CULTURE, MEDIA & FILM | CRITICAL ESSAY

Critical Literature Study on Habaib Identity in the constellation of Islamic studies in Indonesia from the colonial period to the present

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Abstract: This article aims to criticize the literature study and map various existed researches on Habaib (plural for Habib) identity in Indonesia, as prominent religious leaders, of the Arabic descendants. Their presence has been acknowledged and recognized and they also played a significant role since the colonial period to the present. The study on Habaib is considered still lacking in the Islamic literature map, compared to other Islamic phenomena, such as the role of Kiayi and political Islamic movements in Indonesia. In fact, one of the interesting issues and phenomena in this reform era is their appearance and existence in various places and media platform. This identity phenomenon can be seen from the spread of Ta'lim gathering activities that are often performed by involving large number of masses and followers. Based on this background, this article will map the existence of Habaib identity references in the constellation of Islamic studies in Indonesia from the colonial period to the present. This article will answer these questions: What are the phenomena that become the main topic of Habaib studies conducted by various scholars? And how is the identity of literature review about them in the constellation of Islamic studies in Indonesia? How do they express their identity expression through media publication? This qualitative article examines various related references data on the literature and historiography of Habaib identity in Indonesia regarding their role in the context constellation of Islamic studies in Indonesia.

Subjects: Islam – Religion; Religion & Anthropology; Religion & Sociology; Postmodernism of Cultural Theory; Subcultures

Keywords: Critical; Habaib; identity; literature review; Islamic context in Indonesia

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This article aims to criticize the literature study and map various existed research on Habaib (plural for Habib) identity phenomena in Indonesia, as prominent religious leaders, of the Arabic descendants. Their presence has been acknowledged and they also played a significant role since the colonial period to the present. The study on Habaib is considered still lacking in the Islamic literature map, compared to other Islamic phenomena, such as the political Islamic movements in Indonesia. In fact, one of the interesting issues and phenomena in this reform era is their appearance and existence in various places and media platform. This identity phenomenon can be seen from the spread of Ta'lim gathering activities. Based on this background, this article will map the existence of Habaib identity references in the constellation of Islamic studies in Indonesia from the colonial period to the present.
1. Introduction

The Arabs in Indonesia were generally and mainly originated from Hadhramaut, which is now a province in the current Republic of Yemen. Based on the name of the region, they are known as the Hadhrami or Hadharim ethnicity. They have arrived in the archipelago, gradually since 13th century. The peak of their arrival took place at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Most of them worked as religious leaders and traders. They initially settled in many big cities in Indonesia, more specifically in coastal areas, such as cities on the North Coast of Java Island, Sumatra Coastal Cities, Sulawesi Coastal Cities, or in the Maluku Islands. In accordance with the political policy of the Dutch East Indies government, they were generally located in a specific location for settlement (wijkensteiels) or known later as Arab villages and were usually led by a captain, who was assigned and appointed by the Dutch colonial official (Hayaze’, 2021).

The Arab migrants generally formed alliances or networks based on tribes or family clans who had settled previously. These traders and religious leaders then established political and economic relations with the local communities and authorities. Some even engaged and held an important position in several regions of the archipelago. As immigrants they were recognized as citizens of Vreemde Oosterlingen or East Asian group. Almost all of them, they came without bringing their spouses/wives. Then they married local women and their children were later referred to as Arab descent/mix marriage descent (Muwallad).

The Arab community in Indonesia, they are divided into different social stratifications. This stratification still existed and maintained in the lives of Arab descent community in Indonesia in some extent. The first group generally works as scholars/religious leader. They claim to be rightful descendants of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, (dzurriyyah ar-Rasul) through his daughter, Fatimah Az Zahra who married to Ali bin Abi Talib, and through their sons, Husein and Hasan. Habib’s descendants who came to the archipelago came from the descendants of Husein bin Ali Abi Talib. They are known as the Alawiyyin family (Ba’alwi) and some are known as Habib (plural Habib). Previously they were also known as-syarif, sayyid or syarifah for their women. Rabithah Alawiyyah, the organization that records their descendant’s family trace, recorded that there are 151 sub-family that goes back to the Prophet Muhammad lineage that still exist globally in different part of the world. In Indonesia, there are 68 remaining sayyid sub-families(clans). They are scattered throughout Indonesia. The highest number of the member of the Alawiyyin clans are the al-Attas. The second one is Al Haddad. Then follows by the Assegaf, Alaydrus, and Al Habsyi (see: Rabitoh Alawiyyah site).

Meanwhile, the second group generally works in the fields of education, military, and trade. They are called the Masaikh and Qabail groups. Some of them doubted and questioned the claims of the first group. They were known as the Irshadi group or followers of Sheikh Ahmad Surkati’s teachings, the founder of Al Irsyad Al Islamiyyah association (1914; See: Berg, 1989; Kesheh, 2007; Jonge, 2019).

