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Becoming Indonesia: Political Gait of the Arabs in the Pre-Independence Period

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Abstract

This article addresses the political gait of the Arabs in Pre-Independence Indonesia. Using a qualitative method with a historical approach, this article aims to parse the political role of Arabs in Indonesia, the achievements they have, and the challenges they have faced since they first came to Indonesia until the country became independent in 1945. This study identifies several things. First, the involvement of Arabs in Indonesian politics has been going on since the time of the kingdom or empire. Some Sayyids are believed to occupy important positions, such as advisors to the king, foreign diplomats, and ministers. Second, in modern times, primarily until 1945, Arabs, both individually and in groups, have played an essential role in the constellation of Indonesian politics. In addition to establishing and developing PAI (called the Indonesian Arab Association initially but changed to the Indonesian Arab Party) in 1934, its figures, especially A.R. Baswedan and Hamid Algadri, were among the prominent figures during the Indonesian independence process. Third, there was a change in tendency in which the Arabs no longer struggled with aspects of the trade, as their initial motivation to emigrate to the archipelago, but began to be involved in various spheres of Indonesian people's lives, including in state politics. They have become essential figures of Indonesian society. With the political role played, they gain a stronger identity, increasingly 'becoming Indonesia'.

Keywords: Hadrami Arabs, Hadrami Sayyid, Arabs in Indonesian politics, becoming Indonesia

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Introduction

The Indonesian archipelago is an economically important and strategic region. As a region that produces spices, mainly nutmeg and cloves, Indonesia is a magnet for traders from all over the world. Those who generally came from China, India, and Arabia, came to Indonesia to buy spices to be sold back to their home regions (Wolter, 1967, p. 199–230)

Trade activities between foreign traders intensified when in the early part of the century until the 7th century, several important ports emerged which would later become their haven. In Sumatra there are ports of Lamuri (Aceh), Barus and Palembang. While in Java, Sunda Kelapa and Gresik ports emerged.



Among the several port cities, Barus has developed long enough as a producer of mothballs. From various travel stories it can be estimated that since 674 AD there have been Arab colonies on the western island of Sumatra (Leur, 1960). The Chinese news tells us that at the same time there was an Arab who was the head of an Arab colony on the west coast of Sumatra, which is considered by many historians as the city of Barus (Arnold, 1913, p. 363–364)

This note gives us an initial clue about the presence of Arab communities in Indonesia. In the history of early Islamization, Arab traders, like the Persian and Gujarat traders, played an important role. They came to Indonesia not only with economic motives; trade, but also religious motives; introduce Islam to the local population. This is in accordance with the theory of islamization explained by some academics, that Islam in the archipelago was brought directly from the Arabian lands in the seventh century, introduced directly by teachers or preachers of Arab origin (Azra, 2002, p. 31; Hasjmy, 1981, p. 156–198)

Apart from the debate around the time of the arrival of Islam in Indonesia, the fact is that the coastal regions of the archipelago in the 7th century were already crowded visited by Muslim traders, both from Arabia and Persia as well as from India. They form special settlements in the area, a fact that is usually done by foreign traders when they come to trading places around the archipelago, do not immediately return to their places of origin, but wait for their merchandise to run out while carrying goods new merchandise from the locals. In fact, they are also waiting for the return of the cruise which is very dependent on the season, thus forcing them to live for months on overseas land.

During their overseas stay, they interacted with the locals with peace and great respect for the locality. This facilitates their adaptation process with local residents in the Indonesian region, which also applies to almost all regions in Southeast Asia. Peaceful, adaptive patterns and respect for locality bring them close to various groups of people, including the nobility or among the kings. Not a few of them, the Sayyids, who eventually married noble daughters. Because of these marriages, it was not uncommon among them to be appointed bureaucrats in the structure of the royal bureaucracy, or even be appointed kings, a reality that could bring about new political forces in the archipelago (Subchi, 2019, p. 234–235)

With the entry of the indigenous population of Islam accompanied by the formation of an Islamic government, the trade relations with the Muslims at the center of the Islamic world became even tighter, including the ‘Arabs’. With this position, Arab immigrants on their journey contributed greatly and even shaped the order of life of the Muslim community in the archipelago. From the beginning of the conversion process to Islam, the Arabs who settled in the area enjoyed the image of piety and wisdom. Local Muslims respect them, especially those who can speak and read Arabic or are regarded as scholars. Especially the Arabs easily assimilated into the archipelago society thanks to their superior social and religious status (Yegar & Schumacher, 2012, p. 73–89)

In its development, especially since the 19th century, the Hadramout Sayyids occupied an important position in the political structure of the state politics in the Nusantara region. Many of them are believed to be advisors to rulers in various kingdoms and sultanates. This position has survived into modern times. Until Indonesia’s independence in 1945, the Arabs, both individually and in groups, played an important role in the constellation of Indonesian politics. The Arabs no longer dwell on aspects of trade, as their initial motivation to emigrate to the archipelago. They have become an important part of Indonesian society, and with the political role played they are increasingly ‘becoming Indonesia’.

