

# Political Responses Towards Shiah and Hizbut Tahrir Movements in Indonesia: A Comparative Study

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## Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the understanding of Shia and Hizb ut-Tahrir's understanding concerning the political system and ideology in Indonesia. By using a political approach and non-military threat theory, this article describes Shia and Hizb ut-Tahrir's political doctrines. The results of the analysis of the doctrines and movements of the two groups, it is known that they have a similar agenda but experiences different treatment in the field. Socially, the two groups were equally welcomed by the dominant group, but politically, only the HT group received repressive treatment.

**Keywords:** Shia, Hizb ut-Tahrir, politics, government.

## INTRODUCTION

The International Crisis Group (ICG), as quoted by Hilmy, directs the radical Islamism movement in Indonesia to Salafi and Jihadi groups, although they differ in their method of movement. The Salafi group mostly uses peaceful means and does not advocate violence to pursue the Islamic revolution. Meanwhile, Jihadi groups use violent means with the main aim of the United States and its allies. But what they both have in common is the understanding that Islamic law is the most superior and holy law and can be applied in all space and time, including for non-Muslims.

One of the groups that were given the main attention by the Indonesian government and included in the ICG version of the Salafi group as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). The government dissolved the trans-national group on July 19, 2017, by revoking its legal entity status. HTI is said to be spreading the doctrine of a caliphate-based state, which means that it is not in line with the principles of democracy and the form of a unitary state enforced in Indonesia. HTI and its movements, which are considered a threat to the state and democracy, only carry out infiltration and ideological movements, not

physical confrontation, militarism, or separation from the state (separatists) to spread the understanding of the Islamic caliphate.

The second group in the spotlight is the Shia. The Shia got a reaction from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). Shia is referred to as an approach that must be wary of. Apart from contradicting ahl as-sunnah wa al-jama'ah as the traditional view of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia, MUI is worried about the concept of Imamah in Shi'ism. At the MUI National Working Meeting in March 1984. By analysis of the concept of Shi'ite imamah, which considers ma'sum (holy people who are free from sins), and also the inclusion of the principle of leadership/government (imamah) in the pillars of religion. Meanwhile ahl as-sunnah wa al-jama'ah do not include this concept in the pillars of religion, but only as a necessity for the general benefit.

In Indonesia, the Shi'a movement is also not so much different from the HTI, namely through taklim assemblies, publication of books, establishing courses and formal education institutions. The Shia group also has formal organizations such as the Indonesian Ahlul Bait Congregation Association (IJABI) and the

Indonesian Ahlul Bait (ABI). Shia Islamic boarding schools also exist in several areas, such as the YAPI Bangil Islamic Boarding School in East Java and Al-Hadi Pekalongan in Central Java. Looking at the similarities in ideological orientations and movements between HTI and Shia in Indonesia, the similarity in the impact of state threats should also occur between both.

Therefore, this study focuses on finding out the potential threats to the democratic system, and Pancasila ideology from Shia teachings and movements and HTI. This paper also compares the teachings and movements between Shia and HTI. It is also known which teachings and movements pose a threat to the Pancasila ideology, the democratic system, and the form of the unitary state of Indonesia. To discuss this, three main questions are raised: what is the political doctrine of Shia and HTI, how is the Shia movement and HTI group, and which one has the greater potential in influencing the existence of the democratic system in Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on Shia and HTI in Indonesia are generally conducted separately. The study of Shia is carried out in a socio-religious context, especially regarding the interaction of the Shia minority with the Sunni majority. Abd. Wahid et al. Research on "Movement and Discrimination of Shia Islamic Minority Groups in Makassar". Research shows that there is persecution by the majority of Sunnis on the activities of the Shia community in Makassar. Muhammad Afdillah researched the violence between Sunnis and Shiites in Sampang, Madura. The study found that the Sunni-Shia conflict in Sampang was multidimensional, intersecting socio-cultural, religious, economic, and political factors.

