

Indonesian Mosques: Current Issues, Management, and Institutions in Indonesia and the United States

Rosita Tandos¹, Abd. Muid N². & Nasaruddin Umar³

Abstract

Mosques (*masjid*) as faith-based organizations (FBOs) have served congregations religiously, and contributed in people's life in providing social services. To play their roles and functions, mosques have faced challenges in Muslim majority and minority countries. This article examined Indonesian mosques in Indonesia and the United States, taking samples of eight prominent mosques in Indonesia (located in two areas of Jakarta and Depok) and two mosques in the United States. Data was collected by conducting observations, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) involving 150 participants in Indonesia, and 75 participants in the United States. They are from managements and congregations of the mosques. The article shows major findings that the development of radical religious understanding, being minority group, and the need to improve the roles and functions of mosques.

Key words: Mosques (*masjid*), building and institution, roles and functions of mosques

A. Introduction

Mosques (*masjid*) mainly serve as a place for performing Islamic worship. Simply, the house of worship has a religious and social identity as the religiosity value has social value. In other words, the social activities that are carried out in this house of worship must transcend religious values, either directly or indirectly. In addition, a mosque's roles and functions are always dynamic and contribute to Muslim and community life.

Two events can be used as a picture of how the mosque had been used by the Prophet as a foundation to build a desirable society. The first is the event of Isra' and Mi'raj that made the mosque a point of departure (*titik keberangkatan*). The second is the event of the journey of the Prophet to Medina where his first activity was to build a mosque at Quba, known as the Quba Mosque. In his struggle, the Prophet made the mosque not only a place of worship, but also having "multi-functions"; to serve matters in this world and the hereafter, or both material and spiritual needs. So, the religious organization or house of worship here is expected not only to perform purely spiritual activities, but also to carry out activities of social and economic aspects.

An important task for Muslims, beyond merely building a mosque, is to enliven and prosper society, optimally to empower local communities, not the contrary. As mentioned in the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad *saw*, "it will come to my followers in a day where they exaggerate to build a mosque but they are just a little to prosper it". In the holy al-Quran, it is also explained: "only people who prosper the mosques are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and still establish prayer and pay *zakat*, and not fear except Allah".⁴

In the era of the Prophet and his Companions, the *masjid* was not only a place where they prayed, but it was also a place where they learned, recited the Qur'an, made *dzikir* (remembrance) and *du'a* (supplication), met with each other, socialized, received the delegations, prepared for expeditions, and raised funds for development. In fact, it was sometimes even a place for tending to the sick and a shelter for the homeless. At the same time, mosques were the cradle of their learning and spiritual growth. The first place where teaching is practiced in Islam is in a *masjid*. At the time of Caliph Umar bin Khattab, there were appointed "speakers" (*qushshahs*) to recite the Koran and Hadith for mosques in cities such as Kufa, Basrah, and Damascus.⁵

¹ Islamic Studies, State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta Correspondence: rositandos2018@gmail.com

² Islamic Studies, State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta

³ Islamic Studies, State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta

⁴ Q.S. Surah At-Taubah/9: 18

⁵ Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1968), *Science and Civilization in Islam*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 48. The similar point mentioned by Spahic Omer, *An Analysis of the Expansion of the Prophet's Mosque by Caliph 'Uthman b. 'Affan* (d. 36

In the history of Islam, *masjid* have also had a very important role in the economic system. Recently, economic development based on Islamic values is so rapidly conducted that it is attracting the attention of many parties and is both criticized and praised for such a contribution. Therefore, the use of mosques as places of worship and as means of community development is not new. The Prophet Muhammad *saw* shows that a mosque is a space for creating social change, eliminating all forms of oppression, and practicing a way of life for the whole society. The first mosque was established by the Prophet Muhammad *saw* and Muslims when The Prophet reached Medina - after the *hijrah* journey.⁶ It was a place of worship and served as a central development. From the time of the Prophet onwards, apart from being a center of worship, the mosque was also used as the center of government, politics, education, culture, and economic development. Having multiple functions is not surprising that the mosque could be a 'center' for developing the life of Muslims. According to Fuel (2007), *masjid* are not only the center of worship, but also a center of civilization for it not only gave birth to figures in Islamic law, but also experts in mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, chemistry, biology, art, architecture, and economics, among others.

During the era of the Prophet, social problems were certainly not the least of major concerns because many friends of the Prophet needed social assistance as the risk of faith that they faced and as a consequence of the struggle. In addition, other social problems, such as poverty, also existed. To solve social problems, the Prophet and his companions made the mosque a place for conducting social activities. For example, they collected *zakat*, *infaq*, and *shodaqoh* through the mosques and distributed the funds to people who needed them.⁷

Mosques also played important roles in the history of modern courts in Indonesia - beginning in 1882 under the Dutch East Indies colonial administration. At that time, trials were held in the courtyard of the mosque. Marriages were likewise performed in the mosque and usually led by a *penghulu* (an official to marry the couple).⁸ In the context of urban communities nowadays, the above description can also be seen in community life. For example, mosques in Jakarta provide activities such as lectures, seminars, counseling, health care, and improving people's incomes. These activities reflect a straight comparison between the dimension of ritual and the social dimension in the activities of mosques.

In the United States, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) such as mosques have significantly contributed in providing social services. A part of a *masjid's* role is to conduct faith-based activities, social services, and community development. Therefore, it is reasonable if policies of FBOs emphasize the imperative of roles of mosques and other faith-based organizations in strengthening communities.