Why did the idea of ‘becoming Indonesia’ emerge? And why is the political dimension chosen by the Arabs to show their existence? This is important to trace because there are many cases where people doubt Arab nationalism. They are still often seen as

hybrid communities that do not have pure Indonesian blood. That encourages them to move actively, especially in politics, to prove their love and loyalty to Indonesia. This case is certainly not only experienced by Arabs (Arab descendants) but also of Chinese descent, Dutch descent, and many other communities. Therefore, it is essential to position the Arabs, with all their constructive roles, as part of Indonesia. This nation is big not solely because of the role of native Indonesians, but also those who do not have pure blood, but in fact, love this country very much. This article seeks to position the Arabs in Indonesia with all its dynamics proportionally.

Method

This study is part of historical research by utilizing literature and field research. The literature search is carried out by collecting books, dissertations, articles, and research results on the political role of Arabs in Indonesia. Using a qualitative method with a historical approach, this study seeks to uncover the political part of the Arabs from the time they first arrived in Indonesia until Indonesia's independence in 1945. To enrich information and sharpen the analysis, this research is also complemented by library research from various sources, such as books, magazines, newspapers, and related sources, relating to the subject matter of research, the political role of Arabs in Indonesia.

The urgency of this study is to understand the position of Arabs in Indonesia, both individually and in groups, in the constellation of national politics since they were present on the archipelago until Indonesia became an independent country in 1945. Not a few works that discuss issues related to Arab political engagement in Indonesia. But most of the work is not exhaustive about the Arab political motives associated with their sense of nationalism. That the political practices they carry out should be a form of proof of how much they love Indonesia. They also have the same sense of patriotism as other Indonesians. By looking at the political role played by Arabs, this research will provide perspectives for readers about the reasons why they chose to 'become Indonesia'.

Results and Discussion

Initial Comportment

Arabs, especially those from Hadramout (Arab-Hadramout), began to enter the archipelago as the development of the trading system and the economy in the Indian Ocean. Around the 16th century, there was fragmentation of trade routes marked by the malfunction of direct shipping routes between the Persia bay and China. This led to the shipping division in three shorter routes. Goods from the Arabian coast were brought by Arab traders to Cambay Harbor in Gujarat and taken over by Gujarat traders who brought them to Malacca. From Malacca, these goods are then brought by Chinese traders to the Chinese plains (Alatas, 2016, p. 30)

The impact of this condition is the emergence of important points in the Indian Ocean in the form of several prosperous sultanates, such as the Malacca and Aceh sultanates, who in turn formed 'Islamicate' (Hodgson, 1977, p. 59)— cosmopolitan socio-cultural land focused on international maritime trade. Since then cities from the Hijaz region began to be connected with the Archipelago (Alatas, 2016, p. 31). It was at this point that the Hadhrami community - specifically the Sayyids - began to take on the role of the diaspora, assimilation, integration with the local population, coloring maps of the spread of Islam in the archipelago (Abshouk & Ibrahim, 2009; Arai, 2004; Jacobsen, 2009; Tagliacozzo, 2009)

The success of the Sayyid Hadramout community in integrating with local kinship networks was increasingly visible in the late 18th century. Together with the Malay, Bugis and Minangkabau communities, they formed a hybrid cultural fabric in the archipelago. By not identifying themselves as Arabs, they succeeded in establishing kinship relations without

resistance, making them part of an archipelago that was known to be plural and pluralist (Furnivall, 1948, p. 304).

In general, the presence of Arabs occurred massively, initially in Aceh, Palembang and Pontianak. They began to settle on Java after 1820, with six large colonies namely Batavia (Jakarta), Cirebon, Tegal, Pekalongan, Semarang and Surabaya. In Jakarta, Pekojan became the largest colony of the Arab-Hadhrami community which was occupied, especially, since the 18th century. In addition to being a trading centre for the Arab community, Pekojan is also a place of acculturation of Arab and Indonesian culture, a space for cross-cultural negotiations in the local context (Wahyudi & Madjid, 2019). In addition, they also established colonies in the Eastern Archipelago since 1870. According to 1885 statistics it was recorded that the total population of Arabs living in Indonesia was 10,888 in Java and Madura, and 9613 in the Malacca Peninsula (Berg, 2010, p. 96–100)

In the following years the number of Arabs in Indonesia always increased. According to the Dutch census of 1930, the total number of Arabs (Arab and native Arab descendants) numbered 71,345. That certainly increased rapidly compared to 1905, which was only around 30,000 people, and 45,000 people in 1920. While at the same time (1930), the total population of Indonesia was 60.593 million people (Hamid Algadri, 1996, p. 185). Other data mentioned, in 1940 there were a total of 50,000 Arab immigrants in the Dutch East Indies who immigrated in the second half of the 19th century (Schmidt, 2003, p. 73)