Communities in the archipelago have long been greatly making a cult of this Habaib figure in their respective regions. The role of the Habaib group as ulama (Islamic leader) in Indonesia is still maintained and can even be said to be greater then before. Their role is clearly seen in their activities and other rituals in Majelis Takhlim (Religious Gathering). They are capable in gathering high number of people because they were also a group of Alawiyyah Tariqa. The core teachings of Tariqa Alawiyyah involve rituals such as visiting the tombs of saints (pilgrimage), celebrating the birthday of the prophet (Mawlid), and reading Sufi prayers such as the Burdah. Some of them, especially from the Habaib group who studied Islam in Hadhramaut, still continue to maintain the role and tradition of the Majelis Takhlim from its predecessors. This identity phenomenon has become increasingly apparent lately, especially in various big cities in Indonesia. Some figures have even become famous for their capability in mobilizing huge number of masses for demonstrations in 2016–2019 in Jakarta.
Currently, within democratic context in Indonesia, the phenomenon of their presence through activities, such as the Taklim Gathering, is increasingly widespread and popular in the eyes of the Indonesian people, which is directly distributed through social media. Their roles and political affiliations also vary, both at the city, provincial, and national levels. However, unfortunately the academic writing and research on their role and identity phenomenon does not seem to be widely studied and disseminated. This raises the question of why the study of their existence and role is still very limited and how the study on their role and their identity in the context of Islam in Indonesia are mapped in the literature.

This article is developed based on temporary assumptions that the roles and traditions practiced by Habaib’s ancestors until now are still being maintained and developed by the new generation of Habaib. Unfortunately, until now the identity phenomenon, in relation to Habaib’s role in the Indonesian Muslim community in the contemporary era, has not been widely studied and explored intensely, especially in the critical study of historiography and literature study in the constellation of Islamic studies in Indonesia.

2. Methodology and data
This article uses a qualitative approach, by recording and exploring the role of the Habaib identity in the context of Islam in Indonesia through literature review and their historiography. To explore the literature studies deeper, field research is also conducted in several higher education institutions to obtain data in the form of undergraduate theses, master theses, and doctoral dissertations that examine the role and existence of Habaib in Indonesia. Furthermore, this research also collects data from related books, articles, papers, magazines, international seminar papers, and various internet sources.

All the data collected was read critically and carefully in depth, by linking the Habaib identity phenomenon in the context of Islam in Indonesia. In addition, critical reading to various writings related to Habaib’s role in Islamic historiography in Indonesia also conducted. Including the writings of Hadrami Arab scholars from foreign and domestic academics as well as from the Alawiyin or even from the Habaib themselves. This study also includes writings in the colonial period, in the post-independence period as well as in the reform era. The method was conducted to see the products of their writings from each different author’s background as well as from different historical contexts. From the classification and categorization of historiographical products, later it can be seen whether the writers support or criticize the role of Habaib identity in the constellation map of the study of Islamic scholars in Indonesia.

3. Results and discussions

3.1. Map of Islamic studies in Indonesia
Until now, modern Islamic studies in Indonesia have focused more on studies of the phenomenon regarding Islamic political issues and the context of Islamic democracy, which are, generally, always directed to religious organizations, such as Nadhlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and the Liberal Islam Network (JIL). Among such studies, there is a book written by Adian Husaini and Hidayat (2002) and Budhy Munawar Rachman (2010).

Moreover, due to the discourse of radicalism and terrorism, Islamic studies in Indonesia always tend to focus on Islamic organizations that are considered fundamentalists, radicals, and anarchists, such as FPI (Islamic Defenders Front), Hizbut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Harakah Tarbiyah, Jamaah Salafiah, Wahabiah, and the Indonesian Mujahidin Council. While the phenomenon of the Habaib and its teaching, have escaped from the observation of Indonesian Islamic scholars, both from Indonesian Islamic scholars as well as international scholars (Indonesian Studies), as will be indicated below.
Initially, books discussing Islam in Indonesia were dominated by the relationship between Islam and politics, such as in Nurcholis Madjid’s (1987) Islamic Modernism and Indonesianess or in the book Ali and Effendi (1986) Merambah Jalan Baru Islam: Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Masa Orde Baru. Previously there were also books that tried to explore Islamic and political thought in Indonesia, as written by Mahrus Irsyam (1984) Ulama dan Partai Politik. All of those books were written during New Order era, when the existence of Islam became a dilemma between being a religious social movement or becoming a political movement, as stated by Abuddin Nata, in his book Problematika Politik Islam di Indonesia (2002).

During Reformation era, many Islamic books emerged which revealed the relationship of Islam as a religious teaching and the concept of government, among which is written by M. Dawam Rahardjo (1999), Masyarakat Madani: Agama, Kelas Menengah dan Perubahan Sosial. Another book with the same theme written by Lutfi Assyaukani (2011) Ideologi Islam dan Utopia: Tiga Model Negara Demokrasi di Indonesia.

In the contemporary literature on Islamic studies during the reform era in Indonesia, there are many books that discuss phenomena and issues relating to figures, schools, organizations, movements, politics, culture, and current contextual situations, including examples of the work of Zaki Mubarak (2008) Genealogi Islam Radikan di Indonesia: Pergerakan, Pemikiran, dan Prospek Demokrasi. This book discusses number of radical schools that are considered dangerous by the authorities and in the eyes of the society.

Meanwhile, other types of books were written by two Australian scholars, Fealy and White (2012) Expressing Islamic: Religious Life and Politic in Indonesia. This book reveals several young Dai leaders (religious figures) who are popular among Indonesian Muslims, especially because they frequently appear on several private television media. These two researchers saw a symbiotic relationship between the needs of the capitalist media and the need for some parties to express the symbols of modern Islam in the public sphere, especially through television.