Furthermore, the importance of the *masjid* for Muslim communities throughout the world is even more magnified when we talk about Muslim minorities. In America, for example, Muslims are a small minority scattered throughout a large continent. For some of them, weeks or months may pass without having a chance to see another Muslim, except in a mosque (*masjid*). The *masjid*, therefore, constitutes the link between them and their religion. There they develop an emotional bond with their community that is vital to the wellbeing of their allegiance to the *ummah* and faith in Allah. In the *masjid*, many youth may find the role models that they lack at home. In addition to this, it is vital for Muslims – especially the youth who did not grow up in Muslim countries – to see a *masjid* because it is the most evident symbol of Islam in their tangible world. All these points show the roles and functions of mosques from early Islam to the present day in Indonesian life and in the United States. The next part discusses current issues or challenges faced by mosques in playing their roles and carrying out their functions in both countries.

B. Current Issues of Mosques in Indonesia and the United States

Mosques, or *masjid*, in Indonesia play religious and social roles and have functions other than mainly serving as a place for worship, such as distributing *zakat* and *qurban*, as well as providing Islamic discussions or classes. Current issues of *masjid* in Indonesia were determined by looking at the results of the P3M research that indicated there were 41 mosques exposed to radicalism; several groups were surveyed and responded. The Republic of Indonesia National Intelligence Agency (BIN) does not reject and does not deny the results of the research. In this case, the BIN only emphasized that the results of the study were more a warning to the government and all parties to be aware of radicalism.

AH/656 CE), in *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought & Civilization*, International Islamic University Malaysia.

⁶ Supardi and Aminuddin (2001). *Konsep Manajemen Masjid: Optimalisasi Peran Masjid*. Yogyakarta: UII Press.

⁷ Usman & Kastrawijaya (2010). *Manajemen Masjid*. Bandung: Angkasa.

⁸ D. S. Lev, "Mahkamah: Indonesia", in C.E. Bosworth (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991, p. 42

However, some other groups also doubted the research results of Center for Research and Community Engagement (P3M) of State Islamic University of Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta. In this study, the P3M focused on the material (*khutbah*) presented at each lecture in the mosques studied. The research has not yet arrived at the impact of mosque activity to radicalism on the wider community or, at least, the mosque congregation itself.⁹

The typology of the mosques that were exposed to radicalism were those under the coordination of a government office. The mosques like this differs from those mosques that grew up within a community and established on certain tenets of communal self-help. The difference is that mosques under government coordination usually have officially assigned management who are expected to master all aspects of the mosque. For a community-based mosque, the control of the mosque is more from the community because they are the ones who established it and manage it.

Another place for Muslims to carry out the five-times-a-day praying is a musalla (*musholla*, a small place) that is mostly provided in shopping centers, private offices, or other public spaces. There is not much choice for visitors or office employees to choose other mosques they may want to attend as these are nearby or at their workplace. This is where the dissemination of certain religious understandings finds its momentum.

Although it can be said that *masjid* (mosque) or musalla do not have a legitimate function for certain religious understandings, lately there has been a tendency to make mosques a base for certain religious understandings to mobilize the masses. Indeed, lately there have been several mosques referred to as gathering places for those who want to hold huge demonstrations. For example, mass worshipers gathered several times at the Great Mosque of Istiqlal that was also used as a gathering place for the masses, but it did not appear that the mosque had changed to have a legitimate function, only to serve as a place for worship or performing a social activity.

If the mosques become a place for disseminating a radical religious understanding, the task of the government is to cooperate with the largest community organizations such as Nahdhatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah to disseminate legitimate understandings. Another thing that needs to be done by the government is to intervene in the mosques under its coordination, especially in the management responsible for religious programs. If the management consists of those who have good and tolerant Indonesian-mindedness, then the program that emerges from the mosque will also be like that. Regarding the mosques that are outside the government's coordination, the government must make efforts to communicate with many parties such as offices, housing developments, or shopping centers so that all are willing to cooperate and spread moderate and tolerant religious understandings. The biggest challenge for the government is to look at 'political identity' that, indeed, occurs everywhere and in many countries, including the United States.

In the United States, Muslim life is unique and has more challenges as they are a minority religious group. Commonly, Islam is embraced by immigrants in the United States although the second generation is commonly born in the country. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in 2001, Islamophobia and related sentiment towards Islam have continued to occur. Muslim groups often become the target of anger from anti-Muslim groups and experience discrimination and injustice. However, various efforts have been made by the United States' government and Muslim groups to minimize this situation. One of the strategic efforts was to develop ideas or concepts about "American Islam" which were expected to not only reflect a diverse Muslim identity, but also so that Muslims could coexist with other groups and play an important role as citizens, especially in guarding peace.

In this study, the concept of "American Islam" can be seen from the results of Bagby's research in 2000 and 2011 that produced important findings about ethnic and group diversity, as well as the responses of Muslims and American society. The results of this study inspired the making of the documentary film entitled "Un-Mosqued", which responds to the dynamics of change in Muslim societies. Through this film, it is hoped that the mosque can be present as a center for social and religious services for Muslims in America. The "Un-Mosqued" documentary was produced with the aim of highlighting the increasing need for reform in many mosques in America.

⁹ Examples of the role of a unique mosque are the Ambar Mosque, one of the mosques in the interior of India. There mosques are used as a place for unique solar power generation, carried out by the local community. Sapna Gopal, "A Necessary Switch India's Only Women's Mosque Goes Completely Solar", in *Energy Future*, July - September 2017, p. 52-56.

Furthermore, the study also found that many young people who are second generation, or even third generation, Americans feel judged or not accepted in a mosque. This is due to the lack of friendliness or sense of ownership in the mosque, or the mosque may not be interesting enough and "involve" the youth. This situation further alienates future generations from using mosques for their spiritual growth. The other issues are related to women's participation and youth in mosques, transparency of management, and the importance of bringing imams who understand the context of American life. The mosque management is less aware of this problem. They are not trying to attract Muslim youth today who want to grow their spiritual lives in mosques. Therefore, this situation must be changed so that the mosque management is expected to find ways to attract the young generation (millennial generation) to participate in activities and be involved in efforts to prosper the mosque.