They arrived earlier in the archipelago than Westerners (Europeans). This is possible because the Arab-Hadramoutsociety is wander. With a wooden boat ride and a long trip duration, they explored various regions ranging from the coast of Ethiopia, Somalia, Zanzibar, India, to the archipelago. In the early days, their initial starting point was the port of al-Mukalla or al-Syahr then sail to Bombay, India. Then they went to Celon Island (Sri Lanka), then to Aceh or Singapore and then spread to the archipelago (Berg, 2010, p. 115; Supratman, 2016, p. 458)

Entering the 19th century, especially since 1870, there was a steamship traffic lane from Europe to the Far East. This condition further strengthened the wave of Arab-Hadhrami migration to the archipelago. Since then, steamboats have become the main choice of Arab immigrants. Although expensive, their trips become faster (Berg, 2010, p. 115)

Aside from traders, another role played by Arabs was the preacher. After arriving at their destination, as the merchants like, they do not immediately return to their original place, due to they have to wait for their merchandise to run out and be able to bring new merchandise, also waiting for the return of shipping that depends on the season. This eventually forced them to live for months on overseas land. At this time, they play the role of preachers.

During their stay abroad they interacted with the local population, not infrequently the local residents who ultimately desired marry their daughters to the nomads, especially Arab traders who are wealthy and have high social strata like the Sayyids. From this mixed-couple marriage born children of mixed Arab descent called *Arab peranakan* (Arab-halfbreed) or *muwalad* - to distinguish it from *aqhah* or *wulayati*, pure-blooded groups, first-generation of immigrants from Hadramout (Mobini-Kesheh, 1999, p. 128–129)

With the birth of these halfbreed children more and more Arabs in the archipelago in particular, so that the colonial government issued a regulation that requires every foreign citizen occupies places that have been determined based on race and nation. Likewise, also the rules that require carrying a letter if you want to travel. With regulations like this, the Arabs who previously only married indigenous women, they turn to marry women of their own ethnicity, especially in the case of mixed marriages of their generation (Berg, 2010, p. 191–203)

Seen from the lineage, they are divided into five main groups: the *sada* (plural of sayyid, lord), which is the highest and most respected group (religious aristocracy); *qaba'il* (plural of *qabila*), namely the worldly nobility; *mashayikh* (plural of *shaykh*), a group that is primarily engaged in education and teaching; *da'ifa* (plural of *da'if*) and *masākin* (plural of *misikin*), a group consisting of free people living in cities and villages, who are not tribal members and also do not include Shaykhs or Sayyids, generally farmers, craftsmen, and traders who are sometimes well off but not respected; and *'abid* (plural of *'abd*), namely slave-trade class (Pijiper, 1985, p. 116)

The Arabs are divided into various ethnic groups (*qabilah*) and kinship, as well as several social strata in their area of origin. The identity is most easily identified from the name of the clan or kin (kin group). It is at the same time the reason that the name of the people is very important to them. The kinship group can be traced to the forerunner figure. In so doing, the Arab can be traced his identity since from 'whose descendants?', 'What *qabilah*?', 'What sub-*qabilah*?' And finally, 'whose family?'. Meanwhile, Arab family names are based on male bloodlines.

In other words, the Arabs who came to Indonesia turned out to have a social strata system that was quite unique. Some of these social strata include: first, the Ba Alwe or Al alwe class. This group consists of *sayids* (masters) who are usually pinned to those who come from the descendants of Husin, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad from his daughter, Fatimah, and *sharif* (respectable people) used by people of Hasan's descent. If people from this group have daughters, they are given the title *Syarifah*. This first group usually plays a role in the fields of religion, commerce and politics. The descendants of Shaykh Abu Bakr, al-Idrus, al-Atas, al-Ahbsyi, al-Haddad and so on are the first strata in Indonesia.

Second, the al-Qabail group means the one who shoulders the weapon. This group is usually the group that becomes the leader of the *qabilah*, the ruler and the sultans. Because of his power, the second group is more prominent than the first group. The second group includes: al-Kethiri, al-Fas, al-Faris, al-Makarim, al-Jabri, Bin Thalib, Bin Mari, Bin Badar, Bin Khamis, and the like. Third, the Masyaikh or Masyaikh groups. They are people who have expertise in science, especially religion. In Indonesia, they include descendants from the family of al-Bafathol, al-Bawazir, al-Amudi, al-Ishak Bin Afif, and so on. Fourth, the al-Qerwan group. They are people who consist of family groups who have special skills, such as blacksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters, and so on. Fifth, al-Khertan group or farmers (Hidayah, 1997, p. 30). These groups will later color the lives of Indonesian people.