In reality, the phenomenon of Islamic society in Indonesia has often been used as a study object by international writers. Some of them are reflected in the writings of Gordon P Means (editor) from the book Political Islam in Southeast Asia (Mean, 2009), which discussed Islam in Indonesia in several sub-chapters. In addition, there are also similar books edited by Robert W Hefner and Patricia Horvatich who compiled writings in Islam in the Era of State-Nation: Politics and Awakening of Muslim Religion in Southeast Asia (Hefner & Horvat, 2001), in which several conflicts that have occurred during the euphoria of Islamic movement in Indonesia are discussed.

Other books that are in parallel with the thoughts of several international reviewers above, are written by Hasan and Abubakar (2011) Islam di Ruang Publik: Politik Identitas dan Masa Depan Demokrasi di Indonesia. This book reviews the relationship of Islam in the context of democracy in Indonesia and taking into consideration the relationship between Islam and the rulers of the mass media. The findings of their study reveals that the prominent presence of Islamic symbols in the public space is not a threat to democracy and the future of Indonesian pluralism. However, the prediction stated in their book became weak, after various large demonstrations emerged repeatedly against the presence of the non-Muslim governor in Jakarta. In addition to that, Islamic symbol was always used as an instrument of solidarity in the elections and presidential elections. This was proven in 2014 and 2019 Presidential Election, Islamic symbols were getting stronger, especially to be used in the battle for power, both at the city, district, provincial, and national levels.

Responding to the contemporary phenomenon of Islamic society, the reviewers of the Surakarta Muhammadiyah University Communication Department in collaboration with the Chulalongkorn University Faculty of Communication Sciences held collaboration research to observe the commodification of religion and the relationship between religion and the use of mass media in Indonesia.
and Thailand. The results of their study were then collected in a book titled *Religion, Media, and Marketing in A Complex Society: Religion, Media and Marketing in Plural Society* (Sokowati, 2015). It studies how religious da’wah activities (Islamic preaching) were made in the form of a marketing strategy with all the attributes that accompanied it. Similar book is more focused by using specific sample. It is written by Janet Steele entitled *Mediating Islam: Jurnalisme Kosmopolitan di Negara-Negara Muslim Asia Tenggara* (Steele, 2018). It discusses journalism practices and products from several Islamic-based print media in Indonesia, such as *Sabili Magazine* and *Republika Newspaper.* This study focused more on the spread of Islamic media in the public domain in the form of printed materials.

Recent book that also observes the same problem is written by Wasisto Raharjo Jati, called *Politik Kelas Mengengah Muslim Indonesia* (Jati, 2017). This book is more specific in observing the actions and lifestyles of the Muslim middle class, especially those living in urban areas.

Topic of Islamic movement studies were also discussed earlier by Rizal Sukma and Clara Joewono. Both of them are from CSIS research institutions that put attention to the phenomenon of Islamic institutional movements after New Order. His book, called *Gerakan dan Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Kontemporer* (Sukma & Joewono, 2007). A recent study of the issues and phenomena of Islam and Islamic society in Indonesia was written by Vedi R Hadiz in his book *Populism Islam in Indonesia and the Middle East* (Hadiz, 2019). This book able give a general picture of how Islamic community acts to resist and react to the wave of globalization that came in, both in the Middle East and later rapidly developing in Indonesia.

A phenomenon that has emerged recently is a new movement regarding Islamic thought of the archipelago. The debate over this discourse has not ended yet. On one hand, it was made a slogan. On the other hand, it was negatively labelled by one supporting party in the Presidential Election. This phenomenon was discussed by Aksin Wijaya in his book *Menuantarkan Islam: Menelusuri Jejak Pergumulan Islam yang tak Kunjung Usai di Nusantara* (Wijaya, 2015). Books and writings about Islam Nusantara until now often receive responses from various parties, both from those who agree and those who disagree. Those who agree generally come from NU, as the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia which is troubled by the Wahabiah and Salafiah movements which questioning the teachings of Islam that have become part of Indonesian culture, especially in Java.

Recently, the development of Islam in Indonesia has developed greatly in diversity. In the notes of Zuli Qodir (2012), there are six phenomena of Islamic variation format in Indonesia, namely fundamentalist/radical, revivalist, Islamic Sufism, progressive, neo-traditionalist, and popular Islam. Based on the various in the format above, it can be said that the pattern of ritualized movements, such as *Majelis Taklim* and others from the *Habaib* in several major cities in Indonesia, can be included in the list, as a neo-traditionalist movements and popular Islamists.

### 3.2. Map of Arab community and habaib studies in Indonesia

Now let us explore the map of studies about the Arab community and the role of the *Habaib* identity. Research on the Arab community in modern Indonesia is still very limited compared to research on Chinese society. Most studies of the Arab community are often associated with the arrival and spread of Islam, as stated by Hasjmi (1983), Thahir Al Hadad (Hadad, 2007), Aljuned (2013), and the latest from Azyumardi Azra (2013). In addition, there are some writings related to political movements during the independence and New Order periods. Besides, the existence of Arab community was also touched in the topics of locality studies, such as Islam in Aceh, Islam in Java, Islam in Palembang, Islam in Pontianak, Islam in Gorontalo, and Islam in Maluku, both in the form of books and articles in various national journals and international.

