantly perpetrated by Salafist groups or other factions. From my perspective, local politics, particularly in the period before general elections or regional leadership elections, is correlated with instances of violence against Ahmadiyah in Bandung].

¹⁴⁰ Interview with KH. Miftah Faridl, 7 July 2019.

¹⁴¹ Interview with KH. Miftah Faridl, 7 July 2019.

On the other hand, differing from KH Miftah Faridl's viewpoint, KH Athian Ali has embraced a more conventional or conservative view regarding Ahmadiyah. Although not directly affiliated with a *pesantren*, KH Athian Ali occupies a significant position within Bandung's religious spheres. Originating from a Persis (reformist) background, he pursued academic studies at al-Azhar University in Egypt, achieving his bachelor's and master's degrees. His return to Indonesia in 1981 marked a pivotal period in his life as he was mentored by EZ Muttaqien, a revered NU *kiai*, Gerakan Pemuda Islam Indonesia (GPII) leader, and a former Masyumi member of parliament. Under Muttaqien's guidance, Athian became a teaching assistant at Universitas Islam Bandung and an influential advocate on several critical socio-religious issues of the time. Their joint efforts focused on advocating for lifting the ban on hijabs in high schools and vehemently opposing the inclusion of pluralism in school curricula (IPAC, 2016). Additionally, they deliberated the concept of Indonesianisation of Islamic law. This concept stirred debates among Muslim activists who contended that it provided room for the development of non-mainstream Islamic ideologies, notably highlighting concerns about the potential proliferation of Shi'ism within this framework. Athian Ali and Muttaqien played pivotal roles in shaping these conversations and confronting the evolving landscape of Islamic thought within the Indonesian context (IPAC, 2016).

Athian Ali is a profoundly conservative activist, fostering connections across the expansive Islamic organisational spectrum while maintaining close ties with local politicians (IPAC, 2016). Following the Reformasi movement, during the ascendancy of hardline coalitions, Athian's influence remained prominent. He featured prominently in an interconnected network of organisations whose members actively protested against the construction of churches, sought to obstruct Christian gatherings, engaged in acts of aggression towards Ahmadiyah properties, and participated in anti-vice campaigns (IPAC, 2016). This collective effort sometimes involved collaboration with local law enforcement, and on occasion, it was accompanied by instances of low-level vigilante violence (IPAC, 2016). Athian Ali's involvement in these activities underscored his role in fostering and mobilising conservative elements within the community, aligning with movements that aimed to preserve what they perceived as the sanctity of religious and societal norms.

Furthermore, Athian Ali's unwavering commitment to reformist ideals became more pronounced primarily through his founding of the Forum Ulama Ummat Indonesia (FUUI) in 2001, based in Bandung. FUUI stands as one among several pro-*shari'a* advocacy groups that emerged during

the period of democratic expansion. Their primary focus lay in staunchly countering what they perceived as threats: liberalism, Christianisation, apostasy, and deviant sects.¹⁴² Within FUUI, particular attention was dedicated to addressing deviant sects, leading to the establishment of specialised divisions dealing specifically with apostasy and deviant sect-related matters. Notably, FUUI set up an investment team dedicated to studying and monitoring deviant sects and an anti-apostasy investigation unit. Ahmadiyah, according to FUUI, was categorised as a cult, resulting in the Investigation Team's thorough mapping of Ahmadiyah activities beyond their congregations. When deemed necessary, FUUI conducted demonstrations in response to these activities, viewing Ahmadiyah's actions as a challenge to their religious orthodoxy and societal norms (IPAC, 2016).

In addition, Athian Ali's focus on combating heresy became notably explicit through his active involvement in establishing the National Alliance Against Shia (ANNAS) based in Bandung on April 20, 2014. Athian Ali held a prominent position as the chairperson within this alliance. The founding principles of ANNAS articulated four key objectives: firstly, to promote virtue and prevent vice (*amar maruf nahi munkar*); secondly, to undertake any necessary measures to impede the dissemination of what they perceived as heretical Shi'a teachings; thirdly, to foster cooperative relationships with other *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) organisations; and finally, to demand an immediate government ban on Shi'ism and the revocation of licences for foundations, organisations, and institutions associated with the Shi'a community.¹⁴³ Under his leadership, ANNAS served as a significant platform dedicated to curbing what they perceived as deviant beliefs, emphasising their agenda through proactive engagement with both societal and governmental spheres.

Moreover, Athian Ali's stance on the Ahmadiyah heresy was equally firm and explicit. On multiple occasions, he articulated statements asserting that Ahmadiyah was not a part of Islam.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Selayang pandang Forum Ulama Umat Indonesia (FUUI), 1 February 2008, <https://fuui.wordpress.com/2008/02/01/selayang-pandang-forum-ulama-umat-indonesia-fuui/>, accessed 21 November 2023.

¹⁴³ Arya Dipa, "Organised Persecution of Shi'ites Launched," *Jakarta Post*, 21 April 2014, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/04/21/organized-persecution-shiites-launched.html>, accessed 21 November 2023.

¹⁴⁴ FUUI dukung ahmadiyah jadi agama baru, detik.com, 14 February 2006, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-538759/fuui-dukung-ahmadiyah-jadi-agama-baru>, accessed 21 November 2023.

He actively advocated for stricter governmental regulations to prohibit Ahmadiyah teachings,¹⁴⁵ advocating for their dissolution. His position was clarified in the following statements:

Sikap kami jelas terhadap Ahmadiyah, bahwa kami tidak akan memberikan toleransi terhadap ajaran atau aliran yang menodai Islam. Ahmadiyah jelas bukan bagian Islam, jadi silahkan untuk membuat agama tersendiri, tidak menggunakan atribut dan praktik agama menyerupai Islam. Oleh karena itu, kami mendesak pemerintah untuk mengeluarkan regulasi yang tegas terkait pembubaran Ahmadiyah dan melarang penyebaran ajarannya yang sesat itu. Tidak ada kompromi dan langkah lain selain dibubarkan
[Our stance is clear on Ahmadiyah, that we will not tolerate any teachings or sects that tarnish Islam. Ahmadiyah is clearly not part of Islam, so please feel free to create your own religion, not using religious attributes and practices that resemble Islam. Therefore, we urge the government to issue a strict regulation regarding the dissolution of Ahmadiyah and prohibit the spread of its heretical teachings. There is no compromise and no other steps other than dissolution].

6.4.3 Muslim civic organisation ties

While the mayoral election in Bandung was fiercely contested, the incumbent candidate refrained from seeking political support from hardline groups. Islamist hardliners strategically mobilised around the Ahmadiyah issue, which gained prominence during the 2008 and 2013 mayoral election periods. Candidates such as Dada Rosada and Ridwan Kamil opted not to rely on Islamist hardliners for political backing. They vehemently opposed using religious issues to incite violence and instead employed sophisticated campaign strategies to garner local support in the mayoral elections. Moreover, these candidates engaged with progressive local religious leaders for guidance on managing religious affairs, indirectly gaining sympathy from their supporters by presenting themselves as moderate mayoral candidates. Now, I will elaborate on how connections within community organisations did not contribute to promoting persecution, especially in political competition, notably during the mayoral elections in Bandung.

¹⁴⁵ Athian Ali meminta pemerintah bubarkan Ahmadiyah, tribunews.com, 12 Maret 2011, <https://www.tribunnews.com/regional/2011/03/12/athian-ali-meminta-pemerintah-bubarkan-ahmadiyah>, accessed 21 November 2023.

Civic organisations hold a significant position in electoral democracy and in nurturing religious diversity, a viewpoint scholars assert (Hefner, 2000; Menchik, 2016). They are considered crucial institutional checks on government authority and champions of social unity within society. Brown (2019) delineates civic organisations as non-state entities capable of shaping policies, influencing political discourse, and exerting sway over political actors, particularly in times of conflict. They function as vehicles for upholding democratic and pluralistic principles. Moreover, Kopecky and Muddle (2003) posit that these organisations perform specific roles such as intermediating between the state and households, advocating for policies beyond formal state structures, maintaining independence, and potentially restraining state power.