Early Political Role

Throughout the 19th century, the Hadramout Sayyids occupied important positions in the political structure of state politics in the Nusantara region. Many of them are believed to be advisors to rulers in various kingdoms and sultanates. As-Sayyid Syarif Ali bin Alawi bin Hasan al Jufri al Alawi, for example, was an advisor and foreign envoy of Sultan Taha Sayf al-Din (1816-1904). Sultan Taha, who has served as Sultan of Jambi since 1855, ordered him to go to Constantinople to be regulated.

Jambi also recorded the name Sayyid Abdullah bin Abdurrahman al-Habsyi, who was an advisor to Sultan Mohildin (d.1885), as well as several other names that played an important role in Jambi's 19th-century history. Apart from being in the political sphere, around twenty Arabs - of the total Jambi population of six hundred in 1830 - in fact emerged as a group with important economic power that had strong support from the palace (Locher-Scholten, 2004, p. 49)

In the history of the Aceh kingdom, the name Habib (Sayyid) 'Abdurrahman az-Zahir (1833 / 4-1896) was recorded. He moved to Aceh in 1864 and was believed to be

the Sultan's main advisor (Ibrahim Ali Alauddin Mansur Syah, 1857-1870, and Mahmud Syah, 1870-74), before finally becoming Minister. Since 1871 az-Zahir initiated negotiations with the Dutch Governor in West Sumatra, Kraijenhoff, regarding the peaceful settlement between Aceh and the Dutch colonial government (Reid, 1972). In the face of the Dutch threat, az-Zahir obtained a diplomatic assignment to Porte (Turkey) - in Istanbul on April 27, 1873 - and immediately addressed various problems facing the Sultanate of Aceh while seeking support from Ottoman officials (Schmidt, 2003, p. 79–83).

There is also the name Sayyid Husain bin Ahmad al-Qadri who arrived at Matan Kingdom, Kalimantan in 1735. Besides being respected as a law expert and naturalist, he also became a sultan's confidant. From Matan he moved to Mempawah (Pontianak) and played a similar role until Priagung Mempawah entrusted the state administration to him (Berg, 2010, p. 179)

On the island of Sumba, Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahman bin Abu-Bakr al-Qadri was known to be a liaison between the Dutch authorities and the leaders on the island of Sumba. This role played very well for 50 years. While Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahman bin Hamid al-Qadri, thanks to his services in resolving riots in Banjarmasin, received the title of prince in 1863. A similar title was given to Sayyid' Abd Allah bin Mansur al-Aidrus in Batavia who also received the title of prince in 1879 (Berg, 2010, p. 160)

Another name to note is, of course, Sayyid Uthmān ibn 'Abdillāh ibn Ā ilqil ibn Yahyā al-'Alāwī (Sayyid Usman). Born on December 1, 1882, Sayyid Usman grew up in an Arab family environment in Pekojan, Batavia. Facilitated by Snouck Hurgronje, in 1889, he was appointed mufti of the Dutch Colonial government, holding an advisory position for Islamic and Arabic affairs. Since then, he has actively voiced *rust en orde* (peace and order) in the Dutch East Indies. But his attitude and position, which provided religious justification for the Dutch colonial power, made Sayyid Usman the target of criticism from many groups, including the Arab community in the archipelago.

The practice of rejection of the ideas or actions of Sayyid Uthmān has long been correct. For example, when Sayyid Usman asked Snouck Hurgronje to write a letter to the Dutch government to support the dissemination of his work in anticipation of the potential danger from the tarekat that was increasingly spread in Java — at that time Sayyid Usman requested that his name be mentioned in a letter to the Dutch government, both in Europe and in Batavia— many tarekat teachers (shaykh) and jealous people try to discredit themselves (Kaptein, 2014, p. 112) He met many similar attitudes as his choice to become part of the Dutch colonial government, and it lasted until the end of his life (Sayyid Usman edited on January 18, 1914). The experiences of some of the Sayyids above confirm the vital role of the Hadrami Arab community in the archipelago, especially in the world of politics.

Political Activity in Modern Times

The experience of the Arabs in politics lasted until the modern period (in this paper, it was limited to the period of Indonesian independence, 1945). If in the past, they were believed to occupy essential positions in the structure of the kingdom or empire, in modern times, something similar happened. Both individuals and groups (through organizations or political parties), the role of Arabs remains essential.

They no longer dwell on aspects of the trade, as their initial motivation to emigrate to the archipelago. A sense of belonging to the country where they were born is embedded, reinforcing what we later understand to be nationalism. The declaration announced by various youth organizations in the Oath October 28, 1928 youth who crossed ethnic and religious boundaries influenced the state orientation of the Arab community in the Dutch East Indies. This national declaration creates difficulties for Arab communities because of

their legal status as foreigners with a state orientation to a distant country, Hadramout. Still, culturally they are bound to the local culture in which they develop their lives. This condition ultimately led to differences in views about the spirit of nationality possessed by the people of Arab descent in Indonesia, in addition to an internal debate among Arab descendants about the groups contained in the Arab community.

