



INDONESIAN ISLAMIC CENTRE LONDON: Dari Masjid hingga Pernikahan, 1996-2017

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ABSTRACT

The efforts of Indonesian Muslims to exist among other Muslim ethnics in London from 1960s up today have not given impacts yet. Their existence has not played an important role in spreading Indonesian Islam and not lead to establish a big mosque there. Therefore, this article discusses about how was their history prior to its Indonesian Islamic Centre (IIC)?; and how far did the IIC make efforts to develop Indonesian Muslims in London? Therefore, this article aims to explore its contributions for Indonesian Muslims there, leading to contribute to the Embassy of Republic of Indonesia in the Great Britain and local ruling government there in social-cultural field. Dealing with this, historical method: heuristic, verification, interpretation, and historiography and social history approach on the great efforts of ordinary people are used. In conclusion, the efforts for an Indonesian mosque need more time in spite of having a house serving as a charity foundation and holding bold solidarity and unity for them regularly. This is inseparable from its mission as a uniting spot. Subsequently, ICC's board members have been able to provide legal marriage service under Indonesian and British laws. All the results show that they should make more significant efforts.

ABSTRAK

Keberadaan Indonesian Islamic Centre (IIC) bagi komunitas muslim Indonesia di London hingga kini belum berdampak besar dalam mensyiarkan model Islam Indonesia di tengah-tengah etnis muslim lainnya. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini mendiskusikan tentang bagaimana sejarah muslim Indonesia sebelum adanya IIC?; dan sejauhmana kiprah IIC untuk mengembangkan eksistensi muslim Indonesia di London? Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi kontribusi organisasi tersebut dalam memenuhi kebutuhan keagamaan dan sosial umat Islam Indonesia sehingga diharapkan dapat memberikan sumbangsih pemikiran terutama kepada Kedutaan Besar Republik Indonesia (KBRI) di Inggris dan pemerintah lokal. Dalam mengkaji subyek-subyek tersebut digunakan metode sejarah yaitu metode yang menggunakan tahapan-tahapan: heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi hingga historiografi dan pendekatan sejarah sosial – pendekatan yang memfokuskan pada usaha-usaha rakyat dalam perjuangannya. Setelah melakukan analisa historis, ada beberapa kesimpulan: *pertama*, perjuangan untuk menghadirkan masjid yang memadai untuk umat Islam Indonesia di London masih memerlukan waktu panjang walau organisasi itu sudah membeli sebuah rumah yang dijadikan yayasan amal. *Kedua*, IIC sudah bersaha mawadahi berbagai kegiatan keagamaan dan sosial-budaya anggotanya komunitas muslim Indonesia di Inggris secara regular. *Ketiga*, penyelenggaraan pernikahan juga menjadi perhatian serius IIC dengan mempertimbangkan hukum-hukum pernikahan yang berlaku di Indonesia dan di Inggris. Semua hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa mereka masih perlu melakukan hal-hal yang lebih berdampak.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 25 January 2022

Accepted 17 June 2022

KEYWORDS

Indonesian Islamic Centre;
London; Imigran Muslim;
Minoritas Muslim.



Introduction

The case of population movement across countries and continents is called international migration.¹ Everett. S. Lee argues that international migration is a population movement activity that includes the aspects of settlement change, migration goals, and an urge to stay or not in certain area.² This kind of migration was experienced by Muslims in Europe. Esposito classifies Muslim migrants in Europe into three categories: first, residents from former colonies; and second, Muslim migrants who were mostly unskilled workers and brought their families with them from countries around the Mediterranean Sea, from the Indo-Pakistani Subcontinent, and from other Muslim countries such as the Near and Far East. In Britain and France, this migration process began before the World War II and in the other European countries it happened in the late 1960s and 1970s. Meanwhile, the third category is Muslim migrants consisting of political refugees from various Muslim countries. They were migrants who went to college, had secular views and did not provide specifically religious leadership to Muslim communities.³

Based on the categories above, it is not easy to include Indonesian Muslim immigrants in the existing classification. They were spread throughout Britain (UK), either as Indonesian citizens or world's nations citizens who have Indonesian blood⁴ consisting of professionals, laborers, nurses, ship crews, engineers, architects, teachers, students, politicians and activists, artists, entrepreneurs, innovators, athletes, religious leaders, youth, and housewives – which do not have a colonial history like Bangladesh and Pakistan.⁵ This data shows that they also cannot be included into a group of unskilled workers and political asylum seekers. Seemingly,