C. Mosque as a Building: Comparison of Indonesia and America

According to H. J. De Graaf, a mosque in Indonesia is a rectangular building and is completely covered by a roof that is given a special ornament at its peak. The rectangular shape of the mosque building is usually a little altered by a small part that juts out, but is connected to the rectangular building. That is called the *mibrab*, where the priest leads the prayer and it indicates that the building is facing where it should, which is towards the Qiblah. Usually the mosque is equipped with a roofed porch or a kind of floor/terrace without walls and located opposite the *mibrab*. However, this porch does not always exist and even if there is one, it is an accessory use in the standing of the mosque.¹⁰

Initially mosques in Indonesia did not have towers where is the *muezzin* echoing the call to prayer. Mosques in Indonesia relied on a large drum or 'Bedug' to call people to pray or to mark the entry of prayer times.¹¹ That is the typical form of mosques in Indonesia. The tower that is now widely seen in every mosque in Indonesia is influenced by the towers that exist outside Indonesia, both in terms of form and in terms of the procurement of the tower itself. So, it won't be surprising if there are many Indonesian towers that are similar to the Prophet's Mosque in Medina or the Grand Mosque in Mecca or mosques in Turkey. In Indonesia, the function of the tower as a high place to spread the call to prayer so that the sound of the *muezzin* can reach the ears of the community has mostly replaced the drum. Therefore, it is possible that the people who are far from the mosque do not listen to the call to prayer because they are echoed in the mosque, but they can still hear the sound of drumming as a sign of the arrival of prayer times. In practice, before the *muezzin* call for prayer, the drum is beaten first. Usually the drumbeat is adjusted to the number of prayer times that will be held. For example, *Bedug* to sign for *Zuhr* was beaten four times as a sign that the prayer would be held in four rak'ahs.

The shape of the mosque as mentioned above is the basic form and indeed influences almost the entirety of mosques in Indonesia, but of course, there are variations in the shapes of the mosques in Indonesia, especially if a mosque has gained the influence of the architecture of the mosques outside Indonesia.

There is a separate 'battle' involving two forces in mosque construction in Indonesia. This battle was noted by Abidin Kusno and is namely between the power of Middle Eastern authority and the power of Javanese cultural authority. According to Abidin Kusno, the Demak Mosque, which was built in 1498 AD, is an example of the results of the two architectural tendencies. The Demak Mosque is a representation of the new power of faith in Java and at the same time makes Islam an element within the framework of a larger Javanese culture.¹²

One form of fighting the tendency towards Middle Eastern authority with the strength of Javanese culture is in determining the direction of the Qiblah Mosque in Demak. Quoting Babad in the story Jaka Tingkir, Abidin Kusno said that it was not as usual as a mosque built in the present, but when the Demak Mosque was built, the direction of the Qiblah was determined after the Demak Mosque was completed. There is even a tendency not to expose the Demak Mosque to Makkah because it is meaningful for facing Makkah, as well as making Makkah the center. Perhaps a building facing Makkah is not a problem, but making it a center is something else. Java must still be the center.¹³

¹⁰ H. J. De Graaf, "The Origin of the Javanese Mosque", in *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Mar., 1963), p. 1.

¹¹ H. J. De Graaf, "The Origin of the Javanese Mosque", p. 1.

¹² Abidin Kusno, "'The Reality of One-Which-Is-Two': Mosque Battles and Other Stories: Notes on Architecture, Religion, and Politics in the Javanese World", in *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Sep., 2003), p. 59-60.

¹³ Abidin Kusno, "'The Reality of One-Which-Is-Two': Mosque Battles and Other Stories: Notes on Architecture, Religion, and Politics in the Javanese World", p. 60.

The inter-correlation in Java at that time between Java and all its cultural elements with Mecca and Ka'bah as new religious symbols makes it apparent that the mosque would never be just a building or place. Mosques are more than that. A mosque is a symbol that can be given any meaning and, surely, that meaning is very strong. Moreover, the mosque is equipped with certain ornaments and architecture in honor of the place where the mosque was built or the story behind the establishment of the mosque. This was evident in the controversy over the construction of a mosque at Ground Zero that prompted strong protests from many parties or groups. Indeed, the mosque is more rightly considered as an attempt to reconcile.¹⁴

The difference between mosques in Indonesia and mosques in the United States is that almost all mosques in Indonesia are buildings that were built to be mosques, whereas in the United States, many mosques have been established in buildings that were not previously designated as mosques, but as dwellings or even churches. At this point, the square shape of the mosque in the United States is a form that follows the form of the residence, itself. The shape of mosques is actually very similar to private homes because it was first a house, and then a mosque – and mosques are commonly larger than a house. Therefore, there does not appear to be much difference between the form of a mosque and a house, or between the form of a mosque and a church. There are also cases where mosques in the United States are very similar to churches because the church building was bought by the Muslim community and then made into a mosque. Some mosques did not even change the original form of the church, but only eliminated pews and furniture, replacing Christian symbols with several Arabic calligraphies, turning rooms into teaching rooms, and marking the Qiblah direction since most churches or houses - as the previous function of the mosque - were not built according to the Qiblah direction.