(Hamid Algadri, 1996, p. 167) In 1930 a group called itself Indo Arabisch Verbond (IAV) was founded and changed to IAB (Indo Arabische Beweging) in 1939. The initiator and founder of this association were M.B.A Alamudi, an Arab descendant born in Amboina. Before establishing IAV, Alamudi had toured the city of Java and received a sizeable welcome. At that time, the Arab community began to realize that the divisions that often occur between them were very detrimental to the Arabs in Indonesia. With the establishment of the IAV, it was hoped that they could reunite the groups. IAV relies heavily on support from wealthy people from the Arab class and is still unable to break away from the social system in Hadramaut. IAV is less related to the reality in Indonesian society itself, where most of the Arab descendants have mixed and have been separated from the social system in Hadramout (Hamid Algadri, 1996, p. 167)

IAV organizations that have not been able to break away from the social system eventually also led to some Arab descendants who were dissatisfied with the actions of IAV. With policy choices that tend to be exclusive and to try to break away from the Arab social system, the IAV Organization has received criticism from various parties, including from several descendants of the Arabs. They are not satisfied with the actions of IAV. One of them was A. R. Baswedan, who was the pioneer of the oath which declared Indonesia as their homeland on 4 October 1934 in Semarang, followed by establishing the Indonesian Arab Union (PAI) on the same date, 4 October 1934.

PAI was an Islamic-Nationalist movement that started its evolution from the oath of the Arab youth, the pledge of claiming Indonesia as a homeland of Arab descent. In brief: Arab descendants are sons and Indonesians and must serve their home, the same as other Indonesian tribes. This movement was later called 'The Arab Youth Pledge' (Sumpah Pemuda Arab).

PAI recognizes Indonesia as a homeland of Arab descent must fulfill their obligations as much as possible to their home and the people of Indonesia. To carry out these obligations, they must improve their position in the social, economic, and political fields. Arabic descent culture in Indonesian culture as long as it does not conflict with Islam.

Another case with the IAB which was founded by M. B. A. Alamudi, at his first meeting it was said that nationalism was dangerous and that the nationalism movement was not healthy (Algadri, 1991). This view is very contrary to the view of PAI which upholds Indonesian nationalism. While the IAB aims to strengthen the race that Arab descendants are Arabs and must remain in Arabia, the PAI is an Indo-Arab association that upholds Indonesian nationalism.

PAI started from a conference attended by AR Baswedan (Chairperson/Al-Irsyad), Nuh Alkaf (Author I/Ar-Rabithah), Salim Maskati (Author II/Al-Irsyad), Segaf Assegaf (Treasurer/Ar-Rabithah), Abdurrahim Argubi (Commissioner/Al-Irsyad). Other PAI figures are Hamid Algadri, Ahmad Bahaswan, HMA Alatas, HA Jailani, Hasan Argubi, Hasan Bahmid, A. Bayasut, Syechan Shahab, Husin Bafagih, Ali Assegaf, Ali Basyaib. From this meeting came 'The Arab Youth Pledge'—devoted only to peranakan Arabs (Amaruli, Maulany, & Sulistiyono, 2018, p. 129)

Initially, PAI was in the form of unity. As the political temperature against the invaders increased, in 1941 the PAI changed its name to the Arab Party Indonesia, and since then joined as a member of GAPPI (Association of Indonesian Political

Parties) which demanded that Indonesia have a parliamentary (Assegaf, 2000, p.165–167). This change also carries the implied message that a new Arab consciousness has been born to proactively engage in the national issues facing Indonesia. They no longer identify themselves as strangers. Instead they feel that they have become part of the Indonesian nation. A compromise was made to release the titles “Sharif” and “Sayid”. Meanwhile the use of the word “Arabic” does not mean that they want to maintain their identity. However, this is done not only to raise solidarity alone.

Actually, the national question at that time was one of the things that received serious attention from the Arabs. On one hand there is the idea that the Arab community merges into the Indonesian nation. This continues to reverberate among Arabs, especially those who are already aware that they are part of the Indonesian nation. While on the other hand, there is still a large part of the Arab community that does not want to recognize Indonesia as their homeland.

PAI totally fight for Indonesia. They are no longer an organization that only encourages Arabs to become part of the Indonesian nation. More than that, they are an organization that proactively contributes to the birth of the Indonesian nation in the future. Therefore, PAI is determined to support the *Volksraad* motion promoted by M.H. Thamrin, Soetardjo, and Wiwoho. They demanded that the Dutch government use the term “Indonesier” (Indonesian) instead of the word *inlander* (native). All of that must be applied in official documents and stipulating Indian citizenship. Then investigate to change the *Volksraad* into a real parliament (Basundoro, 2012, p. 45)

It turned out that the power of the colonial government was very strong and large. Therefore, the motion was never successfully realized. Nevertheless, at least the existence of the motion has become a symbol of the beginning of the unity of the Indonesian nation fighting for their rights. These are the rights that were ignored during the colonial period by the Dutch government. No exception the right to govern themselves autonomously.