¹ Migration is generally defined as the movement of people from one place (country or so) to another place (country or so on) to settle. Migration was also carried out during the time of the Prophet Muhammad when he migrated to Medina in 622 AD. "Arti Kata Migrasi," *KBBI Kamus Bahasa Indonesia*, retrieved on Agustus 14, 2021, <https://www.kamuskbbi.id/kbbi/artikata.php?mod=view&Migrasi&id=27667-arti-maksud-definisi-pengertian-Migrasi.html>; John L. Esposito, ed., *Ensiklopedi Oxford Dunia Islam Modern*, trans. Eva Y. N, vol. 2 (Bandung: Mizan, 2002), p. 348.

² Elisabeth Dewi, "Migrasi Internasional Dan Politik Luar Negeri Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional* 9, no. 1 (2013). Everett. S. Lee, "A Theory of Migration," in *Theories of Migration*, ed. Robin Cohen (Cheltenham, UK; Brookfield, Vt., US: E. Elgar, 1996), p. 14–24.

³ Esposito, *Ensiklopedi Oxford Dunia Islam Modern*, p. 398–399.

⁴ This declaration is the result of the worldwide Congress of Indonesian Diaspora held in Los Angeles Convention Center on July 8, 2012. This congress was initiated by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in America with the aim of connecting Indonesian citizens or Indonesian descendants aboard. Retrieved from Vina Mubtadi, "Kongres Diaspora Indonesia Sepakati Pembentukan Jaringan Global Diaspora Indonesia," <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/kongres-diaspora-indonesia-sepakati-pembentukan-jaringan-diaspora-indonesia/1381737.html>, on July 24, 2021.

⁵ "Deklarasi Diaspora Indonesia: Kami Diaspora Indonesia.," <http://www.diasporaindonesia.org/>, retrieved on July 24 2021.



Bean and Brown's 'World system theory' can complete the Esposito's theory of migration. They assert that people migrate not solely because of economic factors but there are other factors such as jobs and commodities [politics].⁶

The arrival of Indonesian immigrants to the UK happened in two period of times: before and after the 1990s. Prior to the nineties, they came based on different motivations and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the first phase, a small number of Indonesian immigrants came to the UK to work for British companies, either in Indonesian company branch or in Indonesian Embassy in London as local staff. There were also those who followed their British husband, who previously worked in Jakarta.⁷ The next phase of immigration in the 1990s was encouraged by several things. Some of them were Indonesian students extending their stay; some were educated professionals; and some were legal and illegal immigrant workers. Besides, there was another group, namely Indonesian women who were not only women with white husbands but also men from other ethnic minority groups with British passports such as Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Caribbean, or Middle Easterners.⁸ It should be noted that about forty percent of all Muslims in the UK lived in the Great Britain area.⁹

The facts above show that many Muslims from various Islamic countries migrated to London, England as well as Indonesian Muslims. The community centre for Indonesian Muslims in London is not only IIC, but there are also many others such as Al-Ikhlas Study Group; Indonesian Family in the United Kingdom (*Keluarga Indonesia di Britania Raya /KIBAR*) for religious events of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (*Kedutaan Besar Republik Indonesia/KBRI*); Nahdlatul Ulama Special Branch (*Pengurus Cabang Istimewa Nahdlatul Ulama/PCINU*); and Muhammadiyah Special Branch (*Pengurus Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah/PCIM*). The emergence of the groups was encouraged by the urge to gather with fellow Indonesians.¹⁰ However, IIC is the object of this research because it is considered as a forum that can unite Indonesian Muslims and the initiator of not only internal-oriented

⁶ Caroline B. Brettel dan James F. Hollifield (Eds.), *Migration Theory*, ed. 3 (New York dan Oxon: Routledge, 2015), p 72.

⁷ Amika Wardana, "Encountering Muslim 'Others': Indonesians in the Muslim Diaspora of London," *KOMUNITAS: International Journal of Indonesian Society and Culture* 6, no. 2 (2015): 201.

⁸Ibid.

⁹ M. Ali Kettani, *Minoritas Muslim di Dunia Dewasa Ini*, trans. Zarkowi Soejoeti (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2005), p. 60.