One of the earliest recorded mosques in the United States is in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Indeed, the Muslim community has been there for a long time. At first, they rented a place to serve as a mosque in 1922. Then, in 1934, a mosque was built. The mosque was periodically renovated and a tower stand was constructed in 1980. According to Jane I. Smith, it is the oldest mosque in America. Therefore, the mosque is held as the "Mother Mosque of America"¹⁵

In the United States, what is meant by a mosque is a building built by the Muslim community, as well as the various activities in it. This definition was stated by Kathleen E. Foley in her research, *Building Mosques in America: Strategies for Securing Municipal Approvals*, which was published in October 2010 by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding.¹⁶ Emphasis on the definition by Kathleen E. Foley, "various activities in it", is actually a hallmark of mosques in America and for mosques where Muslim communities are a minority. Such an emphasis is also a sign that the shape of the building is not a top priority. In many ways, the shape of mosque buildings in America is the result of negotiations with the surrounding culture and environment, even when the mosque was built as a mosque from the beginning. Mosques that were previously not used as mosques were forced to follow the architectural form of the building's previous functions.

One example of building mosques resulting from negotiations with the culture and surrounding environment is the establishment of mosques by the Muslim American Community Association in Voorhees, New Jersey. In the initial designs of the mosque, there were ornaments intended as domes located at the top of the building. The shape is not at all similar to a dome, but it got a strong reaction from the surrounding environment because it was considered a tower. Finally, the building was erected without including the dome because it was considered as a tower.¹⁷

Worship in Islam, like prayer, does not require certain buildings, such as mosques. The only thing needed in the prayer service is to face the Ka'bah or Makkah.¹⁸ In order to face Ka'bah, a special place called *mibrab* is established that has certain signs such as a prayer mat that looks different from the other prayer mats because of its design and size. Next to the *mibrab*, there is usually a kind of pulpit used to deliver lectures and sermons during Friday prayers.

¹⁴ Lee Pierce, "A Rhetoric of Traumatic Nationalism in the Ground Zero Mosque Controversy", in *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Vol. 100, No. 1, February 2014, p. 53–80.

¹⁵ Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 56.

¹⁶ Kathleen E. Foley, *Building Mosques In America: Strategies for Securing Municipal Approvals*, in <https://www.ispu.org/building-mosques-in-america-strategies-for-securing-municipal-approvals/>. The research was published by Institute for Social Policy and Understanding in October 2010, p. 13.

¹⁷ Kathleen E. Foley, *Building Mosques In America: Strategies for Securing Municipal Approvals*, p. 16-17.

¹⁸ Jale Nejdert Erzen, "Reading Mosques: Meaning and Architecture in Islam", in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 69, No. 1, SPECIAL ISSUE: The Aesthetics of Architecture: Philosophical Investigations into the Art of Building (WINTER 2011), p. 126.

Although there is no special building for prayer services in Islam, it is unbearable to make special buildings for prayer, itself, because the Prophet Muhammad gave an example by building the Quba Mosque during the hijrah and also the Nabawi Mosque when he arrived in Medina. In this case, the building of special buildings for prayer services in Islam has a social dimension because the individual dimensions have actually been completed without special buildings. Therefore, in the social dimension the mosque must be seen.

The importance of establishing mosques in the United States was triggered by the absence of a place suitable for Friday prayer.¹⁹ Friday prayer is a prayer that must be done in congregation and is different from other prayers, including obligatory prayers five times a day. That which is proper in this case is feasible because it would accommodate many people and it has to be a clean place. There is a mosque, but not too large - the temporary place is a large yard, because the mosque is not spacious. Establishing a place of worship is certainly a matter of its own. In addition to being a strange sight, there is also no guarantee of the cleanliness of the yard when one of the legal requirements for prayer in Islam is the cleanliness of the prayer place.

A mosque is not only for worship, as mentioned previously. Indeed, there is a tendency to make the function of the mosque solely for worship, but it certainly denies the initial meaning of a mosque. Then, if it is only for worship, the existence of a mosque is not needed. Although a mosque is only used for prayer, it presents a sign of the presence of the Muslim community. The presence of a mosque, then, is like replacing the sentence: "Here there are many Muslims."²⁰

Thus, basically, the presence of mosques is always social in dimension and not just for prayer services. In the United States, the presence of a mosque is more than just a place of prayer. For example, the establishment of the Islamic Center in Washington DC, which was completed in 1957, is an acknowledgement of Islam as a religion that has an important presence in the American context. From 1957 through 1999, 300 institutions identified as mosques or Islamic centers were established in the country. Mosques are always in areas where there are many Muslims. That is in contrast to a country like Poland, for instance, where mosques are not built in areas with a high Muslim population.²¹

In Islam there is no rigid separation between religion and politics and that also impacts mosques in Islam, namely there is no mosque solely intended for prayer. This is certainly different from temples, synagogues, or churches. The function of the mosque is always various.²² Some mosques in the United States, for example, were established by Indonesians who settled in America. The mosques are used as gathering spaces as Muslims do not make their houses places to welcome Indonesians who just come. In this case, the mosque becomes the place to meet, especially if the people who come are well known, or even not known, by them. If there is still free time, then the person who has just come will temporarily visit the house of one of the residents.

In a society with a majority Muslim composition such as Indonesia, mosques always have social dimensions within the meaning of togetherness in worship because it is understood that prayer in congregation is considered more rewarding than praying alone. Prayers in congregation are more often understood by performing prayers in congregation in mosques than in congregational prayers at home with family members. Indeed, most people's homes do not provide a special place for prayer, except for a few rich people who have large houses so that they provide special spaces as a place of prayer. More often there are signs displayed in the home such as Arabic calligraphy, photographs of the Ka'bah, and/or other Islamic ornaments.

As reflected by some Muslim community mosques in America, where mosques are marked on the existence of the Muslim community, the feeling of being recognized as Muslim is something that is important and very human. We know that in Islam there are many schools of thought. Among several mosques in America, some are famous for schools such as Ahmadiyyah mosques, Shi'ite mosques, and the Ahlul-sunnah wal Jamaah mosque. The model of establishing a mosque like this is certainly not as simple as the effort to present a place to use for congregational prayers or Friday prayers or even as a sign of the Muslim community.