The research related to HTI focuses more on its vision of the caliphate. Research conducted by Sulaiman Kurdi, for example, provides a conceptual description of HTI's doctrines and analyzes the causes of the emergence of these thoughts and movements. In his analysis, Kurdi considered that HTI naturally arose as a result of religious demands as well as emerging social problems. Another study was conducted by Muhammaddin, who tried to make the HTI caliphate system relevant to the modern Islamic state system. Muhammaddin considered that the

promotion of the model of power made by HTI did not conflict with Islamic teachings and was relevant to a modern Islamic state. However, suppose it is related to the current state reality. In that case, the HTI model is difficult to adjust, especially since the power model is attributed to the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Ottoman caliphs.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach. By analyzing the potential for shifting the democratic system from Shia and HTI groups, the concept and explanation of non-military threats are made. Non-military threats are non-physical threats that can have ideological, political, economic, socio-cultural, technological and information dimensions and public safety. The ideological threat comes from the ideology of other countries that can shift or eliminate the Pancasila ideology adopted by Indonesia. Political threats can come from within the country or abroad and take the form of intimidation, provocation, or political blockade. State intervention is also included in this threat.

Meanwhile, economic threats are closely related to the influence of other countries. Economic factors are one of the tools to determine the bargaining position of each country in international relations. Countries with weak economic growth often face difficulties dealing with other countries with a stronger economic development. A strong economy is usually followed by strong in political aspect and military factor.

## DISCUSSION

### Political Doctrine in the Shia Movement and HTI

The Shia view of politics is centred on the role of the imam (leader) in regulating human life. The doctrine of Imamatus (Shia leadership) is one of the pillars of religion. The Imam in Shia is the custodian of the purity of Islamic teachings and guard against any deviation. It has both religious and political authority.

Murtadha Muthahari mentions that an imam holds three positions: head of state or

community leader, as a spiritual guardian (person who has magical abilities or karamah), and as absolute mujtahid or holder of religious power after the Prophet Muhammad. An imam must also have knowledge related to sharia, but this knowledge is not obtained through a learning process but from the direct gift of God through inspiration (ladunni).

As implemented in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the government is called wilayat al-faqih in Shia teachings. The concept of government is a government-held by the faqih (ulama). The faqih's role is to enforce Islamic laws and protect Islam, establish a government, prosper the Muslims and carry out punishments. The Shia, in general, view that politics is a very vital field for realizing God's laws. If realizing sharia law is obligatory and can only be done with political power, then gaining political power is also obligatory.

As quoted by Fuad, Oliver Roy categorizes Shia as an ideology of traditional Islamic fundamentalism, which is characterized by the strength of the role of clerical oligarchy in making interpretations of Islam. Traditional fundamentalism will be stronger if the authority of the ulama is strengthened, including in matters relating to socio-political issues. According to Roy, the Shia case in Iran is different from other traditional fundamentalist movements. Traditional fundamentalism distinguishes between clergy and secular figures such as presidents or kings. Ulama and political rulers are separate entities; therefore, there is no known theocracy in Islam, except in the case of wilayat al-faqih in Iran.

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) also has the same orientation as the Shia, namely improving the living conditions of mankind today with politics as the main route. HT considers that all the chaos in global life is caused by the democratic system, which turns out to be a pseudo-democratic system. The democratic government is led by a group of people who have an interest, not the general public, as ideally a theoretical democracy. Hizb ut-Tahrir aspires to create an Islamic society. For them, society is a collection of individuals and interactions between individuals. Therefore, there is a need for a system to regulate society. Hizb ut-Tahrir took political paths called the Islamic caliphate to create it all.

In the Islamic caliphate system of government, power is held by a caliph, as the representative of God on earth who is elected through an election mechanism by Majlis Shura, namely a group of people who have high capacity and integrity. The main source power of the caliphate is based on Islamic law, and the power is essential in the hands of the people who then pledge one caliph for all Muslims in the world. In the end, the caliph has the right to establish laws and regulations following Islamic law.

There are similarities in the absolutism of power, the form of the theocratic state, and the use of political channels to implement Islamic laws that are believed to be. In detail, the similarities and differences between the two are listed in table 1.