¹⁰ Arifuddin Ismail, "Pendidikan Keagamaan Dan Komunitas Muslim Indonesia Di Inggris: Religious Education an Indonesian Muslim Community in the United Kingdom," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan* 14, no. 1 (2016): 71.



programs but external-oriented programs as well, such as establishing Indonesian Mosque and facilitating Islamic weddings.

This research highlights the existence of IIC in London. Therefore, the author tries to focus on answering the following questions: how is the history of Indonesian Muslims before the IIC?; and how far is IIC's role in developing the existence of Indonesian Muslims in London? The focus of the discussion started from 1996 to 2017. The 1996 was the beginning struggle of Indonesian Muslims in establishing the forerunners of Islamic organizations before the IIC, while 2017 was considered the end because the IIC was published more global to activate fundraising to build mosques in London for various Muslim communities around the world.

The discussion of the research is to fill the research gap on Muslim communities in London, England, which is carried out more seriously. There are some previous researches done, for example, Wardana's article entitled "Institutionalizing diasporic Islam: Multiculturalism, Secularism, and the Integration of Muslim Immigrants in Britain", published in the *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* (2013). Wardana sociologically asserted that the integration process experienced by Muslims in England has been through a very complex process. The Muslims in Britain had to face multiculturalism and secularism challenges of British society. On the other hand, they struggled independently through the Islamic institutions by developing ethnic-religious traditions in immigrant lands. Several institutions formed by Muslim immigrants in the UK have been mentioned, including the *Al Mahsoom* organization in Manchester, an independent organization focusing on charity, and *An-Nisa* community in London, an organization fighting for gender discrimination. Above all, this paper discussed the position of Muslims in the UK in general who were trying to build their ethno-religious institutions in countries with different backgrounds. The Indonesian Muslim communities in her article have been mentioned, however, it did not mention the IIC community which also plays a big role for Muslim community in England. Another research is done by Wardana entitled "Encountering Muslim 'Others': Indonesian in the Muslim Diaspora of London" which was published in the *Community Journal: Research and Learning in Sociology and Anthropology* (2014). Wardana analysed the existence of Indonesian Muslims in London which was polarized into three groups, namely: traditionalist, revivalist, and secularist groups. In general, the paper anthropologically discusses the Indonesian Muslims identity in the midst of the pluralistic conditions in London. However, research about Indonesian Muslim



organizations, especially IIC, have not been widely discussed. The last is a study by Ismail entitled "Religious Education and Indonesian Muslim Community in the United Kingdom" published in the *Journal Education* (2016). The study found that the establishment of Islamic community in London is mainly due to the absence of Islamic education needs fulfilments in schools. Historically, the previous study also briefly described the activities held by each Indonesian Muslim community in London. However, the explanation is relatively concise, including about IIC.

The present study used a qualitative approach. In collecting the data, library sources and interviews was applied using historical methods. The research was carried out in four stages; data collection (heuristics), source testing (verification), data analysis (interpretation), and historical analysis (historiography).¹¹ In addition, the social history approach – an approach focusing on the efforts of the people (not the government) to fight for their ideals was used as the basis for the research analysis.¹²

Results and Discussion

Muslim Immigrants in London; Overview of Muslim Immigrants from Other Countries

Muslim immigration to Great Britain happened gradually. The first stage was from 1945 to the 1970s. After the World War II, there was a massive migration of various Muslim immigrants, one of those had served in the British military and were demobilized by the British which caused some Muslim soldiers did not return to their home countries.¹³ The flow of immigrants increased in 1948 since the policy regarding the construction of the Commonwealth and the legislation of the British government facilitated immigrants after the World War II.¹⁴ The 1962 Commonwealth Act which was later changed to the Commonwealth Act in 1968 was passed to restrict non-white people.¹⁵ Also, education became the main encouragement for Muslim

¹¹ Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar ilmu sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2013), p. 67.

¹² E. J. Hobsbawm, "From Social History to the History of Society," *Daedalus* 100, no. 1, (1971): 20–45.

¹³ Demobilization is the release from military duty for soldiers (deployed during war) after the war is over. The opposite of demobilization is mobilization. Retrieved from "Arti Kata Demobilisasi," *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Online*, <https://kbbi.web.id/demobilisasi>, on August 19, 2021.