¹⁹ Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, p. 151.

²⁰ S. M. Imamuddin, "Mosque as a Centre of Education in Early Middle Ages", in *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Autumn 1984), p. 160. The wish to register a mosque with local authorities is of further practical and symbolic significance since it indicates a desire for 'official' recognition of Muslim presence and identity. Sophie Gilliat-Ray, "The First Registered Mosque in the UK, Cardiff, 1860: The Revolution of a Myth", in *Cont Islam* (2010), DOI 10.1007/s11562-010-0116-9, Published online: 9 February 2010, Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2010, p. 181

²¹ Kasia Narkowicz and Konrad Pędzwiatr, "From Unproblematic to Contentious: Mosques in Poland", in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2017, Vol. 43, NO. 3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1194744>, p. 446.

²² S. M. Imamuddin, "Mosque as a Centre of Education in Early Middle Ages", in *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Autumn 1984), p. 160.

The mosque is presented as a sign for the school of thought having members of the same tradition or madzhab, usually attending this mosque. There are mosques associated with the school or madzhab held by the worshippers of the mosque, and some are associated with the tribe of the congregation. In China, many mosques are associated with tribes such as Kazak, Kirghiz, Tajiks, Tartars, Uzbeks, Dongxiang, Sala, or Bao'an.²³ Indonesian mosques in America are not exactly equated with mosques in China; Indonesian mosques in America are not based on ethnicity (e.g. Buginese, Batak, Javanese, etc.) - but mosques in China are built based on ethnicity and origin of the region having similarities based on primordial matters.

D. Mosque as an Institution: Comparison between Indonesia and America

The religious life of Indonesian Muslim people is influenced by the mosque and often revolves around it. The mosque is institutionally related to the government although there is no direct intervention by the government on every policy such as management, worship, and community programs. The spirit of the reformation era seemingly influenced government policy towards mosques, but with the Ministry of Religion and the Indonesian Mosque Council, in some cases, the government's influence on mosques can still be said to exist. Such a condition is not like in the United States. In Indonesia, houses of worship such as mosques get donations or support from the state. Therefore, regulations, audits, interference, and state control certainly exist. However, there is resistance to this fact. Even some legislators in the country give their criticism of interference too far away from places of worship. They said it is a religious nightmare if synagogues, churches and mosques receive too much government interference.²⁴

There are types of mosques in Indonesia that are established and managed by: 1) certain individuals who give their land and at the same time build the mosque, 2) a group of people (self-supporting) living around the mosque, 3) housing developers, 4) community organizations that buy a piece of land and build a mosque, and 5) shopping centers, offices, and other public places that provide mosque facilities, and others.

Individuals who donate their land and build mosques are usually very powerful over the mosques. They manage the mosque, even finance most of the mosque's operations, but sometimes not fully. The direction of this mosque management is very much dependent on the religious direction of the individual who gives the land. The role of the government in this type of mosque is very dependent on the clerics. If Imam or the cleric is comfortable with the role of the government in religious matters, then the mosque programs will be very governmentally- oriented. If the opposite, then the mosque goes according to the wishes of the management.

As for mosques that are self-supporting communities in certain environments, the role of the government is usually greater because of the diversity of the colors of the communities in the mosque. Religion makes people prohibit a particular religious school from becoming dominant because it will get a strong reaction from different religious bodies. Therefore, a safe position that they can take is to make the government a reference to cover the differences.

Mosques that are provided by housing developers usually experience a situation similar to community-initiated mosques. The differences can only be seen from the particular environment of the mosque including the location and mosque building. If it is a housing developer's facility, then the land and building of the mosque are usually given by the housing developers, not by the community. However, in terms of managing the mosques, housing developers no longer take a role. The role is given to the residents of a community or neighborhood. Therefore, in terms of management, it is very similar to mosques that are community initiated in certain environments.

As for mosques developed by certain community organizations, the management style is, of course, very dependent on the religious tendency of the community organizations that developed it, especially in relation to the government. If the community organization that manages it feels comfortable with the role of government in religious matters, then the government is used as a reference in the management of their mosques. If not, then the opposite. The next type of mosque, or *mushallah* (small mosque) in some cases, include facilities provided by shopping centers, offices, and other public facilities. It appears that there is a circle of interest between the management of these public facilities, certain religious groups, and the community using the mosque.

²³ Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, "China's Earliest Mosques", in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (September 2008), p. 330.

²⁴ David Saperstein, "Public Accountability and Faith-Based Organizations: A Problem Best Avoided", in *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 116, No. 5 (Mar., 2003), p. 1365.

Managers of public facilities, indeed, are direct owners of mosques, but they tend not to care too much to intervene directly in the management of mosques. Moreover, a mosque can run its own financing through a donation box. Even if the mosque can run without “strict control”, the public facilities management does not seem to care how the mosque is managed as long as it complies with public interest. In this case, it can be seen that the greatest strength is with the certain religious groups that directly manage the mosque. The users of the service, the congregation (*jama'ah*), are the group that tend to receive any religious groups or schools that work in the mosque as long as they generally accept the teachings of Islam.

Looking at the management of mosques in Indonesia compared to the management of mosques in Egypt, the managers of mosques in Indonesia are relatively freer to manage and develop programs in their mosques. The government intervention in mosques in Indonesia is considered minimum. In Egypt, all mosque-related matters beyond maintenance are subject to government oversight. The Ministry of Waqf Department checks the administration of the mosques to ensure that that officials and employees carry out their duties. The Ministry of Public Health checks sanitation facilities (including water supply and plumbing equipment); if they are found to be below standard, then the mosque manager must fix them.²⁵

The relationship between the mosque and the government that is different between Indonesia and Egypt has its advantages and disadvantages. The freedom given to managers of mosques in Indonesia allows people to develop their creativity freely in religious and social matters. However, the disadvantage is that uncontrolled religious sects have the possibility to undermine state sovereignty. In contrast, in Egypt, there is a restraint on the creativity of mosque management. It means that there is full control by the government towards mosques, so that all possible infiltrations of sects that might undermine the sovereignty of the state can be overcome.