Unfortunately, those books mentioned above do not discuss, not even mentioning, the role of the *Habaib* in the life of contemporary Islamic society. It is shown from the absence of Habib or
Habaib words in their index page attachments. It is the same for the books published by the Research Center for Religious Literature of the Research & Development and Education and Training Agency of the Ministry of Religion Inventarisasi Karya Ulama di Lembaga Pendidikan Keagamaan. Studi di Beberapa Daerah Propinsi (Rahman, 2011). Even the Scientific Magazine like Prisma and Ulumul Qur’an also missed to mention the phenomenon of the Habaib issue in Indonesia.

Every study of Arab society in Indonesia will always referred to the classic writing of Van Den Berg (1930/Berg, 1989). Until now, Van Den Berg’s research has become a reference to observe the continuity of various Arabic families and clans in Indonesia. In addition to Van Den Berg, another Dutch researcher in the colonial period who conducted research on Arab community was Snouck Hurgronje. His books are generally in the form of a collection of letters, notes, and reports that have been collected and translated in Indonesian as many as 10 volumes (INIS 1920/1991). Both were scholars studying the challenges and issue-related Arab ethnic group during Dutch Colonial period. Their results of study on the lives of Arabs and Islam in the Dutch Indies tended to be negative and biased.

Studies of Arab diaspora and its influence in the spread of Islam in the Southeast Asian region and Indonesia were generally conducted Western Orientalists (Dutch), such as Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein. The two researchers once brought together several other Hadrami Arab researchers at an International Symposium in the Netherlands (Jonge & Kaptein, 2002). The results of the meeting contains 15 papers, which were then compiled as Transcending Border: Arabic, Political, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia. Nico Kaptein himself wrote a book entitled Islam, Colonialism and the Modern Age of the Netherlands East Indies: A Biography of Sayyid Uthman (Kaptein, 2010).

The existence of Arabs, who later became settlers in Indonesia and around Southeast Asia is considered a diaspora community. Topics relating to their diasporic context have often been studied by many Orientalist observers, such as Freitag and William G. (1999) Hadrami Trader, Schollar, and Statesman in Indian Ocean 1770–1960s. Other than that, there are other writings from Leif Manger (2010) The Hadrami Diaspora: Community Building on the Indian Ocean Rim or from other researcher, such as Syed Farid Syed Farid Alatas (1999) Hadramaut and the Hadrami Diaspora: Problem Theoretical History and from Ahmed Ibrahim Shouk et al. (2009) The Hadrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation. Meanwhile, Indonesian researcher who has revealed the topic of this diaspora is Jajat Burhanudin (1999) in his article “Diaspora Hadrami di Nusantara”.

Other researchers who are interested in the issues of the Hadrami community from Southeast Asia are Engseng Ho (Singapore) and Summit Mandal (Malaysia Mandal, 1994/2002). Engseng Ho wrote a book called The Graves of Taim (2006). However, the issues raised by them are, generally, about Arab society before the independence or still in the colonial period context. They have not touched Arab society in Indonesia in the present time, especially in Reformation era.

Apart from them, there are several researchers of Arab society in Indonesia, such as Linda Boxberger (2002) and Ronit Ricci (2011). However, in Linda Boxberger’s book On the Edge of Empire: Hadhramawt Emigration and the Indian Ocean, it has similarities to the study of Dutch Orientalists who studied Arab society in the colonial period. Meanwhile, Ronit Ricci only raised the issue of texts which are often used as a basis for reading recitations and Sufism teaching among Alawiyin in Sri Lanka and in Sumatra.

A researcher from Australia once wrote about the lives of Arab society in Indonesia, Natalie Mobini Kesheh (2007). But her book only examines the existence and nationalism movement of the Arab community from the Irshadi (Al Irshad organization) and The Indonesian Arab Union which became the Party. Studies of Arabs in Indonesia also attracted the attention of researchers from Japan, Yamaguchi Motoki (2006, 2016), which is the result of his dissertation.
The study of contemporary Arab society is not only limited to the topic of the diaspora, but there are also other interesting issues, such identity as written by Frode F. Jacobsen (2009). This book also explains various issues of internal complexity that occur in the lives of Arab society in general, as citizens in Indonesia. The anxiety of identity as an immigrant community in the status of an Indonesian citizen, was once revealed by Jajang Jahroni, in his article “Becoming Indigenous in the Land of People: The Struggle of the Identity of Indonesian Arab Communities” (2000).

Other books related to the participation of Arab communities in political movements in Indonesia have been discussed by A.R. Baswedan (1974), Hamid Al Gadri (1984 and 1996). Meanwhile, Indonesian writers or Arab descendants who researched the Arab community in the Dutch-Indonesian Indies are Ahmad Hussein Badjerei (1996), and which can be considered profound is the work of Husein Haikal (2019). Several writers outside of the Arab writer circles who are also interested in studying Arab society, are recorded as Abdul Rachman Patji (1986), Bisri (1999), Amin Amin Subarkah (2001), Riazi Ngosirian (2015), Qurtuby (2017), Mahzumi (2018), and Maisarah (2020). While other recent books related to the participation of the Arab community in political movements in Indonesia were written by Nabiel A. Karim Hayaze’ (2015; 2017, 2021). Another article examines the socio-cultural phenomena of Arab society on the coast of Java, which is related to the disappearance of the traditions of the Arab descendants that once existed (Alkatiri, 2014). He also wrote the foreword in Huub de Jonge’s book (2019).