Examining Brown's (2019) framework, both NU and Muhammadiyah undeniably embody the functional traits of a civic organisation. However, their alignment with the ideological aspect is less straightforward. While they firmly reject the notion of an Islamic state, they endorse Indonesia as a multi-religious state ensuring equal rights for all faiths, as per Brown (2019). Members of NU and Muhammadiyah might compromise on human rights, equal protection for religious minorities, and civil pluralism if they perceive threats to Islam from heresy, blasphemy, or encroachments by other religions, as discussed by Menchik (2016; 2019). Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah and NU hold a distinct role in upholding democratic values, especially when parliamentary legislation jeopardises Indonesia's pluralistic governance. During such junctures, they intervene to uphold the state's formal commitment to religious diversity, as emphasised by Brown (2019).

Furthermore, in Bandung, an intriguing absence of persecution against the Ahmadiyah community has been revealed through this research. This phenomenon is largely credited to the significant influence of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Within the context of Bandung, NU has assumed a crucial role as a custodian of intra-religious peace, earning substantial favour among political factions and current officeholders aiming for political backing. NU's active involvement in Bandung has effectively offset municipal policies that tend toward moderation and prioritise accepting diverse religious beliefs.

There are two primary reasons why NU Bandung effectively fulfills its pivotal role. Firstly, the organisation actively promotes an atmosphere of religious pluralism by opposing the Bandung mayor's attempt to implement a local regulation on Ahmadiyah in 2013; secondly, NU Bandung serves as a counterforce against more hardline Islamic groups, with the aid of local NGOs such

as Jakatarub. Through this collaborative effort, a delicate balance is maintained in the city's religious landscape, ensuring that religious diversity is respected and safeguarded, including the rights of the Ahmadiyah community.

6.4.3.1 NU Bandung actively promoted a climate of religious pluralism by opposing the Bandung mayor's attempt to implement a local regulation on Ahmadiyah in 2013

There are two contrasting perspectives regarding the role of NU. On one hand, NU is seen as a staunch advocate and defender of religious tolerance, pluralism, and democracy (Künkler and Stepan, 2013). However, Greg Fealy (1998) and Robin Bush (2009) have offered a critical view of NU, suggesting that political motives and material interests influence it. Despite this critique, the prevailing view in academic literature portrays NU as a reliable champion of democracy, moderation, and tolerance in Indonesia. Respected scholars, including Greg Barton (2002) and Robert Hefner (2000), extensively document NU's significant contribution to shaping a pluralistic, tolerant, and 'civil' form of Islam. Their publications underscore NU's substantial role in shaping Indonesia's religious landscape, particularly in promoting inclusion and diversity. Alfred Stepan (2010), a renowned scholar in political comparative analysis, expresses admiration for NU, characterising it as a fundamental pillar of a tolerant civic society. This acknowledgment underscores NU's profound influence in shaping Indonesia's religious and political landscape, advocating for democratic values, religious tolerance, and social cohesion.

As a manifestation of support for religious pluralism, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) refrained from issuing a *fatwa* against Ahmadiyah, opting instead for a non-binding recommendation during a Plenary Meeting of the Central Board held on 9–11 September 2005 in Bogor (Burhani, 2013). Within this recommendation titled 'Tausiyah: The NU's Position on Ahmadiyah', NU outlined several key points regarding Ahmadiyah. Specifically, they categorised Ahmadiyah as a deviant sect that diverges from Islam due to their non-acceptance of Prophet Muhammad as the last Prophet. However, NU explicitly discouraged any persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, emphasising that the government holds complete discretion in potentially banning or dissolving the Ahmadiyah movement. It advocated for peaceful expression of objections, urging Muslim communities to engage in a comprehensive study of Islam to prevent misinterpretations. Additionally, NU highlighted the government's need to maintain a consistent policy regarding Ahmadiyah activities in Indonesia (Karni, Ubaid, and Farida, 2010). Following the 2008 ministerial decree concerning Ahmadiyah, several regions mirrored these regulations in their

respective areas. As of the end of 2022, records indicated that four provinces and 25 regions/municipalities had enacted laws restricting activities associated with the Ahmadiyah. Although constituting a smaller subset compared to Indonesia's broader administrative divisions of 34 provinces, 405 regencies (*kabupaten*), and 97 cities, these areas represented over 40 per cent of the total population (Brown, 2019).

The main showcase of NU Bandung actively fostering a climate of religious pluralism in Bandung concerning Ahmadiyah is the primary force in opposing the Bandung mayor's attempt to implement a local regulation on Ahmadiyah in 2013. KH Maftuh Kholil, the leader of NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) Bandung, vehemently opposed the 2013 local rule enacted by the Bandung city administration regarding Ahmadiyah. This opposition emerged after it was revealed that Rosada was considering the implementation of laws against Ahmadiyah after the intense demonstrations by Islamist hardliners in 2011 and 2012. KH Maftuh Kholil emphasised the need for reassessment, notably drawing attention to the possible range of differences and negative consequences of enacting discriminatory laws. Ultimately, this suggestion was considered, resulting in Bandung being among the cities that refrained from implementing prejudiced measures against Ahmadiyah, even amidst a politically charged period. Successful candidates and parties in Bandung strategically secured support from these influential networks to bolster their campaigns.

The findings from the field suggest that Persis (Islamic Union) in Bandung holds a contrasting perspective compared to NU Bandung. Specifically, Persis strongly opposes the presence of Ahmadiyah within the city. Maman Abdurrahman, a prominent figure in Persis, vehemently criticised the teachings of Ahmadiyah. In 2010, he supported the 1965 Blasphemy Law (Menchik, 2016), and in 2011, he authored a book criticising Ahmadiyah's beliefs as heretical (Abdurrahman, 2011). This standpoint was further reinforced by the Chairman of Persis Bandung, who asserted that Ahmadiyah had strayed from Islam and endorsed the Bandung City government's regulations to restrict Ahmadiyah's missionary activities. He elaborated:¹⁴⁶

Secara keilmun memang Persis yang paling keras menentang Ahmadiyah terutama yang disampaikan oleh KH Mamam Abdurahman, dan itu tidak pernah berubah sampai sekarang. Oleh karena itu kami mendukung bila pemerintah kota menerbitkan local regulation on Ahmadiyah untuk membatasi aktivitas dakwah Ahmadiyah yang

¹⁴⁶ Interview with the chairman of Persis Bandung, 17 July 2019.

menyimpang tersebut [Regarding knowledge and scholarship, Persis is the most vehement in opposing Ahmadiyah, primarily as conveyed by KH Mamam Abdurahman and that stance has remained unchanged until now. Therefore, we support the city government in issuing a local regulation on Ahmadiyah to limit the deviant missionary activities of Ahmadiyah].

Moreover, Abdurrahman and Persis' viewpoints differed from other notable local figures. Specifically, NU branches in Bandung did not oppose Ahmadiyah or issue public statements on this matter, unlike their counterparts in Bandung and other parts of Indonesia. The leadership of NU Bandung did not prioritise addressing the Ahmadiyah issue as a crucial concern. The pluralistic stance of NU Bandung can be attributed to the figure of KH Maftuh Kholil, who advocates for religious tolerance in the city and is an ally of the Bandung Ahmadiyah community. Apart from serving as the chairman of NU Bandung, KH Maftuh Kholil also leads the Al-Ikhwan Islamic boarding school in Cigadung, Bandung. This institution is renowned for its moderate educational approach, encompassing academic units from early childhood to higher education. During the interview session, he conveyed:¹⁴⁷

Keberadaan Jamaah Ahmadiyah di Bandung bukanlah suatu ancaman yang perlu dikhawatirkan. Walaupun Ahmadiyah dianggap sesat bagi sebagian orang, namun bagi kami Ahmadiyah hanya perlu dibimbing dan diarahkan sesuai dengan kapasitas saya sebagai kiai. Berikan kesempatan mereka untuk beribadah dan jangan memusuhi mereka. Rangkulah mereka dalam dakwah [The presence of the Ahmadiyah community in Bandung isn't a threat to be feared. Despite some considering Ahmadiyah as deviant, from our perspective, they simply need guidance and direction within my role as *kiai* a religious leader. Offer them the chance to worship and avoid any hostility towards them. Embrace them through preaching and outreach efforts].