In its history PAI did not hesitate to criticize sharply any irregularities of the founders. PAI is also actively promoting Indonesian national principles. In addition, PAI has always sided with the national movement, regardless of opposition from the Dutch (Algadri, 1991, p. 50). In line with this, the colonial government began to highlight the movements of PAI. The colonial government was restless and worried about the new Arab movement. This is because they actually attracted peranakan Arabs to the anti-colonialists. At that time the Dutch Government had and continues to make arrests of the main leaders of national political parties that are considered radical, and dissolve his party. They also did not escape alienating PAI and its scouting houses were frequently visited by intelligence asking about the activities carried out.

When Japanese troops entered Indonesia, shortly after on 8 March 1942 the Dutch East Indies Government surrendered in Kalijati. The attack was led by Governor-General Tjarda Van Strakenborg Stachouwer. It was during the Japanese era that all political parties were disbanded by Japan. Thus, the Indonesian Arab Party also broke. The dissolution of PAI did not eliminate the national awareness and identity of Arab descendants in Indonesia. The movement and revival of nationalism have influenced their social attitudes, striving to continue to ‘become Indonesia.’

The process of ‘becoming Indonesia’ for Arabs was made possible by the role of many figures. Some important figures noted include A.R. Baswedan. Born on 11 September 1908 in Ampel Village, Surabaya, Baswedan was the third child of the couple Awad Baswedan and Aliyah Binti Abdullah Jahrum. His formal education began in Madrasah al-Khairiyah - built by Surabaya Arabs - located near the Ampel Mosque. Next he studied at Madrasah al-Irshad led by Syeh Ahmad Soorkati before he returned to Surabaya and studied at the

Hadramaut School specializing in Arabic literature (Suratmin & Kwartanada, 2014)

Throughout his life, A.R. Baswedan continues to encourage public awareness to 'become Indonesia'. He realized that racial sentiment was latent in various parts of the world. Thus, if Arab society continues to claim to be foreigners, then it is likely that they will also become victims of racial sentiments in Indonesia (Basundoro, 2012, p. 29)

In the *Matahari* newspaper in Semarang, August 1, 1934, Baswedan wrote: *Indonesian Arabs were raised with gado-gado, not mulukhia. With durian, not with dates. With the cool mountain air, not the hot desert! They were turned on not on the edge of the Dajlah and Furat, but the edge of Musi, Kapuas, Bengawan, and Brantas. More savory coconut oil than samin oil. Therefore, a safe way for you, in the future is to immerse yourself in your mother's people. Your homeland is Indonesia!*

Entitled "Arab Peranakan and Totoknya," the article caused a stir in the Arab community in Indonesia and considered Baswedan to insult their ancestors in Hadramout. Moreover, not long ago, in the same newspaper a photograph of Baswedan appeared in a Javanese *blangkon* and clothes sitting casually with Soeljoadikoesoemo and his wife, a *priyayi* couple dressed in Javanese, accompanied by the sentence, "Does this photo do not make an Arab peranakan from a generator who is accustomed to coming?!" (Suratmin & Kwartanada, 2014).

Although full of rejection from fellow Hadhrami people in Indonesia, Baswedan remains committed to maintaining its principle, 'become Indonesia'. It is on this basis that it is so active in guarding the establishment of PAI. At that time, he organized the colonies of Arab communities in Indonesia to attend the Arab Community Conference in Semarang. Representatives from *Al-Irshad* and *Arrabitah* from various cities agreed to attend the conference.

Through PAI, Baswedan tried to consistently ignite the spirit of resistance against colonialism which pitted sheep between the Arab peranakan group and their ancestors (totok group), between *Al-Ershad* and *ar-Rabithah* and Muslims in general who was heated with the *Khilafiyah* so that unity and unity were not realized.

His thoughts about statehood were developed through various platforms. In 1945 he became a member of the Central Indonesian National Committee (KNIP). In 1946 he served as Deputy Minister of Information, in 1947 as a member of the Diplomatic Mission of the Republic of Indonesia, in 1950 becoming a member of the Central Indonesian National Committee Workers Board. In these various forums, he contributed a lot to the struggle for recognition of the sovereignty of the nation and state of the Republic of Indonesia.