On August 26-28, 2005, the Department of History and Civilization-International Islamic University Malaysia in collaboration with the Yemeni Embassy in Malaysia held a meeting labelled Yemeni-Hadramis in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation. The meeting produced 23 papers. Some of these papers mention the existence of the Habaib movement, both in Malaysia and in Indonesia (Alatas, 2005). However, it has not yet revealed the relationship and role of the Habaib in the Alawiyyin or Ba‘alwi Arab community in the current reformation era, at least only Hamdy and Faridz (2005), who mentioned a little about the FPI (Islamic Defenders Front).

Other researchers who examined the existence of the roles and traditions of the Habaibs and their identity, especially in Jakarta, Solo, and Lombok are Kazuhiro Arai (2005), Yasmin Zaki Shahab (2005), Ismail F. Alatas (Alatas, 2005; 2012), Burhan Magenda (2005), and Martin Siama (2005). The fifth articles were collected in the Indonesian Anthropology Journal. Ismail F. Alatas (2007, 2021) also wrote about the Alawiyyin group related to the role of the Habaib authority and its identity in Indonesia, especially in Java. The latest proceedings (2018) are from the Hadhrami Conference in Jakarta (2017) which discusses nearly 20 papers relating to the Hadhrami Arab community in Indonesia from the colonial period to the present, only three papers raised the issue and discussed the role and network of activities of Majelis Taklim the Habaib in Indonesia. Among the three articles, there are two interesting articles that reveals the relationship between the Hadhramaut ulama group and the Habaib in Indonesia. The article was written by Samsul Rijal (2017) and Khakim, M. L., & Efendi, D. (2017).

The latest discussion about Habaib was held on 25th–26th April 2018 at Faculty of Humanities Universitas Indonesia Depok, in the framework of the Hadhrami Festival. One of the sessions on the second day of this seminar discussed the Habaib Phenomenon. The title of the topic of the session was Internal Dynamics at the Habaib Indonesia Community, which were presented by three speakers, is Yasmine Shahab, Ben Sohib, and Haider Baqir raised the issue of history and activities of Habaib circles (Alkatiri et al., 2018). In 2019, Huub de Jonge published his article collection into a book called, Seeking Identity: Hadrami Arabs in Indonesia 1900–1950. In his book, he mostly expressed about the socio-cultural conflict between the Ba‘alwi or Alawiyyin group and the Al Irshad group. The latest book about Hadhrami in Indonesia, was written by Nabiel A. Karim Hayaze’, called Hikayat Kapiten Arab di Nusantara (2021) that uncovers the role and contribution of several Kapiten Arabs as well as several other important figures of the Arab Hadhrami communities in Indonesia in past colonial era, including few Habaib figures.
It can be said that references to books or articles regarding Habaib’s role and their identity, in particular are still few and not profound, even limited to the colonial era. In data collection, we found several books written in the 2000s, but the content still revolves around the past. A few that can be mentioned here are (based on the order of the year of publication) M. Hasyim Assagaf, writing the book *Derita Putri: Studi Historis Kafa’ah Syarifah* 2000; Azyumardi Azra written “Tarekat Alawiyah dan Noe Sufisme: Jaringan Ulama Hadrami Diaspora 2001; M Noor Sulaiman Pettalongi written *Sayyid Idrus bin Salim Al Jufri* (2003); Abdul Qadir Umar Mauladawiah once introduced several Habaib figures in his 17 *Habaib Berpengaruh di Indonesia* (2008); or Husin Nabil Assengage in a small book *Merantau ke Negeri Wali: Bertemu dengan kekaisih Allah* (2012); Alaydrus’ book titled *Jalan Nan Lurus, a glimpse of the Bani Alawi Congregation* (2013); and Muhammad Subarkah in his book, *Jalur Dakwah Diaspora Hadramaut, dalam Peran Dakwah Domai Habaib-Alawiyyin di Nusantara* (2013). All of the books mentioned above display the strengthening and confirmation of the existence and role of religious leaders from the Alawiyyin circles who have lived in Indonesia since the colonial era, including a book from the proceedings of the *Role of Da’wah Habaib in the Archipelago* (2012).

In addition, there is a new book entitled *Arab Diaspora Sayyid: The Role of Descendants of the Prophet SAW in Filling History of the Archipelago* (2018), written by Idrus Alwi Al Masyhur. This book covers the history of the journey of the Habaibs from the beginning in Hadramaut to Indonesia. In this book, there are also various names of figures of Sayyid or Habaib, who stand out in the long history of the spread of Islam in Indonesia. However, this book is too subjective to describe the role of the Habaib because it is not accompanied by valid historical documents and data. Moreover, the writer himself is a descendant of one of the Habaib group themselves, of course there is much that needs to be criticized from his writings.