As another illustration of KH Maftuh Kholil's pluralistic approach, furthermore, he orchestrated the delivery of a thousand flowers to a local church, symbolising religious tolerance, an act repeated nearly every Christmas.¹⁴⁸ He conveyed that these flowers symbolise religious harmony,

¹⁴⁷ Interview with KH. Maftuh Kholil 20 July 2019.

¹⁴⁸ Sosok KH. Maftuh Kholil, kliksosok.com, 31 July 2017, <https://kliksosok.blogspot.com/2007/07/kh-maftuh-kholil.html>, accessed 1 December 2023.

carrying a message from the Muslim community to the Christian community celebrating Christmas.

While upholding his pluralistic approach, KH Maftuh Kholil sheepishly admitted that it also served as an essential strategy for gaining constituents. This assertion aligns with Brown's findings (2019), indicating that NU significantly contributes to perpetuating democratic norms and upholding the state's formal dedication to religious pluralism. However, this contribution doesn't solely stem from an ideological commitment to civil Islam but rather from an organisational strategy centred on risk management. This strategic approach dictates the timing of their political interventions and the compromises they propose. He argues that NU actively seeks compromise solutions to preserve their levels of influence and reconcile their internal ideological divisions (Brown, 2019). During the interview session, KH Maftuh Kholil conveyed:

Sikap NU Bandung yang progressive dan mengedepankan religious pluralisme terhadap kaum minoritas, baik itu Ahmadiyah, syiah maupun umat kristiani merupakan salah satu bentuk pelaksanaan perwujudan kompromi nilai-nilai dalam NU dikaitkan dengan cita-cita tawassuth (moderasi), tawazun wa i'tidal (keseimbangan), tasamuh (toleransi), dan amar ma'ruf nahi munkar. Dengan memperlihatkan cara Islam yang ramah seperti ini dapat membangun dan mempertahankan pengaruh dan memperoleh dukungan konstituen baru terhadap NU Bandung [NU Bandung's progressive stance, prioritising religious pluralism towards minority groups such as Ahmadiyah, Shia, and Christian communities, embodies the embodiment of compromise within NU linked to the ideals of moderation (tawassuth), balance (tawazun wa i'tidal), tolerance (tasamuh), and enjoining good and forbidding wrong (amar ma'ruf nahi munkar). By showcasing this accommodating aspect of Islam, NU Bandung can both cultivate and sustain influence while garnering support from new constituents].

6.4.3.2 NU Bandung serves as a counterweight to more hardline Islamic groups

The fieldwork revealed that NU Bandung consistently upholds its role as a staunch defender of religious tolerance and pluralism. The discovery supports Jati's (2022) concept of the 'traditionalist turn', signifying traditionalist Muslims reclaiming their prominence in the religious

sphere and resisting the dominance of conservative factions. NU, notably, has been successful in diminishing the influence of conservative elements, a part of its broader initiative advocating for religious moderation, which aligns with the inclinations of the incumbent candidate Dada Rosada and his 'Bandung Agamis' tagline, as well as Ridwan Kamil and his 'Bandung Juara' tagline. In the context of Ahmadiyah, NU's Bandung efforts are notable and include several key initiatives that serve as a counterweight to more hardline Islamic groups, including the mobilisation of GP Ansor and actively engage in FLADS/Jakatarub.

Firstly, NU Bandung actively engages GP Ansor, the youth wing of the NU movement, in advocating for tolerance and standing in solidarity with religious minorities like Ahmadiyah and Shia. This involvement reflects a deliberate effort to challenge the narrative propagated by hardline Islamists who condone violence against Ahmadiyah. Rather than responding to the aggression of hardline Islamists with similar tactics, GP Ansor adopts a different approach. They stand alongside these marginalised communities, offering support and companionship in various activities when required. This support isn't limited to verbal advocacy but encompasses a multifaceted strategy. GP Ansor consistently engages in interfaith dialogue, fostering understanding and empathy, while also safeguarding the places of worship belonging to these minority communities, including Ahmadiyah, to ensure their safety and continuity of religious practices. This proactive involvement underscores NU Bandung's commitment to promoting inclusivity, tolerance and safeguarding the rights of religious minorities within the community. As one prominent member of GP Ansor Bandung said:¹⁴⁹

Ya memang dari GP Ansor sendiri memiliki Banser yang selalu siap memberikan bantuan pengamanan di setiap acara besar yang dilakukan seperti Jalsah Salanah atau pertemuan tahunan yang dilakukan Jamaah Ahmadiyah Bandung [Yes, indeed, GP Ansor has Banser, always ready to provide security assistance at every major event, such as Jalsah Salanah or the annual gatherings organised by the Ahmadiyah community in Bandung].

An integral aspect of this endeavour involves ensuring the security of places of worship, a responsibility *Banser* (*Barisan Ansor Serbaguna*/Ansor Multipurpose Unit) takes up, especially during specific religious commemorations and gatherings. What distinguishes GP Ansor's approach, facilitated by Banser, is its strong dedication to upholding multiculturalism and

¹⁴⁹ Interview with a prominent member of GP Ansor Bandung, 21 July 2019.

safeguarding the well-being of religious minority communities. This commitment stems from GP Ansor's active engagement in the Humanitarian Islam movement, a significant initiative they have embraced. The core objective of the Humanitarian Islam movement is to reinterpret and contextualise Islam's fundamental teachings, presenting an alternative interpretation that promotes critical thinking. It aspires to encourage introspection and open dialogue among Muslims, fostering an environment where they can confidently address complex and sensitive issues. As a result, the presence of GP Ansor through its Banser, rooted in Islamic education (*santri-based*), has proven remarkably effective in maintaining religious harmony and a conducive atmosphere within the city of Bandung.

Secondly, NU Bandung is actively involved in fostering connections with diverse local communities, notably through initiatives like the Interfaith Religious Network or *Jaringan Kerja Antar Umat Beragama (Jakatarub)*. Wawan Gunawan, an ardent activist within NU Bandung, plays a pivotal role as a key figure and chairs the presidium of this network. Jakatarub operates as a crucial platform facilitating interfaith dialogues, fostering a climate of tolerance and mutual understanding among different religious groups.

This network boasts participation from a spectrum of organisations, representing a rich tapestry of religious diversity. In addition to Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, it includes representatives from Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Christian, Catholic, Ahmadiyah, and Shia communities. Jakatarub's primary focus lies within the cultural sphere, aiming to heighten societal consciousness and dispel narratives of intolerance perpetuated by extremist factions. By actively engaging in interfaith discussions and initiatives, Jakatarub endeavours to bridge gaps, nurture empathy, and cultivate a shared sense of respect among distinct religious communities. This concerted effort is a testament to NU Bandung's commitment to fostering harmony and unity amidst a diverse religious landscape, countering the divisive rhetoric often amplified by intolerant groups.

Jakatarub hosts approximately 175 activities annually centred around the themes of tolerance and interfaith dialogue. These initiatives are predominantly driven by the youth, who serve as the driving force behind these engagements. Among the numerous activities, two standout events take centre stage each year: the 'youth interfaith camp' and the 'peace festival,' both held in Bandung (Lengauer, 2023).

These events pivot around a fundamental concept to unite young individuals, preferably from diverse religious backgrounds, and facilitate their interaction in informal and intimate settings. Jakatarub views these encounters as 'authentic engagements' (*perjumpaan yang otentik*), not scripted dialogues orchestrated by religious representatives adhering to a set 'code of conduct', but rather genuine, unfiltered interactions among ordinary people. At the heart of this approach lies the belief that 'dialogue starts with friendship', encapsulated in Jakatarub's annual festival, Bandung Lautan Damai (Bandung's Sea of Peace) (Lengauer, 2023).

Bandung Lautan Damai isn't merely an event but a series of activities comprising concerts, exhibitions, film screenings, and workshops. This comprehensive approach fosters an environment where individuals from varied religious backgrounds can converge, establish connections, and engage in meaningful exchanges. By promoting such encounters, Jakatarub aims to cultivate a grassroots movement where relationships are built, understanding is fostered, and the seeds of dialogue and mutual respect are sown among everyday people.