Table 1 *Similarities and differences between Shia political doctrine and HT*

<b>Political Doctrine</b>	<b>Syiah</b>	<b>Hizbut Tahrir</b>
The mainline of community improvement	Politic	Politic
Leadership traits	Imam an sich absolutism	Khalifah absolutism based on the Shari'a
Form of State	Theocracy	Theocracy
Form of government	<i>Wilayat al-faqih</i>	<i>Dawlah Islamiyyah</i>

Shia movement in Indonesia

The Shia movement in Indonesia, according to Abubakar, is carried out through 3 channels, namely the intellectual path, the spiritual activity path, and the ideological movement path. The intellectual path is carried out by introducing free and critical thinking, which is believed to increase intellectual mindset, spiritual movements are carried out through Shia religious activities such as the commemoration of Ashura Day, and ideological movements are carried out to strengthen people's belief in Shia approach and spreading story to public about the success story of Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini. According to the

Indonesian Ulema Council, Shia develops and spread their understanding in three stages: first, through religious-cultural movements such as establishing taklim assemblies, mudzakah-mufakarah majlis, and publication of books as well as radio and television broadcasts. Second, through educational movements such as establishing educational institutions and courses. Third, achieve political goals by establishing a Shia Islamic state in Indonesia.

The penetration of Shia intellectualism was also stated by Jalaluddin Rakhmat, the main founder and chairman of the IJABI Shura Council. He mentioned that there were three main generations of Shia development in Indonesia. First, before the 1979 Iranian revolution. Their beliefs were limited to themselves or their families and were exclusive. Intellectuals dominated the second generation, mostly students and academics interested in Shia thought as an alternative to Islamic thought at that time. The third generation studied a lot of Shia fiqh, especially from the Qom graduates in Iran. According to Rakhmat, this generation tends to conflict with other groups, and the Shia missionary movement is increasing.

The model for spreading Shiism through intellectual pathways among students is carried out by forming discussion communities such as the Al-Muntadzar Institute for Islamic Studies (LDSI), Evolution of Intellectual Spiritual Awareness (Exploration), Rausan Fikr and the Islamic Philosophy Activist Network (JAKFI). In the educational institution sector, Shia already has Islamic boarding schools and formal and informal educational institutions such as the Islamic Boarding School Foundation (YAPI) in Bangil, Al-Hujjah in Jember, Muthaharin in Bandung, and Al-Muntazar in Jakarta. According to MUI records, in the Jabodetabek area, there are 18 Shia institutions. In Central Java and Yogyakarta, there are 14 institutions. In East Java, there are 17 institutions. In West Java, there are 12 institutions, and outside Java, there are 23 institutions. That means that in 2013, there were at least 84 Shia institutions and not including internet sites, broadcasters and publishing institutions).

At the socio-cultural level, the existence of Shia is dynamic. In some cases, Shia groups can live side by side with residents. However, in several other cases, the Shia group experienced

rejection from residents, resulting in fatalities. Based on MUI records, from 2000 to 2013, there have been 6 clashes between residents and Shia groups. The first was the burning of the Al-Hadi Islamic Boarding School in Batang in 2000. This incident resulted in 3 houses being destroyed, 1 car damaged, and 1 building material warehouse burning. The second was an anti-Shia demonstration in East Java in 2006. This incident destroyed 3 houses, 1 prayer room, and 1 car belonging to the IJABI chairman. Third, the incident in Sampang in 2007, where a Shia group that was going to hold a commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday was opposed by residents.

#### The Direction of Shia Politics in Indonesia

In society, it is difficult to identify people who are Shia sects if they do not take shelter in educational institutions or religious institutions that have been identified as Shia institutions before. Shia has taqiyah teachings which at first only revolved around tawhid but then were also used in all sectors of life to protect the Shia community from discrimination and intimidation from anti-Shia groups. In Makassar, for example, the Shia community attends congregational prayers with residents and follows public prayer procedures. Prayers with Shia fiqh rules are only performed in the house or the Shia community. As a result, several Shia followers became preachers in various mosques in Makassar. In some areas of the Riau Archipelago, the Sunni community has traditionally celebrated Ashura day without knowing the historicity of the ritual.