In the United States of America, mosques such as the Muslim American Community Association in Voorhees, New Jersey or the Islamic Center in Washington DC are types of mosques that are organized by Muslim groups who formally collaborate with the government. There is also a mosque that is an independent Indonesian Muslim community in Philadelphia (Al-Falah Mosque). Initially, the Muslim community in Philadelphia, that named itself the Indonesian Community of Greater Philadelphia, conducted house-to-house recitation. They just rented a place to worship when performing the Eid al-Fitr prayer and Eid al-Adha.²⁶ Mosques from non-governmental organizations such as the Al-Falah Mosque are free to carry out religious rituals according to the flow adopted by the community that founded the mosque. Similar things are found in other mosques that have different streams such as the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, the Ahmadiyya, and the Shia mosques. The government of the United States permits these streams to operate according to their respective mosques and will only act if laws are violated. Differences in flow of religious rituals are not violations in the United States.

On the other hand, mosque relations with the government in Indonesia are not as strict as Egypt, but also not similar to those in America. On the one hand, there is a big concern of the government towards mosques in Indonesia, especially in terms of the flow that is considered to have the potential to undermine the unity of the Republic of Indonesia or '*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*' (NKRI). On the other hand, it is challenging for the government to filter out the ideas of violence that sometimes infiltrate mosques, as well as to protect the minority streams. The government actually adheres to freedom in religion as a part of democracy, but certain minority sects like not getting maximum protection from the government.

A study conducted by the Pesantren and Community Development Association with Rumah Kebangsaan resulted in finding that at least 41 of the 100 government-affiliated mosques in Jakarta have been exposed to radicalism.²⁷ If mosques that are under direct coordination with the government can be infiltrated by radical notions, how about the mosques that are free to choose from among the many in the free market of religious understanding? The main problem is that the government does not have a formula to anticipate such things.

Long before the issue of mosques being exposed to radicalism, there had been an issue about the annexation of mosques by certain schools that replaced the flow or tradition that had long been valid in a mosque with a new flow that was very different from the previous one. For example, some mosques had the traditions of tahlilan, barazanji, ratiban, etc., but they no longer practice the tradition because they are considered bid'ah.

²⁵ Morroe Berger, “Aspects of Governmental Policy towards Religion in Egypt Today”, in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Jan., 1970), p. 3.

²⁶ Information about Al-Falah Mosque in Philadelphia can be accessed at www.alfalah.us

²⁷ Sheany, “Radical Teachings Enter Mosques of Gov't Institutions”, in <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/radical-teachings-enter-mosques-govt-institutions/>. Data was taken in 30 November 2018.

The above fact made some people anxious in Jakarta giving rise to an organization called Fahmi Tamami (Forum Mosque and Mushalla Takmir Gathering Forum)²⁸ that was declared by Rhoma Irama (a very famous singer) on September 22, 2007 or 10 Ramadhan 1428 H.²⁹ This organization is still active, although it seems to have changed its vision from the gathering of mosques and mushallas to protect them from the influence of certain sects to somewhat of a practical political vision.³⁰

E. Roles and Social Function of Mosques: Comparison of Indonesia and America

For immigrants in the United States, their presence is culturally fragile because they live in a different society that does not necessarily recognize their existence. As a result, the existence of a shared space that gives them shelter and gives them security is indispensable. In this case, the mosque becomes a shared space. The fragility of the existence of Muslim migrant communities is also often triggered by the conditions of foreign politics such as acts of radicalism and terrorism. It is not weird when people compare Muslim communities in one country with Muslim communities in other countries, even though it is not necessarily the same. Not infrequently, they get inappropriate treatment for acts committed by Muslims in other countries. For example, after the events of 9/11 in New York City, many Muslim communities received unpleasant treatment for acts committed by others.

When Muslims get stressed, such as the effects of terrorism and radicalism abroad or domestically, then in America, all eyes are on the mosque. The voices conveyed by the leaders of the mosque are voices that are considered to represent Muslims and become the official voice of Muslims. That is where the function of the Imam becomes very significant. In this case, it is not at all the same for Imams or the priests. In Islam, Imams are only leaders of prayers and are added to matters such as marriage, funeral, education, etc., but the priest/pastor is responsible for more than only leading Christian worship. On the other hand, religious leaders in America function more broadly than religious leaders in Indonesia.³¹ Priests, Pastors, or Imams in America can also play a role as fund-raisers for the maintenance of mosques, as personal or Muslim group guides, visiting sick people or parents, organizing people against narcotic abuse, clearing suspicions of Islam, giving non-explanations about true Islam-Muslim, and active in inter-faith activities.³²

As a shared space, the mosque is needed by the community and the mosque also needs the community. At this point, mosques are needed by the community as a shared space and the mosque needs the community to keep developing. Therefore, for example, migrant workers in Germany who came around the 1970s brought their families. Then, it was necessary for them to rent a place to gather and worship and celebrate religious holidays. To make the place grow, mosques need people who are willing to conduct activities in it. A controversy sometimes occurs in the community because of land shortages. The impact is congestion and limited parking spaces, as well as the noise caused by the Friday worship.³³ In the beginning, the surrounding community must experience conditions that were different from what they practiced in daily life. Here we need good communication skills by the Muslim community so that the mosque they are pioneering continues to grow.