The Ahmadiyah community in Bandung finds great comfort in Jakatarub's presence as it fosters an environment devoid of negative biases or unilateral judgments toward the Ahmadiyah faith. Frequently, Jakatarub extends aid and offers constructive explanations to counter the marginalisation faced by the Ahmadiyah community. This insight was shared by the presidium of Jakatarub, who concurrently serves as an activist within NU Bandung:¹⁵⁰

Prinsip kami dalam meningkatkan sikap pluralism di Bandung adalah merubah persepsi dari 'membedakan' pandangan keagamaan menuju 'melibatkan' umat agama dari berbagai latar belakang agama, termasuk kelompok islam minoritas seperti Ahmadiyah dan Syiah. Salah satu cara untuk merubah stigma itu adalah dengan memperbanyak ruang perjumpaa untuk saling mengenal, membangun pemahaman dan persahabatan diantaranya melalui Youth Interfaith Dialogue dan Bandung Lautan Damai yang telah kami rintis [Our principle in enhancing pluralistic attitudes in Bandung involves shifting perceptions from 'distinguishing' religious perspectives towards 'engaging' people of various religious backgrounds, including minority Islamic groups like Ahmadiyah and Shia. One way to alter these stigmas is by creating more spaces for encounters to foster mutual understanding, build

¹⁵⁰ Interview with the presidium of Jakatarub, 21 July 2019.

relationships, such as through Youth Interfaith Dialogue and Bandung's Sea of Peace, initiatives that we have initiated].

6.5 Conclusion

This thesis investigates the root causes of the religious persecution experienced by Ahmadiyah followers. A detailed analysis of empirical data on religious persecution in Depok and Bogor reveals a significant contrast, mainly concerning local regulations affecting the Ahmadiyah community. While persecution is evident in Depok, followers of Ahmadiyah in Bogor have not faced similar treatment. Bandung presents a different case – it lacks specific local regulations against Ahmadiyah, yet persecution against the group has still occurred. Therefore, this chapter seeks to scrutinise empirical data better to understand the main research question of this thesis, focusing on the factors contributing to religious persecution against Ahmadiyah followers in situations where local regulations are absent.

To address this question, the conceptual framework connecting local politics and religious persecution remains a crucial tool in understanding the dynamics influencing the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. This chapter focuses on local dynamics, thoroughly assessing how political competition directly impacts religious persecution, particularly in Bandung. The absence of a dominant party in the local parliament has led to instability and unpredictability in Bandung's political landscape, as evidenced by elections from 2004 to 2019. No single party consistently dominated the vote, with victories alternating among them. For example, the PKS party won in 2004 with 24% of the votes, the Democratic Party in 2009 with 40%, PDI-P in 2014 with 24%, and PKS again in 2019 with 26%. Additionally, each major election in Bandung featured intense political activity, with coalitions endorsing candidate pairs, numerous contenders, and slim victory margins. For instance, eight pairs competed in the 2013 mayoral election, backed by party alliances and independent groups.

The study uses three intermediary factors as analytical tools: political competition and patronage networks, local religious authorities, and Muslim civic organisation ties. The primary goal is to closely examine and critically evaluate the link between local politics and instances of religious persecution.

First, the research findings suggest that local politics during the mayoral elections in Bandung played a critical role in either enabling or curbing religious persecution against Ahmadiyah members. In the 2008 and 2013 elections, Islamist hardliners targeted Ahmadiyah followers to increase their influence within patronage networks. By showcasing their militant capabilities, these groups, particularly FPI and GARIS, sought to compel political candidates to acknowledge their stance through acts of persecution. This tactic was especially noticeable because these groups had relatively weaker numbers and political clout in Bandung compared to places like Depok, Bogor, and other parts of West Java. Moreover, fieldwork revealed that violence and persecution against Ahmadiyah followers surged during the 2008 and 2013 mayoral elections. However, this trend significantly declined after 2013. Three key factors drove the persecution by Islamist hardliners during these elections: (1) Testing internal cohesion among Islamist groups by using Ahmadiyah and other religious minorities as a means to demonstrate their electoral influence; (2) Disrupting Ahmadiyah's annual events as a form of hostile reaction; and (3) Anticipating a reciprocal response from the local government, leveraging its responsiveness to religious concerns to position Islamist groups as key stakeholders in the city's religious policymaking.

In contrast, both Dada Rosada, during his incumbency in the 2008 election, and Ridwan Kamil, a newcomer in the 2013 election, deliberately avoided exploiting anti-Ahmadiyah sentiments to attract votes from conservative Muslims. They refrained from aligning with Islamist hardliners and adopted progressive and strategic campaign strategies resonating with younger voters and non-traditional urban residents. As a result, after the elections, they successfully garnered support from progressive local religious leaders, which played a crucial role in preventing further persecution of Ahmadiyah members in Bandung.

Second, regarding local religious authority, this study highlights the importance of incumbent candidates securing support from progressive religious leaders, or *kiai*, who play a crucial role in competing for election votes and countering the conservative influence of Islamist hardliners. This explains why incumbent candidates do not depend on hardliners for political support and vote mobilisation. The research identifies two influential *kiai* in Bandung, KH Miftah Faridl and KH Athian Ali, who, despite not directly overseeing *pesantren*, have considerable influence through their congregations and political connections. These figures hold differing views on religious minorities, particularly Ahmadiyah, with KH Athian Ali adopting a more conservative

stance and KH Miftah Faridl taking a moderate approach, welcoming Ahmadiyah followers as part of Bandung's community.

Furthermore, religious market competition plays a crucial role in shaping the behavior of Islamist hardliners in Bandung, particularly in their decision to target Ahmadiyah followers. Unlike cities such as Depok and Bogor, where dominant Islamist organizations exert significant influence over religious discourse and local politics, Bandung lacks a single, hegemonic Islamist force. This absence of a centralized authority created an environment in which smaller radical groups, particularly FPI and GARIS, sought to elevate their status by engaging in high-profile acts of persecution. Without an established Islamist organization controlling religious narratives, these hardliner groups needed to demonstrate their relevance through visible, provocative actions that reinforced their ideological credentials and political influence.

One key reason why Ahmadiyah became the primary target of persecution was that attacking religious minorities allowed Islamist groups to differentiate themselves in Bandung's fragmented religious landscape. In a competitive religious market, organizations must continuously find ways to assert their influence, attract followers, and secure financial or political backing. Persecuting Ahmadiyah served as a strategic tool for Islamist groups to position themselves as defenders of religious orthodoxy, thereby appealing to conservative Muslim constituents. By disrupting Ahmadiyah gatherings and forcing local authorities to respond, these groups not only legitimized their presence but also tested their ability to influence political and religious decision-making.

The link between religious market competition and political patronage networks further fueled persecution. Since Bandung's electoral landscape was marked by instability—where different parties won mayoral elections between 2004 and 2019—Islamist hardliners had no guaranteed political backers. This uncertainty meant that these groups had to repeatedly prove their value as political assets, particularly during election periods. By staging acts of persecution, they pressured candidates into acknowledging their influence, whether through direct engagement or tacit approval. If politicians responded favorably—either by refraining from condemning attacks or by implementing restrictive measures against Ahmadiyah—Islamist groups strengthened their role as key actors in Bandung's political-religious ecosystem.

However, the decline in Ahmadiyah persecution after 2013 illustrates the shifting dynamics of religious market competition. As progressive leadership under Ridwan Kamil gained traction and

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) expanded its influence in Bandung, the need for radical Islamist groups as political brokers diminished. NU's strong advocacy for religious pluralism provided an alternative religious authority that countered hardline narratives, reducing the space for Islamist groups to justify persecution as a means of influence. This trend reinforces the argument that persecution is not solely driven by ideological extremism but is also shaped by competitive pressures within religious and political landscapes. The Bandung case thus highlights how religious market competition can incentivize or constrain persecution, depending on the broader political and religious environment.

Third, regarding connections with Muslim civic organisations, the study highlights the significant role of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in allowing Ahmadiyah followers in Bandung to practice their faith freely without facing persecution since 2013. In Bandung, NU has acted as a guardian of intra-religious harmony, gaining favour among political factions and officeholders seeking support. NU's active engagement has influenced municipal policies toward moderation and accepting diverse religious beliefs. NU Bandung's success in this role is due to its advocacy for religious pluralism and its efforts to oppose the 2013 attempt to implement a local regulation concerning Ahmadiyah. Additionally, NU Bandung nurtures ties with local communities through initiatives like the Interfaith Religious Network (Jakatarub), maintaining balance in the city's religious landscape and ensuring the respect and protection of religious diversity, including the rights of the Ahmadiyah community.