There are several books about Habaib written by Habaib circles themselves. Besides the above authors, other writers from among them are (1). Sayyid Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Omar Asyathir (1986) *Sekilas Sejarah Salaf Al-Alawiyyin*; (2). Ba’bud (2003) *Jejak Habaib di Nusantara*; (3). Alaydrus (2006) *Jalan Nan Lurus: Sekilas Pandang Tarekat Bani Alawi*; (4). Mashoor (2010) *Sejarah Silsilah dan Gelar Alawiyyin Keturunan Imam Ahmad bin Isa Al Muhajir*; (4). Masyhur and Al Adni (2011) *Biografi Ulama Hadramaut*; (6). Baharan, A.H. 2013. *Mazhab Para Habaib dan Akar Tradisinya.* (7). Idrus Alwi Al Masyhur (2013) *Sejarah Silsilah dan Gelar Keturunan Nabi Muhammad SAW di Indonesia, Singapura, Timur Tengah, India, dan Afrika*. Those books mentioned above also have similar substance to the previous books which also show confirmation of the claims of the Alawiyin for their role in spreading Islam in the archipelago and Southeast Asia.

The rest are books that only relate to the teachings of the Habaib, such as from (1). Allama Sayid Abdullah Haddad (1998) in his book *Thariqah Menuju Kebahagiaan*; (2). As Sayyid Muhammad Rafiq bin Luqman Al Kaff Gathmyr (2006) in his book *Managis Sayidina Al Imam Al Qutb Al Ghouts: Al Fakhruj Wujud, Manakib para Imam Ba’alwi*; (3). Novel Muhammad Alaydrus (2000) Sekilas tentang Habib Ali bin Muhammad Al Habsyi in his book *Maulid Simthud Durar*. In addition, there are also similar books written by Al Habib Alwi bin Thahir Al Hadad (2007) entitled *Wai Karomah and Thariqah: Dalam Pandangan Mufti Johor*. Another author is Sayyid Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Umar Al-Syatri (1986) in his book Sekilas Sejarah Salaf Al-Alawiyyin, or in the book Husin Nabil (2012) *Akidah Bani Alawi*. We also collect written books from the Habaib in the form of expressions of affection for the Prophet Muhammad SAW which are part of the Alawiyah Sufi practice, such as the books above. The books are used in their various rituals.

Although few books have been published, in fact, the research on Habaib has been carried out in higher education institutions. The study was generally completed in Islamic higher education institutions, such as the State Islamic Institute (IAIN), which generally adopt the name of the Wali Songo as the name of their institution. Most of them located on Java. Some studies of Habaib’s role in the form of undergraduate theses, master theses, and doctoral dissertations can be seen in their library repository. In addition, from research through field studies and
internet searches, library repository was found in other state higher education institutions, originating from the Department of Anthropology at the Faculty of Political Sciences Universitas Indonesia (UI), Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), and Universitas Airlangga (Unair) as well as from Cultural Studies at Faculty of Humanities UI and from History Study Program Faculty of Humanities UI. Some examples, as listed below. (1). The role of Habib Abdurrahman Bin Muhammad Al Habisy at the Al Riyadh Kwitang Mosque in 1993–2009 (Thesis of UI Jakarta, M. Ramdhani Nugraha, 2010). (2). Habib Mundzir Al Musawa’s Da’wah Strategy in Formation of Akhlakul Karimah Adolescents in the Assembly of the Prophet SAW (Thesis of UI Jakarta, Halomoan, 2013). (3). Habib Riziq and Politics (Thesis, UI Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Isnul Rahmawati D Asri, 2018). (4). The Religious Role of Abdullah Bin Muhsin Al Attas in Empang Bogor 1893–1933 (Thesis of UI Yogjakarta, Fitri Nurhayati, 2016). (5). The Role of Habib Jindan in Advancing Islam in Tangerang 1998–2008 (Thesis of UI Jakarta, Diah Nur Afifi, 2017). (6). Strategi Dominasi Habib Betawi terhadap Orang Betawi Muhibin (Master Thesis at Faculty of Humanities UI, RM Joko P Mulyadi, 2016). Of the six academic writings, only Joko P. Mulyadi’s master thesis is critical of examining the relationship between the Habibs and their supporting community groups using a cultural studies approach. While others only provide a description of support for Habiba’s role in their respective study locations.

In addition, there are also individuals, communities, and related institutions that promote the Habiba roles and its contribution in Indonesia through social media in the form of their own websites or blogs, as an expression of confirming their identity, such as those conducted by the Robithoh Alawiyyah institution. The institution that records and documents various things about the Ba’awi/Alawiyyin Family or Habiba in Indonesia. In 2019, a new association is established, called Majelis Hikmah Alawiyyah (Mahya) by several young modern scholars and prominent Habib and Alawiyyin figures in Jakarta. This association focusing in spreading and promoting the Thariqah Alawiyyah in Indonesia. This institution also records and disseminates its findings through social media. In addition, this group also socializes the role of the Habiba in digital form that was disseminated through social media in the title of Indonesian Ulama Manakib. Clearly, this group intends to include and promote the role of the Habiba as part of the Indonesian Ulama. In 2021, the digital form has been changed in the form of book publishing.

Recently in September 2021, Mahya published their first initial publication called Menyusuri Jejak Cinta. This book written by one of Mahya main researcher, Ustadz Ali bin Yahya using pseudonym, Abu Muhsin (2021). This book contains biographies of several prominent Habiba in the archipelago and this first edition only cover in Jakarta and Bogor. But still this book only covers the previous first generation of Hababas from previous colonial era and written by their own internal writer, from Alawiyyin themselves. As well as a book written by Musa Kazhim Alhabisy (2022) who represent a young Habib. This book aimed at strengthening the peace-loving image of Habiba in the eyes of the general public, as well as countering the actions of several other Habiba who were considered radical because they took part in the realm of practical politics.