Besides A. R. Baswedan, another important name to note is Hamid Algadri. He was born in Pasuruan on July 10, 1912. His father, Muhammad Hamid Algadri is a Muslim figure in Pasuruan who was appointed as Kapitein der Arabieren (Head of Arab society) in Pasuruan (Hosniyah, 2016, p. 967). In lineage, Hamid Algadri comes from the land of Hadramout in the Arabian Peninsula and the maternal lineage of Malabar, India.

Although born of Arab ethnicity (Hadhrami), Algadri has a modern Western education. After completing his formal education at *Europesche Lag School (ELS)*, he continued his *MULO (Meer Utgebreid Lager Onderwijs)* secondary school, junior high school which was mainly provided for native students in 1928-1933, before finally joining *AMS-A (Algemeene Middelbare School)* Western classics.

At *MULO* school Algadri is actively involved in the *JIB (Jong Islamieten Bond)* Islamic youth association. To voice his ideas, the magazine *JIB (Het Licht)* was published in Dutch to provide information and advocates for religion against all forms of attacks on Islam. *JIB* stands on the advice of Islamic-nationalist leaders, including The Grand Old Man, Haji Agus Salim, spreader of Islamic understanding modern, and therefore naturally

the attitude of JIB is also colored Islam-nationalist and anti-Dutch (Algadri, 1996, p. 33)

In 1936, Algadri was listed as a student of the *Rechts Hoge School* (Higher Education Law) in Batavia. So, he was the first Arab descendant to demand a degree at university. While a student at the *Rechts Hoge School* (Higher Education Law), Hamid joined the Indonesian Arab Association (PAI) which was founded by AR Baswedan in 1934.

The role of Algadri when he decided to join PAI was to unite the Arabs and try to change the bad image of Arabic descendants in the Archipelago, which began to spread among intellectuals. Some of the bad behaviors of the Arabs who were understood by the community at the time were: practicing usury in trade, being a loan shark in markets, and opposing the Western education system because the wrong image of the Arabs is always reported in Dutch newspapers and magazines that are widely read by Indonesian intellectuals.

Hamid does not want assimilation that has happened decades ago, and this lousy image damages Arab's good relations with Indonesia. In this atmosphere, Hamid wished to clarify that the behavior of some Arab ethnic groups did not reflect the fact of the Arabs, not only in Indonesia but also in their own country, such practices were also prohibited because they were contrary to Islamic teachings. Hamid considered that the Dutch tried to sharpen the problem by generalizing corrupt practices of the ethnic Arabs so that between natives and Arab descendants did not get along. On the other hand, they actively encourage moneylenders and other bad people to come to Indonesia. The Netherlands wants to continue to create a bad image of the Arabs. So, the natives hate Arab descendants.

To improve the bad image that has already been spread by the Dutch newspapers, PAI immediately plunged to eradicate the moneylenders in the Arab circles to create a safe and prosperous life atmosphere. Arab image, which is identical to a moneylender, must be changed with its eradication efforts. Therefore, Hamid fully supports *woekeordonansi* intended to eradicate the moneylender and urges the party to firmly punish and destroy workers in Arab circles (Maryam, 2018, p. 72–73)

One of the leaders of the Arab community at that time, Husin Bafagih, wrote a drama called "Fatima" about Arab hatred of usury. The show was performed in big cities in Java, such as Jakarta, Semarang, Surabaya, and so on, so that it became very popular with the general public. Initially, Dutch propaganda against Arabs almost succeeded in relaxing relations between Arabs and indigenous peoples. However, it becomes aground instantly when PAI moves to correct the wrong perception (Maryam, 2018, p. 74)

This Arab descent movement was quickly accepted into the national movement. After successfully uniting the views of two different groups of Arab descendants, Algadri encouraged PAI members to have a high sense of nationalism. Consequently, they must recognize Indonesia as their homeland. The move of Hamid who was in the position of chairman of the Jakarta branch of the PAI then became a PAI executive board until 1942 was very significant. He can help determine the principles and ideology of PAI. Especially when Algadri was appointed as a representative of PAI in the GAPI (Association of Indonesian Political Parties) - established on May 21, 1939 in Jakarta - with PB PAI chairman H. M. A Hosein Alatas.

In his expertise in speeches and negotiations, Algadri is often appointed as a speaker at important meetings held by PAI. One example was when he was appointed spokesman in the context of the Soetardjo Petition during the action and demands of the Indonesian Parliament. Algadri conveyed the attitude and views of the PAI so that sympathy arose from national parties.

In 1939 PAI was growing. Many Arab descendants who declared themselves to join the PAI. Because it has spread branches and branches are formed. Algadri played a role in strengthening the view that the PAI was an organization that not only recognized Indonesia

as their homeland, but that Arab descendants were nationalists who were ready to fight for Indonesian independence from the hands of the invaders (Maryam, 2018, p. 95)

Algadri participated in the fight for legal equality with the natives. Taking part in the Sutarjo Petition was an initial step in fighting for Indo-Arab status through political channels. In the fifth PAI congress in Jakarta in 1940, as Hamid Algadri's ideals, the PAI could initiate a struggle program for his party.