While the findings in Bandung provide valuable insights into the interaction between local political dynamics and religious persecution, their applicability to other regions depends on several contextual factors. One key factor is political competition and patronage structures. The findings suggest that in areas with political instability—such as Bandung's fluctuating electoral landscape—Islamist hardliners are more likely to use persecution as a tool to strengthen their influence. A similar pattern may emerge in other Indonesian cities with fragmented political environments where no single political force maintains consistent dominance.

In addition, religious authority and religious market dynamics play a crucial role in shaping electoral strategies. In Bandung, the influence of religious figures such as KH Miftah Faridl helped mitigate persecution by steering political candidates away from seeking support from Islamist hardliners. This highlights the importance of religious leaders in shaping political calculations, particularly in urban centers where moderate religious figures have significant

influence over public opinion and religious policy direction. A similar dynamic may apply in other cities where progressive religious leaders are capable of counterbalancing conservative Islamist narratives.

The presence or absence of counterweights from civil society also determines patterns of persecution against Ahmadiyah and other religious minorities. In Bandung, the relatively strong presence of NU served as a moderating force against radical groups. The extent to which Muslim civic organizations play a role in countering hardline Islamist movements will determine whether similar patterns of persecution emerge in other cities. Cities with strong NU representation or active interfaith networks are more likely to suppress intolerance, whereas regions with weaker civil society infrastructures may face a higher risk of religious persecution.

Thus, while the motivations behind Ahmadiyah persecution in Bandung provide important insights into the relationship between politics and religious market competition, their broader applicability depends on the political, religious, and civil society structures of each locality. Future research could explore similar cases in other urban areas to further refine these theoretical insights into the factors that drive or constrain religious persecution.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This chapter underscores the thesis's significant contribution to understanding how local political dynamics influence religious persecution, particularly against the Ahmadiyah community in Indonesia. By examining how political actors leverage religious issues to consolidate electoral support, the study sheds light on a critical but often overlooked aspect of religious discrimination. However, this contribution can be made even more compelling by further integrating historical, social, and political dimensions, allowing for a deeper comprehension of the underlying forces driving persecution.

Religious persecution in Indonesia is not an isolated phenomenon but rather a product of historical processes that have shaped the state's role in regulating religious expression. During the New Order era, the government institutionalized religious categorization, reinforcing the marginalization of groups like Ahmadiyah. While democratic reforms after 1998 promised greater religious freedom, the persistence of state-sanctioned restrictions on minority groups reveals how entrenched power structures continue to shape local governance. Local politicians, often driven by the imperative of electoral survival, have learned to exploit these religious fault lines, weaponizing sectarian sentiments to secure voter loyalty. The thesis's findings demonstrate that political competition is not just an incidental factor but a central mechanism through which religious persecution unfolds.

Beyond political strategies, religious persecution is also deeply embedded in broader societal attitudes shaped by religious education, media narratives, and the influence of Islamic organizations. The growing presence of hardline Islamist groups, coupled with the increasing conservatism within mainstream religious institutions, has fostered an environment where discrimination against Ahmadiyah is normalized. Hardline organizations have actively framed Ahmadiyah as a theological and social threat, using their influence to pressure local governments into enacting restrictive policies. At the same time, internal divisions within moderate Muslim organizations have weakened their ability to mount a meaningful resistance against discriminatory practices, further enabling persecution to persist. This study's exploration of Depok, Bogor, and Bandung reveals that while political actors play a crucial role, they operate within a broader social framework that both legitimizes and sustains religious discrimination.

The local political dynamics that drive religious persecution must also be understood within the broader context of Indonesia's evolving democratic landscape. While decentralization was intended to bring governance closer to the people, it has also allowed local elites to use religious issues for political gain, particularly during high-stakes electoral contests. The thesis highlights how different levels of electoral competition influence the extent to which candidates align with hardline groups, demonstrating that persecution is not merely a byproduct of religious intolerance but a calculated political strategy. This pattern is not unique to the Ahmadiyah community; similar dynamics are evident in the persecution of Shia Muslims, Christian minorities, and indigenous religious groups, further reinforcing the significance of this study's findings.

Ultimately, this thesis reveals that religious persecution is not an inevitable consequence of religious diversity but rather a product of deliberate political choices. By using a local political framework and analysing patterns of persecution in three cities, Depok, Bogor, and Bandung, the research underscores the influence of political dynamics on religious tensions, particularly during local elections. Political candidates often exploit religious identity to gain electoral support, leading to increased social division and instances of persecution. Furthermore, the study identifies the crucial roles of religious authorities and civic organisations in shaping attitudes toward religious pluralism and tolerance. While some religious leaders advocate for inclusivity and dialogue, others perpetuate narratives of exclusivity and intolerance, exacerbating societal tensions.

In this chapter, the primary discoveries and arguments presented in the thesis will be recapitulated and subsequently analysed in connection with established theories of political competition, patronage networks, local religious leaders and Muslim civic organisations.

7.1 Thesis findings and arguments

Religious persecution can occur even in nations with strong democratic institutions, such as India, the United States, and Indonesia (Brathwaite and Park, 2019). Most research on this topic has concentrated on inter-religious conflicts and the role of regulatory measures, finding that religious regulations are closely linked to persecution (Grim and Finke, 2007). However, these studies do not fully explain intra-religious conflicts, especially in developing countries.

In Indonesia, intra-religious conflicts targeting the Ahmadiyah community have not been adequately addressed. Between 2007 and 2023, there were 568 reported incidents of persecution against Ahmadiyah followers across 56 districts, including intimidation, physical attacks, hate speech, and destruction of property. These widespread issues highlight the urgent need for effective interventions. Although the Indonesian government enacted Joint Ministerial Decree 3/2008 and 26 local regulations to curb these conflicts, these measures have often failed to prevent persecution and are sometimes seen as contributing to it (Crouch, 2012).

This study expands Grim and Finke's framework by analysing religious persecution against Ahmadiyah in Indonesia. It highlights that social regulations, especially *fatwas* issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), are strongly linked to the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. Islamist groups often use MUI *fatwas*¹⁵¹ to justify these actions, sometimes in collusion with local authorities, as seen in Depok and Bandung. However, in Bogor, persecution decreased following the introduction of a local regulation, as detailed in Chapter 3. The MUI's conservative shift since the reform era has created a more permissive environment for discrimination against Ahmadiyah. Hardline Islamist groups, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), use MUI *fatwas* to enforce Sharia law and legitimise violence. While some Islamic organisations recognise MUI *fatwas*, differing opinions within the Islamic community persist. The MUI's alliances with extremist groups provide them with a veneer of legitimacy, enabling them to exploit religious ignorance to justify their violent actions.

The Ahmadiyah case is particularly intriguing because regulations targeting Ahmadiyah are not the sole factor driving their persecution. Analysis shows that while Ahmadiyah followers are dispersed across Indonesia, they are notably concentrated in only 70 districts or cities. Of these, 17 have local regulations against Ahmadiyah and also report persecution. In contrast, ten districts have anti-Ahmadiyah laws but no documented persecution. Additionally, 39 districts lack such regulations yet still experience persecution, while four districts neither have local restrictions nor report persecution.

¹⁵¹ The *fatwa* is an opinion as an answer given by some qualified religious scholars based on Islamic law on a question from the society. On regards on Ahmadiyah, the MUI has the strongest commitments against this movement by issuing two *fatwas* in 1980 and 2005. The latter *fatwa* was very strongly advocating for banning Ahmadiyah and prohibit the spread of Ahmadiyah teaching. It also stated that Ahmadiyah is not part of the Islam community and the Muslim who follows it is a heretic.

This raises a critical question: why are religious regulations used to justify persecution in some areas but not others? It also prompts further investigation into the conditions that lead to violent persecution despite the presence of Islamist hardliners in various regions. Therefore, this research aims to uncover the underlying factors and local dynamics driving the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers, focusing on the specific conditions and motivations that lead to such actions.