Mosques as shared spaces as in America do not occur in Indonesia. The main factor, of course, is that the Indonesian Muslim community does not experience cultural threats and existential fragility. The Indonesian Muslim community is the majority group so it does not experience such a crisis. Therefore, the space with the Indonesian Muslim community is not centered on mosques but spread across many places.

²⁸ FAHMI TAMAMI is a name given by a famous Indonesian musician, named Rhoma Irama.

²⁹ Among the FAHMI TAMAMI programs are: 1) Keeping ukhuwah between ta'mir mosques and mushalla, and 2) Maintaining *waqaf* lands and traditions (Interview with Ustadz Lutfi Zubaid 11 January 2008).

³⁰ The research on FAHMI TAMAMI was done by Abd. Muid N. although only in the form of unpublished papers entitled "Islamic Symbolism", 2008.

³¹ In terrorism and radicalism, mosque imams in Europe have been under the spotlight because they are considered to have failed to integrate their worshipers into European society and incidentally indeed mosque imams in Europe are generally migrants. Saba Şenses Ozyurt, "Bridge Builders or Boundary Markers? The Role of the Mosque in the Acculturation Process of Immigrant Muslim Women in the United States," in *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 3, September 2010, p. 295.

³² Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, p. 157.

³³ Petra Kuppinger, "Mosques and Minarets: Conflict, Participation, and Visibility in German Cities", in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (Summer 2014), p. 797-798.

Back to the emphasis on "various activities in it", as the definition of the mosque mentioned by Kathleen E. Foley. As part of the definition of mosques in America, which emphasizes activities rather than buildings, that is where the term "Islamic Center" comes from. The phrase "Islamic Center" does not mean the building as the center for Muslims, but rather the center of activities for Muslims. Therefore, it is certain that mosques in America are not just a five-day prayer place which is the simplest function of the mosque, but all Islamic activities of Muslims are concentrated in the mosque called the Islamic Center. In that mosque, the American Muslim community socializes both with their fellow Muslims and with non-Muslims. Muslim children learn Islamic studies there that they cannot have at school or at home. In Indonesia where Islam is the majority religion, there is no need to have a particular place where Islamic religious centers are held because wherever Muslims can carry out their activities such as establishing prayers in mosques, commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad in the Regency Hall, hold a beautiful Al-Quran reading contest in an open field, hold a thanksgiving for the birth of a baby in each house, and so on. In short, there is no special place as a place where all special religious activities are carried out there freely. Therefore, the meaning of the phrase "Islamic Center" differs between Indonesia and America. Some mosques or Islamic centers in America already have complete facilities such as education for children and adults, sports facilities, shops, restaurants, funeral services, or offices related to Islamic business. For many other mosques, having all these facilities are just a dream.

For the first generation of migrants in America, the function of the mosque as a shared space is different from the function of the mosque as a shared space for second and third generation migrants. The first generation of migrants did not have a choice for space together with others other than the mosque. The limitations of social capital gave them no other choice. Second generation migrants have better social capital because of their wider relationship with other Muslim communities, even they usually earn a better education. Therefore, for second and third generation migrants, mosques are more common spaces to look back on their religious teachings or shared space to maintain contact with fellow Muslim communities.

According to Jane I. Smith, Muslims who came to America in the early 20th century did not yet have the intention to carry out religious activities typical of Islam. They did not even have the intention to identify themselves as Muslims or as members of a great Islamic tradition that must they show to others. The second generation began to change. Moreover, the next generation begins to look for Muslim social groups where they could feel comfortable and accepted because of the similarity of life traditions. This generation will later actively carry out religious nuances. They usually pray together and recited the Koran in groups.³⁴

As a second generation, there is a sense of wanting to identify themselves as Muslims and they also want to identify their children as Muslims. Therefore, in this second generation was a current that required the existence of places for education that specifically taught Islamic teachings. That is when the mosque became more important for American Muslims.³⁵

Some migrant groups from Indonesia who wanted mosques as places of worship, gathering places, and places to learn for their children were actually part of the general trend of the second generation of all Muslims in America, although many of these Indonesian migrants are the first generation of migrants from Indonesia or they have come to America rather than being born in America. They follow the trend of the second generation of Muslims because they are in the nuances of that tendency. This is different from the Muslim community in Albany, which is the capital of the State of New York. There is no big tendency to establish a mosque or Islamic center. Aside from there not being too many Muslims there, many Muslims there are students at several universities in Albany, one such as the State University of New York at Albany. As students, they most likely did not dream to settle in Albany, so the long thought of establishing a permanent shared space did not cross their minds.

F. Conclusion

Mosques have played important roles and functions for Muslims and the whole society. It becomes the center for conducting religious and social activities. In the pre-modern era, mosques in Indonesia were dominated by mixed cultural ornaments, both Arabic and local ethnics, while in the modern era, mosques are established with modern architecture inspired by Islamic values. In the United States, mosques commonly appear as a home or building previously used as something else and then used as a mosque. Therefore, there are no significant differences between the form of a mosque and a house or between the form of a mosque and a church – as nowadays, some churches are used as mosques.

³⁴ Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, p. 151.

³⁵ Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, p. 151.

Mosques in Indonesia are mostly established and managed by certain individuals, a group of people, housing developers, community organizations, and the government. In the United States of America, mosques are usually managed by religious groups and groups that identify with a certain ethnicity. For example, in New York City there is al-Hikmah (Indonesian mosque) and mosques that are affiliated mostly with Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah.

Finally, Imam or Priests in Indonesia are mostly focused on religious activities while in America, they can perform various activities and issues, such as fund-raisers for the maintenance of mosques, organizing people to not get involved in narcotics, working on the issue of counter radicalism-terrorism, giving explanation about true Islam, and active in inter-faith activities. All of the points of mosques in both countries might inspire all components of the society to support mosques in order to improve their roles and functions, as mosques are resources in the community that assist people in many aspects (religious, social, economics, education, etc.).