According to the findings of Abubakar, Anwar and Nasir, the continuation of the existence and process of inclusiveness of the Shi'a community are to maintain their existence in the constellation of religious politics in Indonesia. They need to maintain internal solidarity. Penalizing the Shia community is within the framework of establishing a Shia community and a Shia Islamic state. The concept of leadership (imamah) becomes the pillar of religion. Without leadership, religion will lose its meaning and purpose, including political matters. To strengthen the position of Shia in the national political constellation, the Chairman of the IJABI Syuro Council chose the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) as the political vehicle. In the 2014-2019 period, she was elected as a member of

Commission VIII of the House of Representatives (DPR), namely the commission in charge of religious, social, disaster issues, women's empowerment and child protection.

Although the Shia community does not appear frontal in social life, nationally and formally, the Shia community has opened its stage. On July 1, 2000, the IJABI organization was founded. According to Rakhmat, establishing a formal organization is needed to gain political recognition, compared to establishing foundations, schools, publications, or Islamic boarding schools. The establishment of IJABI is also one of the international Shia networks. Rakhmat visited Iran and informed and requested support from Ayatollah Khomeini. Finally, IJABI was declared at Gedung Merdeka, Bandung and was attended by around 2,000 Shia followers from 20 provinces. Shia leaders from various countries were also present, such as Shaykh Ja'far Hadi from Iran, Ayatollah Ibrahim Kazerooni from London, and Muhammad Baqir and Rusli from Singapore. The establishment of IJABI also received approval from the government, which was under the leadership of President Abdurrahman Wahid.

In the context of the state, the Shia relationship with Indonesia is also related to the Iran-Indonesia relationship. Iran's influence and political power for Indonesia cannot be underestimated. In the trade between the two countries, 88% of which is Indonesia's imports of Iranian oil. The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also trying to explore cooperation with the Indonesian national news agency, both in print and electronically, to disseminate Iranian information in Indonesia. In other foreign relations, sending students to Iran is very large, reaching 7000 people.

#### HT Political Movement and Direction in Indonesia

The orientation and movement of the HT group in Indonesia are more explicit than that of the Shia. When HTI was still standing or after the government dissolved it in 2017, the HT group movement was still going on without significant obstacles. The disseminated issues are still the urgency of the caliphate and the movement carried out around community development and the dissemination of print and electronic media publications.

According to Hasanuddin and Manik, the strategy carried out by HT in Indonesia is divided into two periods. The first period was during the New Order regime. This period is called the Nuqtahul Ibtida phase, namely the process of recruitment, coaching, and cadre. The authoritarian and repressive nature of the New Order regime made the HT group not go public in its movement but rather person to person, community to community. They hold leadership training halaqah forums in universities and private. The themes studied in the forum revolved around political urgency in applying Islamic law, indoctrination of Hizb ut-Tahrir teachings, and organization.

Next in the second period, namely when the New Order fell and the reform took place. HT declared itself as an organization registered with the government under Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. HTI received a decree from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Kesbangpol RI. At this time, HTI was campaigning for its vision openly. They carry out intensive training for their members, campaigning for the idea of a caliphate to the community through recitations in mosques or public meeting places, distributing them through books and mass media, and demonstrations on the streets. At this stage, HTI plans to master economic thought, political thought, and the military to be in line with HT's doctrines.

Like the Shia, HT started with establishing a Muslim community first before establishing a dawlah, or imamah/wilayah al-faqih in Shia. The achievement of HT in Indonesia is not much different from that of Shia, which is only at the level of the education and moral movement. But the basic difference between the two is practical political participation. Although IJABI insists that it does not engage in politics, its members are allowed to engage in practical politics, as Jalaluddin Rakhmat is a member of the DPR. However, for HT, joining a political party and elections is prohibited. Participating in democratic politics means joining and supporting the infidel system. So the HT political movement is extra-parliamentary politics.

In general, according to Qohar, there were 4 (four) activities that HTI often carried out before being dissolved by the government. First, demonstration. According to him, this form of activity is the most prominent public sphere.