This research has revealed **the relationship between local politics during mayoral elections and the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers**. It shows that the underlying causes of this religious persecution are closely tied to the actions of local political actors, particularly during high-stakes mayoral elections. Persecution often occurs when candidates use the Ahmadiyah issue to enhance their Islamic credentials, aiming to attract support from conservative Muslims and hardline Islamic groups for electoral gain. This observation supports Brathwaite and Park's theory (2019) that suggests heightened political competition leads to increased religious violence, a pattern that persists even when other factors are considered. They argue that religious violence escalates with political rivalry and voter turnout. Djupe and Grant (2001) also highlight a link between religious persecution and electoral competition, as previously noted by Wilcox and Sigelman (2001). Additionally, Chhibber and Shastri (2014) propose that in regions with intense electoral rivalry, political elites might exploit religious identities to inflame social or sectarian tensions, potentially resulting in religious persecution.

Additionally, this study highlights how local politics impact religious persecution by investigating persecution trends in Depok, Bogor, and Bandung. It identifies three critical factors shaping this dynamic: (a) the role of political competition and patronage networks, (b) the influence of religious leaders, and (c) connections with Muslim civic organisations. These elements are further detailed in the table 31 below.

Table 31

Three pivotal factors of the correlation between local politics during mayoral elections and religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in three cities







Selected cities	Political competition (Margin of victory)	Patronage network and vigilante groups	Religious authority or local religious leaders	Muslim civic organisations' tie
Depok	The average winning margin in the past three elections: 14.25%	Candidate enhanced Islamic image, seeking hardline support. Parties aligned with powerful hardliners, emphasising Ahmadiyah and securing votes.	Hardline <i>kiai</i> influence Depok's politics, impacting policies and elections through traditional authority.	NU's internal tensions over Ahmadiyah, leading to inconsistencies, weakening its influence in countering restrictive policies in Depok
Bogor	The average winning margin in the past three elections: 30,27%	The candidate avoided extremists and employed progressive strategies to prevent Ahmadiyah oppression. Weak hardliners view Ahmadiyah as non-threatening.	Progressive <i>kiai</i> ensure Ahmadiyah protection, endorse moderation and supported by mayoral candidates	NU Bogor serves as a beacon of religious moderation and tolerance, countering extremism through leadership, initiatives, and support for minority groups
Bandung	The average winning margin in the past three elections: 20.40%	Candidates refrained from exploiting religion and seeking hardline support. Hardliners targeted Ahmadiyah, seeking influence and support, and causing violence.	Mayoral candidates ally with progressive religious leaders for votes, avoiding Islamist extremists. Notable <i>Kiai</i> influence politics	NU Bandung plays a pivotal role in promoting religious pluralism by resisting discriminatory regulations and collaborating with <i>GP Ansor</i> and <i>Jakarta</i> to safeguard minority rights

Supporting Argument 1: Political competition and patronage networks shape candidates' positions on Ahmadiyah persecution, influencing electoral outcomes and governance approaches in selected cities.

This study has unveiled the pivotal role played by the initial mediators – the political competition and patronage network – in influencing political candidates to either endorse or resist the religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in the selected cities under examination as shown in the table below 32.

Table 32

The correlation between political competition and religious persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in selected cities

Case Study	Local religious regulation on Ahmadiyah	Political Competition	Candidates' strategies for vote mobilization	The strength of local FPI	Patronage network between candidates and hardliner Islamists	Persecution of Ahmadiyah Followers
Depok		Avg MoV: 14.25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploited Ahmadiyah for increasing Islamic profile Attract votes of conservative Muslims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong networking Vote getters 	Candidate maintain support from influential brokers	
Bogor		Avg MoV 20.40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not exploit Ahmadiyah Gain support from progressive religious leaders and pesantrens networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak networking Do not consider Ahmadiyah as a priority to address 	No patronage networks	 *)
Bandung	 **)	Avg MoV: 30.27%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not exploit Ahmadiyah Employed programmatic strategies Gain support from pesantrens networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong networking Persecute Ahmadiyah during mayoral election (2008&2013) Failed to gain votes and patronage from candidates 	No patronage networks	 until 2013

*) The demonstration at Sindang Barang Ahmadiyah Mosque on 24 February 2011, was the only recorded incident of persecution against Ahmadiyah followers in Bogor, preceding the issuance of the mayoral regulation. Led by the Bogor Muslim Family (KMB) and other Islamist groups, the protest pressured Mayor Diani Budiarto to issue a regulation, resulting in the mosque's closure. After the regulation was enacted, no further persecution was reported. Since the incident of persecution occurred only once and was not sustained, this research categorizes Bogor as having no persecution against Ahmadiyah followers.

***) In Bandung, the mayor issued a directive in the form of a 'decree' on 12 April 2012, an internal instruction for civil servants assigned to assist in formulating policies to address potential challenges related to the presence of Ahmadiyah followers. This contrasts with Depok and Bogor, where the mayors issued 'regulations' explicitly restricting Ahmadiyah activities, including banning the dissemination of their teachings—whether orally or in writing—prohibiting the use of their symbols, and limiting their religious practices. Consequently, this research considers that Bandung does not have specific regulations directly overseeing the activities of Ahmadiyah followers.

In Depok, the political landscape is shaped by intense competition, evidenced by an average margin of victory (MoV) of just 14.25% in the past three mayoral elections. This narrow margin drives candidates to engage deeply with religious issues, particularly targeting the Ahmadiyah community, to attract the conservative Muslim vote. In Depok's socially conservative environment, where Islamic identity plays a significant role, exploiting the Ahmadiyah issue becomes a strategic tool for candidates to strengthen their Islamic credentials. For example, Nur Mahmudi Ismail's efforts to enhance his Islamist profile, including denouncing Ahmadiyah as a heretical sect, align with the need to appeal to conservative voters.

Depok's political networks are particularly strong, with candidates relying heavily on local vote-getters and brokers, who play a crucial role in building and sustaining electoral support. The

presence of these robust patronage networks means that influential brokers, often aligned with Islamist hardliners, are essential for securing votes. In such a context, aligning with these hardliners and taking a strong stance against Ahmadiyah not only bolsters a candidate's Islamic profile but also ensures their alignment with the powerful networks that influence voter behaviour.

Furthermore, the collaboration between political actors, particularly the PKS, and Islamist hardliners like the FPI, serves as a powerful tool in both persecuting the Ahmadiyah community and securing electoral victories. This alliance is not merely circumstantial but is driven by a convergence of objectives: PKS's political goals align with FPI's mission of 'amar makruf nahi munkar' (Enjoining the good and forbidding evil). The FPI's framing of religious and moral issues is strategically designed to resonate with conservative voters, especially during the 2010 mayoral election. These vigilante groups were not passive observers but active participants, playing a crucial role in mobilising voters and galvanising support from conservative circles.

The impact of this collaboration is evident in the election's outcome. The political incumbent, supported by these Islamist hardliners, secured the mayoral seat, a victory that underscores the effectiveness of this alliance. The sustained support from groups like FPI also ensured that the incumbent's political position remained strong, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between political parties and Islamist hardliners in Depok. This collaboration highlights the extent to which religious issues are exploited for political gain, with the persecution of minority groups like the Ahmadiyah becoming a tool in the broader strategy to maintain power and influence in a competitive political landscape.

In contrast to Depok's fiercely competitive political environment, Bogor offers a more moderate political landscape, with an average margin of victory (MoV) of 20.40% in the past three mayoral elections. This wider margin allows candidates in Bogor to prioritise broader, more inclusive issues rather than exploiting divisive topics like the Ahmadiyah controversy. Unlike in Depok, where intense competition pushes candidates to engage with religious hardliners, political figures in Bogor often align themselves with progressive religious leaders and *pesantren* networks. This alignment promotes a more tolerant and moderate political atmosphere, where the Ahmadiyah issue does not dominate the political agenda.

Bogor's weaker political networks further distinguish its dynamics from Depok's. Candidates in Bogor are less dependent on local brokers and instead focus on appealing to a broader electorate, which contributes to a more tolerant approach toward religious minorities. Despite Bogor being one of the regions that enacted local regulations against Ahmadiyah, there have been no reported cases of persecution against Ahmadiyah followers since the regulation's implementation in 2011. This suggests that the absence of strong patronage networks and the relatively moderate political competition in Bogor have created a less hostile environment for religious minorities.