In the political aspect, he helped the party, among others: 1) Achieving a mass of Indonesian Arabian crossbreed as aspired by the PAI; 2) Demanding political change that embodies the one Indonesian nation. The demands: (a) the abolition of the criterium race which is the basis for dividing society into groups; (b) the existence of equal court rights for all people; 3) Demanding an Indonesian Parliament elected by and for the people and the place where the government bears responsibility: (a) demanding democratic (democratic) government: (b) demanding the right to vote for the public in a direct manner; 4) Demanding Indonesia in a state position; 5) Demanding: (a) broad rights of assembly and assembly: (b) right of speech and freedom of expression; and 6) Demanding the elimination of various types of traditional burdens such as compulsory labor.

On the religious aspect, he helped the party, among others: 1) Demanding the removal of article 178 I.S and Goeroe Ordonnantie; 2) Demanding the return of the right to administer inheritance to Muslims in the Religious Raad; 3) Demanding the right to use the mosque and returning the mosque's cash to the Muslims; and 4) Demanding the abolition of subsidies on all religions (Algadri, 1991, p. 52).

In the magazine *Insjaf* Algadri also interpreted the PAI's articles of association regarding the Islamic Principle. According to Algadri, Indonesia is the place where Arab Peranakans were born and became a homeland for Arab Peranakans. It is an obligation for Arab peranakans to participate in prioritizing the interests of the Indonesian people, because of that in the PAI Algadri emphasizes and does not matter where the Arabs come from, that Arab descendants are Indonesian and have the same rights and obligations as native Indonesian people (indigenous). PAI does not want Arab descendants to use the Hadramout system but merges with the prevailing system in Indonesia. This is very logical because they have breeders in this country. Then the rules they must use are in accordance with Indonesian state policy (Maryam, 2018, p. 97)

Of course, PAI is not the only organization where Arabs gather and carry out political activities. Sayyid Hasan bin Sumayt, for example, had already been involved in politics through the Sarikat Islam (previously known as Sarikat Dagang Islam). Sayyid Hasan bin Sumayt was one of the leaders of the Sarekat Islam in Surabaya (1914 and 1919) who had good relations with H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto as the great leader of SI. He also often contacts with other SI leaders, Agus Salim, to discuss various SI problems in the Surabaya branch (Korver, 1985, p. 173)

Sayyid Hasan bin Sumayt was also noted to be one of the main funders of the Setia Oesaha printing company, which published the *Oetoesan Hindia*, SI's propaganda newspaper. At the same time, he also supported the existence of Jam'iyyah al-Khayriyyah, the educational organization of the Hadrami in Surabaya (Mobini-Kesheh, 1999, p. 45). However, Sayyid Hasan bin Sumayt's actions tended to be more economical and educational than political.

Institutionally, in addition to PAI, it can also be noted that organizations where Arabs had hadrami activities, such as Arrabitah and Al-Irshad. However, of the three associations, only PAI is a political organization, although all three have the same political rights. PAI became an important political organization representing the Arabs in fighting for their ideals of becoming Indonesia. Of course, the author does not deny the existence of other Arab

organizations outside the PAI, which participated in coloring national politics until the independence period. But in the context of this paper, the author takes the example of two Arabian hereditary figures, namely A. R. Baswedan and Hamid Algadri, all of whom were active in PAI. This became the author's attempt to show the Arab political performance in the pre-independence period.

Conclusion

Many figures of Arab descent have played an important role in the emancipation of Indonesian Hadhrami and in the integration of the Hadhrami minority into broader Indonesian society. During the early decades of the twentieth century, relatively small communities, and for outsiders relatively closed, were in a state of constant conflict and confusion, coupled with the tension of Hadhrami culture and Indonesian culture, and between loyalty to the Hadhramaut, their home region, with the country where they live and look for livelihoods, Indonesia. In the years leading up to World War II (1939-1945), the idea of being Indonesian emerged and developed strongly among Arabs in Indonesia, and This was made possible by the efforts of figures such as Baswedan, and also Algadri. Through them, Arabs in Indonesia gained their future identity, becoming Indonesia. Mainly through PAI (originally called the Indonesian Arab Union but changed to the Indonesian Arab Party), it was implied by the strong will of the Arabs to be actively involved in the national issues facing the nation. They no longer identify themselves as strangers but have become part of the Indonesian nation.

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This part pervades the background of the study and provides the significance of the study. A brief description of the theory used in this research should be explained in this section. It is containing the previous research to show the gap analysis and the author's position in this study. It must also give state of the art and it must point out the research questions. In this part, the author(s) should use references (quotations) to support the argumentation. For instance: Rosida (2015). It should use APA style sixth edition and are expected to use reference manager such as Mendeley, Zotero, and those kinds of thing.

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