There is also another recent publisher who focuses in Habiba issue and history, called Telaga Cinta and published several books related to the issue. In 2021, they also published a book called Rihiyah written by Mustofa Najib (2021). Based on the researcher’s study and observation this is the only book that cover the story of modern-recent Habiba figures, including the late Habib Anis Al Habisy (Solo) and Habib Umar bin Hafidz (Hadramaut). This book, (rihiyah means journey) was also written based on the true story, through the journal notes as well as interview with the people who joined the journey to Hadramaut in September 1993. This journey considered as the turning point for the Habiba roles and movements in Indonesia, with the arrival of Habib Umar bin Hafidz to Indonesia and the sending of students from Indonesia to Hadramaut to study Islam and Thariqah Alawiyyah. Both these books also aim to strengthen Habaib’s image and identity that is more peaceful and more acceptable to non-Arab communities.
During the reference research and review in the early 2000s, it was apparent that there was a phenomenon of the appearance of several young Habaib figures. This is inseparable from the desires and responsibilities of senior Habaibs to preserve and spread, their traditions and knowledge to other communities. For that need and cause, they sent their children and relatives to study in the city of Tarim, as a city of legend and sacred place for the Habaibs. In the city, there are various tombs of scholar leaders who are considered as wali (Guardians of God) by the community. Unfortunately, the graves of the saints are not mentioned at all in the book *Ziarah and Wali in the Islamic World*, edited by Henri Chambert Loir and Claude Guillot (2007).

As well as the network of non-Arab scholars in the archipelago (Azra, 2013), the Habaib also have a network that is not only based on their family in Indonesia, but also with the Habaib network in Hadhramaut as their center of reference. One of the most popular is Habib Umar bin Hafiz. He has played a major role in reconnecting Indonesia and Hadhramaut through education and preaching movements from the 1990s to the present. In Indonesia, he has become very popular and his gathering and preaching followed by thousands of followers.

The practice of sending young Hadhrami (Indonesian Arab) has been practiced since a long time ago, as a way to teach young generation of Hadhramis, who were born in Indonesia about Islam and their tradition. But this kind of practice and its network of relations had stopped and paused for approximately 22 years (1968–1990), since South Yemen was controlled by the Socialist Marxist regime with connections to the Soviet Union. Under the socialist regime, the Alawiyin in South Yemen experienced marginalization, humiliation, and physical persecution from the state apparatus. Moreover, the traditional customs and expressions of devotion to the sayyid group were outlawed (Knysn cited Rijal, 2017). After Yemen unification (North and South 1990), the Alawiyin/Sayyid groups are once again free to express their religious views and practice their old tradition and customs. Even though they had to deal with the Salafi Wahhabi circles who were previously supported by the old government, which against their religious tradition activities which were considered heretical.

After the Yemen unification, Habib ‘Umar established a religious college called Dar al-Mustafa (the House of the Chosen One) at Tarim. This education institution has been receiving hundreds of students from various countries, but mainly from Southeast Asia and especially Indonesia. Previously, religious education in Hadhramaut was exclusive which only accepted students from the Alawiyin circles. It was only in the early 2000s that they began to open opportunities for non-Arab students to study there (see: www.daralmustafaedu.com).

One student who was able to develop his knowledge from Habib Umar was Habib Munzir. He was the main platform for spreading the sayyid style of traditional Islam under the banner of devotion to the Prophet. This kind of da’wah has been called the Prophetic da’wah (da’wah nabawi). When Habib Munzir returned to Indonesia in 1998, the first thing he did was conducting da’wah, a mission which is emphasized in the Dar al-Mustafa. He formalized his da’wah groups under the name of the Majelis Rasulullah (the Assembly of the Prophet). Habib Munzir brought new innovation in public da’wah by creatively casting his sermon group’s name as a banner for his religious entrepreneurship. Habib Munzir and his team mobilized his followers to carry out traditional rituals, such as reciting zikir, salawatan, and maulid texts, as well as visiting the sacred graves of sayyid saints in Jakarta and other places (Al-Musawa, 2014; Majelis Rasulullah & Guntur, 2013; Halomoan, 2013).

Generally, the young Habaib were alumni from two Ribath (pesantren) in Tarim, Hadhramaut, namely the Asyaythiri Pesantren, which was led by Habib Salim Asyyathiri, and the boarding school Darul Musthafa led by Habib Umar bin Hafiz bin Shaykh Abubakar bin Salim. Both educational institutions do have a good tradition of da’wah. Indonesian students who continued their studies to Hadhramaut, mostly alumni from Islamic boarding schools led by the Habaib who did have
access to Ribath Assyathiri and Darul Mustafa with their santri (students) from various cities in Indonesia

The print and electronic media plays a significant role in promoting the sayyid scholars from the Middle East. Publications on the scholars are not only promoted by graduates of Hadramaut, but also by Indonesian sayyids and traditionalist Muslims who are interested in popularizing their thoughts or marketing their works. These publications are sold in certain Islamic bookstores and by small vendors rather than in big bookstores, due to their reluctance to fulfill those retailers’ requirements.