The political scenario in Bogor highlights a complex interplay between competition and religious issues, particularly during mayoral elections. By issuing a mayoral decree in 2011 to ban Ahmadiyah-related activities, Diani leveraged these networks to strengthen his Islamic image. However, the absence of reported persecution following the decree reveals a crucial insight: the intensity of religious persecution is closely tied to the presence of strong patronage networks. In their absence, Bogor's political environment tends to favour moderation and a less confrontational approach toward religious minorities. This shift became even more evident under Bima Arya's leadership in the 2013 and 2019 mayoral elections. Unlike his predecessors, Bima Arya rejected the support of extremist Islamist forces, choosing instead to run progressive campaigns targeting younger, urban voters. His strategy, supported by progressive local religious leaders, not only secured his electoral success but also led to a period free from documented persecution of Ahmadiyah members. This contrast highlights how a move away from reliance on hardline patronage networks toward inclusive, modern political strategies can foster a more tolerant and stable political climate in Bogor.

Furthermore, Bandung's relatively low level of political competition, evidenced by an average margin of victory (MoV) of 30.27% in the past three mayoral elections, has led candidates to adopt a more cautious approach to the Ahmadiyah issue. Unlike in regions with more intense competition, where religious controversies are often exploited for political gain, Bandung's political environment allows candidates to be more selective in their strategies. During the 2008 and 2013 elections, Islamist hardliners like FPI and GARIS, despite their weaker presence in Bandung, sought to assert their influence by targeting Ahmadiyah followers. Their persecution tactics aimed to demonstrate their militant capabilities, test the internal cohesion of Islamist groups, and pressure candidates to acknowledge their stance by disrupting Ahmadiyah activities. However, the intensity of these actions declined significantly after 2013.

Candidates such as Dada Rosada and Ridwan Kamil deliberately distanced themselves from these extremist factions, recognising that a broader, more inclusive campaign strategy would be more effective in Bandung's political climate. Instead of aligning with hardline groups, they focused on appealing to a broader electorate, particularly younger and urban voters, by promoting progressive policies. Bandung's political networks are characterised by a more strategic use of patronage, where engagement with these networks is done selectively rather than out of necessity. This selective approach reflects the city's complex and competitive political landscape, where candidates prioritise building broad-based support over relying on divisive religious issues, contributing to a more tolerant and stable political environment.

In summary, the varying levels of political competition in Depok, Bogor, and Bandung significantly influence local politicians' strategies, particularly in how they engage with the Ahmadiyah community. In Depok, the high level of competition drives politicians to exploit religious issues and establish strong patronage networks, leveraging these connections to enhance their Islamic credentials and secure votes. Conversely, Bogor's moderate competition fosters a more inclusive and tolerant political atmosphere, where weaker patronage networks diminish the emphasis on religious controversies, allowing for a broader appeal to voters. Meanwhile, Bandung's relatively low level of competition allows for a more diverse and selective approach, with political strategies that adapt to the specific election cycle and candidate profiles. The varying margins of victory in each city highlight these distinct political dynamics, demonstrating how the intensity of competition shapes the treatment of religious minorities and influences the broader political landscape. This comparison underscores local political contexts' critical role in determining governance approaches and managing religious diversity.

Supporting argument 2: The influence of conservative religious leaders in Depok contrasts sharply with the more inclusive, collaborative governance seen in Bogor and Bandung.

The influence of conservative religious leaders in Depok plays a crucial role in shaping both the treatment of the Ahmadiyah community and the outcomes of local elections. These leaders, alongside Islamist hardliners, attract the attention and support of incumbent candidates through their significant positions in *pesantren*, which serve as centres of religious activity. Notably, KH Ahmad Damanhuri and KH Zainuddin Maksum Ali, two influential *kiai*, hold opposing views on the Ahmadiyah issue, thereby shaping the political landscape in different ways. Damanhuri, known for his strong opposition to Ahmadiyah, holds more sway over political parties and

candidates due to his long-established *pesantren*, Al-Karimiah, which has a large following. His fiery rhetoric and extensive networks make him an attractive ally for those seeking electoral success, as illustrated by the close ties between Damanhudi and mayoral candidate Nurmahmudi Ismail. On the other hand, Zainuddin's more inclusive stance is less politically influential in Depok's conservative climate.

The case of Depok highlights the pivotal role of hardline religious leaders in local politics. While moderate voices exist, the support of hardline figures like Damanhudi is often deemed essential for securing electoral victory. This dynamic is further reinforced by the perception that backing restrictions on Ahmadiyah activities, as supported by hardline *kiai*, would not result in significant electoral losses. Consequently, moderate religious leaders and their more inclusive approaches are often sidelined, allowing hardline figures to dominate the political discourse and shape policy decisions. This trend underscores the importance of religious authority in determining both electoral outcomes and the broader political and social environment in Depok.

This local dynamic reflects broader patterns of religious persecution in Indonesia, where conservative religious leaders have consistently opposed groups deemed heretical. Scholars such as Menchik (2016) argue that religious elites frame Ahmadiyah as a theological crisis to sustain their authority and advance exclusivist agendas. This theological opposition, combined with political opportunism, enables religious actors and state elites to justify persecution.

The intersection of theological legitimacy and political strategy is particularly evident during elections, where sectarian divisions are instrumentalized to consolidate power. Political elites capitalize on anti-Ahmadiyah sentiments, leveraging the backing of hardline religious leaders to secure votes. Soedirgo (2018) highlights how local politicians align with conservative Islamic organizations to foster an exclusionary environment, mirroring broader trends observed by Wilkinson (2006) and Varshney (1993, 2003) on the manipulation of religious identity in competitive politics. Ultimately, religious ideology is not just a doctrinal issue but a strategic tool wielded within broader power struggles. The alignment of conservative theological positions with political ambitions reinforces patterns of exclusion and marginalization, shaping the persecution of Ahmadiyah in both local and national contexts.

On the other hand, in Bogor, the study reveals how the implementation of local regulations, backed by progressive *kiai*, has successfully curbed persecution against the Ahmadiyah community, promoting a sense of harmony within the city. The influential role of *kiai*, who serve as cultural brokers and political entrepreneurs, is pivotal in bridging the national system with local communities. Their ability to maintain complex networks and adapt to societal and political changes has solidified their leadership roles. The endorsement of progressive religious figures like KH Mustofa Abdullah Bin Nuh (KH Toto) and KH Hasbullah by Mayor Bima Arya was instrumental in fostering religious moderation and protecting minority groups, including the Ahmadiyah. Their leadership within key institutions such as the MUI and FKUB enabled interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution, and the promotion of religious harmony.

Mayoral candidate Bima Arya's focus on religious moderation, both as a campaign strategy and during his time as mayor, has led to the effective protection of the Ahmadiyah community, as evidenced by the lack of persecution during his tenure. This case demonstrates the effectiveness of governance that incorporates diverse perspectives and prioritises tolerance and coexistence. The collaboration between political leadership and progressive religious authorities in Bogor serves as a model for how inclusive policies can lead to peaceful and harmonious community relations.

Similarly, the political dynamics in Bandung reflect those in Bogor, where the support of progressive religious leaders, known as *kiai*, is crucial for politicians seeking election success and countering the influence of conservative Islamist factions. This study highlights the strategic alliances that current politicians form with progressive *kiai* to secure votes and diminish the impact of extremist groups. In Bandung, two prominent *kiai*, KH Miftah Faridl and KH Athian Ali, play significant roles despite their differing views on religious minorities like the Ahmadiyah – KH Athian Ali takes a traditionalist stance, while KH Miftah Faridl adopts a more moderate approach.

Mayoral candidates like Dada Rosada and Ridwan Kamil have leveraged the influence of progressive religious figures such as KH Miftah Faridl to garner public support and guide their governance. Dada Rosada, for instance, avoided exploiting the Ahmadiyah issue for traditional voter support and distanced himself from Islamist extremists, following KH Miftah Faridl's advice to prevent persecution of Ahmadiyah. He also promoted the Bandung Agamis program, which recognised religious diversity as a strength. Similarly, Ridwan Kamil shunned the backing

of Islamist extremists, instead fostering an inclusive political environment through his 'Bandung Juara' campaign, which embraced a religious essence without overtly religious rhetoric.