References

- Abaza, M., 2004. Markets of Faith: Jakartan Da'wa and Islamic Gentrification. *Archipel* 67, pp. 173-202
- Abu Bakar, H., 2007. *Manajemen Masjid Berbaris II H. Abu Bakar*. Yogyakarta: Arina.
- Aryanti, T., 2013. A Claim to Space: Debating Female Religious Leadership in a Muhammadiyah Mosque in Indonesia. *The Muslim World* 103, pp. 375-388.
- Bachar, S. *Et Al.*, 2006. Establishment Ulama and Radicalism in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. *Research Monographs on the Muslim World* 1: 4.
- Bakti, A.F., 2006. Daarut Tauhiid: New Approach to Dakwah for Peace in Indonesia. *Dakwah: Jurnal Kajian Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 8: 1, pp. 1-29.
- _____, 2004. Paramadina and Its Approach to Culture and Communication: An Engagement in Civil Society. *Archipel* 68, pp. 315-341
- _____, 2012a. As-Syafi'iyah Engagement in Dakwah and the Development of BKMT for Civil Society in Indonesia. (www.andifaisalbakti.com).
- _____, 2012b. Majelis Taklim At-Thahiriyah and Its Engagement in Civil Society: The Case of Dakwah (Islamic Communication) Activities (www.andifaisalbakti.com).
- Bano, M. & Kalmbach, H. (eds.), 2012. *Women, Leadership, and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority*. Leiden. E.J. Brill.
- Berger, Morroe, "Aspects of Governmental Policy towards Religion in Egypt Today", in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Jan., 1970), p. 3-34.
- Basit, Abdul, 2009. *Strategi Pengembangan Masjid bagi Generasi Muda, jurnal dakwah dan komunikasi*. Vol.3 No.2 Juli-Desember 2009.
- Betty, R. Schart., 1995. *Kajian Sosiologi Agama*. Yogyakarta: PT. Tiara Wacana.
- Caiero, A. _____, 2011. Transnational 'Ulama, European Fatwas, and Islamic Authority: A Case Study of the European Council for Fatwa and Research. In M. van Bruinessen, and S. Allievi (eds.). *Producing Islamic Knowledge: Transmission and Dissemination in Western Europe*. London: Routledge
- Chester, T. 2002. "What Makes Christian Development Christian?". A Paper Presented at the Global Connection Relief and Development Forum.
- Creswell, David, 2003. *Research Design*, London: Sage Publication
- Danim, Sudarwan, 2002. *Menjadi Peneliti Kualitatif*, Bandung: Pustaka Setia
- De Graaf, H. J., "The Origin of the Javanese Mosque", in *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Mar., 1963), p. 1-5
- Erzen, Jale Nejdte, "Reading Mosques: Meaning and Architecture in Islam", in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 69, No. 1, SPECIAL ISSUE: The Aesthetics of Architecture: Philosophical Investigations into the Art of Building (WINTER2011), p. 125-131.
- Steinhardt, Nancy Shatzman, "China's Earliest Mosques", in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (September 2008), p. 330-361.
- Imamuddin, S. M., "Mosque as a Centre of Education in Early Middle Ages", in *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Autumn 1984), p. 159-170.
- Kuppinger, Petra, "Mosques and Minarets: Conflict, Participation, and Visibility in German Cities", in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (Summer 2014), p. 793-818.

- Kusno, Abidin, ““The Reality of One-Which-Is-Two”: Mosque Battles and Other Stories: Notes on Architecture, Religion, and Politics in the Javanese World”, in *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Sep., 2003), p. 57-67
- Saperstein, David, “Public Accountability and Faith-Based Organizations: A Problem Best Avoided”, in *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 116, No. 5 (Mar., 2003), p. 1353-1396
- Foley, Kathleen E., *Building Mosques In America: Strategies for Securing Municipal Approvals*, dalam <https://www.ispu.org/building-mosques-in-america-strategies-for-securing-municipal-approvals/>. Research Report published by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding in October 2010, p. 1-50.
- Gilliat-Ray, Sophie, “The First Registered Mosque in the UK, Cardiff, 1860: The Revolution of a Myth”, in *Cont Islam* (2010) 4, DOI 10.1007/s11562-010-0116-9, Published online: 9 February 2010, Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2010, p. 179–193
- Gopal, Sapna, “A Necessary Switch India’s Only Women’s Mosque Goes Completely Solar”, in *Energy Future*, July-September 2017, p. 52-56.
- Muid N., Abd., (2008). “Simbolisme Islam”, unpublished paper.
- Narkowicz, Kasia and Konrad Pędziwiatr, “From Unproblematic to Contentious: Mosques in Poland”, in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2017, Vol. 43, NO. 3, p. 441–457, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1194744>,
- Omer, Spahic, An Analysis of the Expansion of the Prophet’s Mosque by Caliph ‘Uthman b. ‘Affan (d. 36 AH/656 CE), in *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought & Civilization*, International Islamic University Malaysia.
- Ozyurt, Saba Şenses, “Bridge Builders or Boundary Markers? The Role of the Mosque in the Acculturation Process of Immigrant Muslim Women in the United States”, in *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 3, September 2010, p. 295-315.
- Pierce, Lee, “A Rhetoric of Traumatic Nationalism in the Ground Zero Mosque Controversy”, in *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Vol. 100, No. 1, February 2014, p. 53–80.
- Sheany, “Radical Teachings Enter Mosques of Gov’t Institutions”, in <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/radical-teachings-enter-mosques-govt-institutions/>. Data taken in 30 November 2018.