Book publishers and magazines which promote Habaib profiles and writings have been growing in number. Most of these publishers are based in East and Central Java. The Pustaka Basma in Malang, East Java, promotes local Habaib as well as sayyid scholars from the Middle East. Previously, it was called Karisma when it was established in 2008 (Mauladdawilah cited Rijal, 2017).

Like book publishers, the number of Islamic magazines that promote Habaib is also growing. The most notable magazine of this kind is Al Kisah based in Jakarta. According to Kazuhiro Arai, the magazine has an important role in introducing Habaib and their activities to a broader Indonesian audience (Arai, 2012). Al Kisah was first published in July 2003 and has been led by Harun Musawa, a sayyid businessman who has worked in the publishing industry. In each publication, it always presents the history of Habaib figures from various regions in Indonesia. Al Kisah Magazine is indeed aimed at introducing the role of Habaib figures to the general public in Indonesia. The presence of this magazine coincided with the phenomenon of the presence of young Habaib figures who had just returned to study from the city of Tarim, Hadramaut, Yemen.

The phenomenon of Habaib’s revival was also responded by various parties in social media who saw it from a different side from the mainstream. Generally, they are not from the Nahdiyin (NU) (see: qureta.com/post/habib-sebuah-ironi-keturunan-nabi dan RS, 2017). On the other hand, many from the NU community support and strengthen the existence of Habaib’s role in Indonesia because it has similarities in several rituals with them. Moreover, they even supported the fact that several Habibs were considered to have participated in the formation of the 1926 NU Islamic organization (Pancoran Mas, 2017).

In our observation, the Alawijiyin group in which there is a Habaib sub-group, they are not a homogeneous group with its image and stereotypes. They are actually a split group, which confronts each other imperceptibly in the eyes of the public, between the senior and younger Habaib group, between the preacher and the practical political Habaib group, between the Shia and the Sunni Habaib group. Indirectly, those group’s preferences are manifested in the realm of recitation, book publishing, and their orientation in local and national politics.

For many Muslim majority circles in Indonesia, Habaib’s role does not interfere with their existence, except for a few young Habibs figures who are opposed to mainstream politics in Indonesia. Meanwhile, what many traditional Muslims in Indonesia are concerned about is the presence of non-Habaib groups who carry Salafi and Wahabi teachings, better known as transnationalists, which are considered to always contradict Islamic teachings that have been widely practiced among the community for a long time.

Although there have been several studies on the Habaib identity from critical literature, the publication of reference books and their historiography regarding the role of Habaib figures, both on a local and national scale, has not been widely circulated in the wider community. From what is available and existed, most of them were written by themselves as a form of justification for the legitimacy of their clan lineage. It is frequently found that their writing is subjective and anachronistic is not supported by valid data and tends to be mythical. Moreover, their writing is basically not aimed for academics’ reference, but is aimed for themselves or their followers. Even the
secular and liberal scholars of Alawiyin or Habaibs descent do not necessarily have the courage to deconstruct their claim of origin or of their historiography. Based on their search of various articles, they tend to justify and strengthen their arguments related to historiography about the Alawiyin group, especially the Habaib group. However, the various written material above can be the basis of further development to examine the existence of the role of the Habaibs and the relations between them and the activities of Majelis Taklim, while paying attention to the direction of their political constellation in the contemporary Islamic era in Indonesia and the constellation of Islamic studies in Indonesia.

4. Conclusion
It can be concluded that references and historiography in form of books or articles regarding the role of Habaib identity and the Shaykh or Sayyid from Hadhramaut or their descendants in Indonesia, are still very limited and scarce. All existed references and bibliographies are only superficial and insubstantial, even limited to the temporal colonial era. A temporary assumption is the reluctance of researchers to explore the patterns of their movements from the past until now. This could be due to the difficulty of access of researchers to interact and to engage deeper, especially to explore their life and their existence. Nevertheless, various writing materials above have given the basic foundation for further development to study and elaborate deeper about the existence of the Habaibs phenomenon, their role, their identity, and the relationship between them with regard to the context of Islamic diversity in Indonesia. In addition, especially in Indonesia they are considered as patrons in the life of the Islamic community. On that basis, it becomes very risky for researchers to reveal their writings that are contrary and conflicting to the mainstream perspective idea and thinking that circulated in Islamic society in Indonesia.

Their emergence can be marked as revivalists from the neo-traditionalist movement that can move freely along with the unification of the Republic of Yemen and the opportunity for freedom to show its identity in Indonesia throughout the reform period. However, as studied by Burhanudin (1999) and even now based on the historiographical data of literary criticism above, their presence does not show a significant contribution to Islamic intellectual discourse in the archipelago. Until now, the Islamic renewal movement seems to be voiced more by non-Habaib scholars than by the Habaib group itself.

Based on the studies of the authors and their historiography, it is necessary to revisit the approach to Arab studies in the contemporary context in Indonesia, especially since there are not many studies on the Habaib community. In fact, in recent years, their role as ulama in Indonesia can be said to have strengthened and intensified. This can be seen in the activities of the Majelis Taklim and other rituals which are increasingly growing and popular in the eyes of the Indonesian people. Some of them, especially those from the Habaib group who had studied Islam in the Hadhramaut region, still continue to maintain the role and tradition of the Majelis Taklim from their previous predecessors. This phenomenon has recently become increasingly apparent, especially in various big cities in Indonesia with different political affiliations, both at the city, provincial, and national levels.

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