Supporting argument 3: Civic organisations like NU shape persecution dynamics in local politics, notably in Depok, Bogor, and Bandung, impacting religious pluralism.

This research examines how civic organisations, particularly Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), impact the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers within the context of political competition, focusing on the mayoral elections in Depok, Bogor, and Bandung. NU, as noted by Fealy and Bush (2014), is a significant political force at the municipal level, with its leaders and members often sought after by political parties for support.

In Depok, the situation regarding Ahmadiyah persecution is intricate. NU's internal divisions, with some clerics like KH Damanhuri opposing Ahmadiyah while others advocate for tolerance, create a fragmented stance on the issue. This decentralisation weakens NU's negotiating power with political candidates and undermines its influence on local policies. Consequently, the incumbent mayoral candidate in Depok perceives minimal electoral risk in imposing restrictions on Ahmadiyah, due to the diminished impact of NU and the strong presence of Islamist groups like PKS. The challenges facing NU in Depok are twofold: the political dominance of PKS and the involvement of certain NU activists in persecuting Ahmadiyah, exacerbated by the local *kiais'* authority over Islamic boarding schools and their authoritative theological interpretations.

The lack of NU's contribution to promoting religious tolerance and countering persecution in Depok, especially amidst political competition, starkly contrasts with NU's impactful role in Bogor and Bandung. In Bogor, NU is a key advocate for religious moderation and a counterbalance to extremist groups. Under leaders like KH Toto, NU Bogor fosters an environment of inclusivity and peaceful coexistence, aligning with progressive mayoral candidates like Bima Arya. Additionally, NU Bogor actively challenges extremist ideologies through deradicalisation programs and youth initiatives, such as GP Ansor, which supports minority groups and promotes multiculturalism.

Similarly, in Bandung, NU plays a vital role in advancing religious pluralism and opposing discriminatory regulations against the Ahmadiyah community. Under leaders like KH Maftuh Kholil, NU Bandung resists local regulations targeting Ahmadiyah and collaborates with organisations such as GP Ansor and Jakatarub to advocate for religious tolerance and protect

minority rights. This approach, which includes engaging in interfaith dialogue and supporting marginalised communities, underscores NU Bandung's commitment to maintaining a balanced and inclusive religious environment.

7.2 Theoretical and practical contribution

Several key theoretical and practical insights emerge from these findings. Firstly, this research reveals a direct link between social regulations, particularly *fatwas* issued by the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), and the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers in Indonesia. This expands upon Grim and Finke's (2007) theory, which posits that while government regulation of religion significantly impacts religious persecution, social regulation influences this dynamic indirectly through its effect on government policies. Specifically, MUI *fatwas* are closely associated with the persecution of Ahmadiyah, with Islamist groups often citing these *fatwas* to justify their actions, sometimes in collaboration with local authorities, as seen in Depok and Bandung. The MUI's conservative shift since the reform era has facilitated discrimination against Ahmadiyah. Groups like the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) use these *fatwas* to enforce Sharia law, thereby legitimising violence. Although some Islamic organisations recognise MUI *fatwas*, there are differing perspectives within the Islamic community. The MUI's alignment with hardline Islamist factions further legitimises their actions, allowing them to exploit religious ignorance and justify violent behaviour.

Secondly, this study highlights three crucial factors driving the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers during local mayoral elections: political competition including patronage networks, religious authority or local religious leaders, and ties with Muslim civic organisations. The findings reveal that heightened political competition often leads to persecution when local candidates use the Ahmadiyah issue to strengthen their Islamic image and attract support from conservative and hardline Islamist voters. This insight builds on Brathwaite and Park's theory (2019), which suggests that intense political competition is linked to increased religious violence. Moreover, Chhibber and Shastri (2014) proposed that in highly competitive electoral environments, political elites may leverage religious identity to exacerbate social or sectarian tensions, potentially resulting in religious persecution, although they did not detail the specific factors driving this dynamic.

Thirdly, this thesis reveals that patronage networks play a crucial role in encouraging political candidates to support the persecution of Ahmadiyah followers. Candidates often align with Islamic hardliners, who act as key intermediaries and vote boosters, to enhance their Islamic credentials and secure electoral backing. This aligns with the views of Hillman (2014), Driscoll (2018), and Aspinall and Asad (2015) on patronage networks, which are essential for local governance and political coordination. According to Aspinall and Asad (2015), local elections in Indonesia are influenced not just by wealth but by the strength of these networks in delivering benefits and ensuring reciprocal support. In the case of Ahmadiyah persecution, patronage networks facilitate political incumbents' alliances with Islamic hardliners, like the FPI, who use the Ahmadiyah issue to their advantage. The FPI's collaboration with candidates allows them to leverage the persecution issue for political gain and mobilise support during campaigns, as detailed in Chapter 4.

Fourthly, local religious authority or leaders have a substantial impact on local politics, especially in highly competitive mayoral elections. Candidates often seek endorsements from influential local religious figures, particularly those managing *pesantren* with large student bodies, as their support can mobilise significant voter bases. The position of these leaders on issues such as Ahmadiyah also shapes candidates' stances on religious policies. This study highlights the influential role of conservative religious leaders, like those in Depok, who oppose Ahmadiyah and attract the attention of incumbent candidates seeking their support. This finding supports Soedirgo's (2020) research, which suggests that the direct election of local leaders has increased the significance of religious networks and brokers in helping political candidates achieve power, thus boosting local accountability. Additionally, Buehler's (2009) study underscores that personal networks at the sub-district level, especially those involving religious leaders linked to candidates, are crucial in determining municipal election results. In contrast, during Suharto's New Order era, local religious leaders had a relatively minor role in politics, with patronage being used to maintain loyalty and suppress dissent (Bertrand, 2004).

Fifthly, the role of civic organisations such as NU in influencing persecution dynamics within local politics, particularly in cities like Depok, Bogor, and Bandung, has significant implications for promoting religious pluralism. Researchers argue that these organisations are vital for electoral democracy and religious diversity, acting as institutional checks on government power and fostering social cohesion (Hefner, 2000; Menchik, 2016). Brown (2019) notes that civic organisations function as non-state entities that impact political discourse, shape policies, and

apply pressure on political figures. Kopecky and Muddle (2003) highlight that these organisations advocate for public policy outside of state institutions and serve as a counterbalance to state power.

7.3 Policy implications

The findings of this research also have important implications for Indonesia's policy agenda. Firstly, promoting dialogue and tolerance among different faiths is crucial. Efforts should be made to foster dialogue, mutual understanding, and community tolerance. Governments, working with civic organisations such as NU and Muhammadiyah, should support initiatives that encourage religious diversity and peaceful coexistence among various religious groups. For example, the Declaration Forum of Sancang in Bandung, established on November 10, 2007, began with the signing of the 'Sancang Declaration' by leaders from different faiths to promote religious harmony in Bandung. The forum includes the Ahmadiyah community and aims to facilitate communication among minority groups, helping to prevent conflicts caused by misunderstandings.

Secondly, enhancing civic engagement is essential. Civil society organisations should actively involve citizens in democratic processes and raise awareness about the significance of religious pluralism in local politics. This can be achieved through educational programs, public forums, and community events that empower citizens to support inclusive governance and respect for religious diversity.

Thirdly, building collaborative governance should be a priority. Political leaders should seek to establish partnerships with progressive religious leaders and civic organisations that advocate for religious tolerance and pluralism. By collaborating, political figures and civil society can develop inclusive governance structures that uphold democratic values and protect the rights of religious minorities.

Fourthly, supporting deradicalisation initiatives is important. Governments should invest in programs designed to counter extremist ideologies and promote tolerant interpretations of Islam. Cooperation among government agencies, religious institutions, and civil society organisations can help prevent radicalisation and foster social cohesion.

Fifthly, implementing conflict mediation and resolution mechanisms at the local level is necessary to address disputes and tensions related to religious persecution. These mechanisms should involve collaboration between religious leaders, community representatives, and government agencies to facilitate dialogue, reconciliation, and peaceful conflict resolution.

Lastly, strengthening community policing is vital. Enhancing community policing initiatives can help prevent and address religious persecution and violence. This includes training law enforcement officers to respond effectively to hate crimes, protect vulnerable communities, and build trust and cooperation within the community to maintain public safety.

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