One of the biggest demonstrations was the 12,000 people long march from Monas to the Senayan Stadium, Jakarta, in 2004. They demanded the implementation of Islamic law through the reinstatement of the Jakarta Charter into the constitution. Second, holding seminars and public discussions. This activity is carried out to get support from educated circles or scholars. They hold seminars from regional to international levels. In 2000 and 2007, HTI held international conferences. The second conference, attended by around 80,000 people, is considered the largest HT conference globally.

Third, Publication through the media. HTI publishes various forms of publication such as pamphlets, bulletins, magazines, booklets, tabloids, DVDs, books, and internet sites. One of his famous bulletins, *Al-Islam*, has been published since 1994, and since 2017 has changed its name to *Kaffah*. The famous one is *al-Wa'ie*, a monthly magazine that prints around 15,000 copies per edition for the magazine category. Fourth, approach to educational figures and institutions. In Lampung, HTI approached educational, community, traditional, and religious leaders. One of them was the visit of the Lampung HTI DPD, who visited the Chancellor of the University of Lampung to explain HTI and emphasized that if Indonesia wanted to progress, the solution was to implement sharia and the caliphate.

#### The Potential for Political Succession of Shia and HTI: A Comparison

Shia and HTI are ideologies and transnational movements that have been active in Indonesia since the collapse of the New Order and the opening of democratic faucets. Both Shia and HTI appeared to the public and established their respective formal organizations. Shia founded IJABI, while Hizb ut-Tahrir founded HTI. Both creates educational institutions, publishing company, and da'wah method.

Regarding politics, both doctrinally have well-structured teachings and systems. Both also attribute their political teachings to the power of God. A Shia Imam will maintain human life by the law of God until the appearance of Imam Mahdi on the Day of Judgment. The caliph in Hizb ut-Tahrir is the same. He will rule the Islamic world that is united with God's law. To

create it all, both have the same method, namely starting with forming an Islamic society.

In practice in the field, Shia and HTI confront different parties. The Shia clashed with the public and the clergy. Meanwhile, HTI is against the government. Shia clashed in socio-cultural and religious issues, while HT collided with state politics. Because of this, the Shia were rejected culturally, while HTI was rejected constitutionally.

The results of the Ijtima Ulama on November 11, 2021, decided that the caliphate was not the only model of leadership recognized and practised in Islam. In the context of internationalism, the Shia benefit more from Iran as an exporter of ideology and a thinker. If Iran is indeed proven to provide a source of funding or political protection, of course, the Shia are in a superior position. Meanwhile, HTI is not affiliated with any state power. A comparison of responses to the Shia and HTI movements, including in the political field, is in table 2.

Table 2 *Comparison of Shia and HTI movements in Indonesia*

MOVement/Respons	Shia	HTI
Educational institutions	√	√
Publishing agency	√	√
Da'wah movement	√	√
Student recruitment	√	√
Formation of Islamic society	√	√
Political participation	√	X
Rejection from society	√	√
Rejection from the government	X	√
Foreign Aid/Assistance	√	X

## CONCLUSION

After the explanation, it is known that doctrinally, Shia and HTI have the concept of

leadership unity under the banner of their respective teachings. Their power is absolute and different from the current system of government in Indonesia. To achieve their goals, Shia and HTI started with forming an Islamic society. The path taken to form an Islamic society is through education, da'wah, and media publications. Both Shia and HTI have their respective supporters and communities from the educated as well as the general public.

In the analysis of this study, the development of Shia is less resistant than the development of the HTI group. Although both received a rejection from the community, HTI was more difficult because it received an official rejection from the government. In this case, the Shia are still more fortunate with the growing development of Shia educational institutions and the Iranization of universities. Suppose the application of taqiyah also accompanies the development of Shia. In that case, it will be even more difficult to contain it when compared to the HTI movement, which tends to be open. Moreover, if Iran also supports politically and economically the concept of non-military threats, then the Shia have more potential to influence the political and ideological constellation of Indonesia.

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