¹⁴ Karsten Struss, "Euro-Islam or Islam in Europe: The Role of Muslims and Their Organizations in Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands", Master Thesis (California: Naval Post Graduate School, 2011), p. 62.

¹⁵ The purpose of the regulation is to control the immigration of Asians, East Africans who are under pressure from Africanization policies, especially Kenya and Uganda. They become cheap labor and there are also traders such as Gujarat traders from India. Some are also Muslim immigrants who come to study. Retrieved from



students to study in the United Kingdom (UK).¹⁶ After the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1971 was validated, Muslims had to be on the basis of work permit before entering the UK. So, in the late 1960s and 1970s, immigrants from South Asia became the largest immigrant group. Henceforth, many temporary residences were replaced into permanent settlements.¹⁷

The second stage happened in the 1970s. Immigrants in this time came from the middle class and professionals who came from Turkey and the Middle East. As a result of the rapid growth in London which eventually attracted the upper class and professionals from the Middle East, it also brought asylum seekers from Algeria, Bosnia, Somalia and Kurdistan to Britain during the last two decades of the 20th century. Along with the increasing number of immigrants, discrimination became a new challenge for the UK government to face. Finally, they enacted the Law on Race Relations (anti-discrimination) in 1976 – a law establishing the multiculturalism basis in Britain.¹⁸

The 2001 census showed that the number of Muslims in the UK reached 1.6 million. It affirmed that the majority of the Muslim population in the UK came from the Indian subcontinent, which is 68% from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan and the rest came from the ethnic dominance of North Africa and the Middle East. About 8% of British Muslims also fell into the category of “white people” who came from Turkish Cyprus, Bosnia, Kosovo and other groups from the former Yugoslavia.¹⁹ The majority of them – around 76% lived in the suburbs of London, West Midlands, North West and Yorkshire.²⁰

London is the most diverse city in terms of religious affiliation – more than a fifth of the population adheres to religions other than Christianity. London had the highest proportion of Muslims at 12.4%, followed by West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber with under 7% for each.²¹ They were not considered minorities unless they were aware of solidarity among them as a result of efforts to maintain the existence of the diversity through organizations or

Jørgen S. Nielsen and Jonas Otterbeck, *Muslims in Western Europe*, 4th ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 40.

¹⁶ Struss, “Euro-Islam or Islam in Europe,” p. 60.

¹⁷ Ibid., 62.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Laurence Hopkins and Rokhsana Fiaz, *Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities - Summary Report* (London: Communities and Local Government, 2009), p. 9.

²⁰ Sundas Ali, ed., *British Muslims in Numbers: A Demographic, Socio-Economic and Health Profile of Muslims in Britain Drawing on the 2011 Census* (London: MCB, the Muslim Council of Britain, 2015), p. 16.

²¹ Office for National Statistics, “Religion in England and Wales 2011,” *Office for National Statistics*, last modified 2012, Retrieved on August 19, 2021, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religioninenglandandwales2011/2012-12-11>.



communities.²² The Muslim minority was divided into three parts. First, those who used to be the majority were then dwarfed in numbers because the non-Muslim made the Muslim group being expelled in large scale such as Palestine, Thailand, and the Soviet Union. Second, those who were already in the majority but the country was unable to maintain a Muslim-led government and the efforts to spread Islam were ineffective, such as India and Balkans. Finally, those who were the majority of non-Muslims living in non-Muslim environments and slowly converted to Islam like Sri Lanka in which the population was a combination of Muslim migrants from South Arabia and converted Muslims from the country.²³ The existence of this Muslim community tended to group according to their ethnicity, like Muslims in Indonesian who grouped themselves in an organization or community.

London is the most populous city in England with a population exceeding Scotland and Wales.²⁴ During the World War II, the population in London increased by three million inhabitants. A few years after the war in the mid-1980s, the population decreased up to two million inhabitants. The population decline was due to common factors that occur in big cities such as some residents who moved out of the town to get a better life, and companies moved because they would find a large area of land to develop their company. Thus, it caused a small number of local residents lived in the same city.²⁵ The drastic decline happened in Borough where it lost more than one third of the population in the post-war decades. London's population began to grow again slowly in the 1990s, while in 2000 the population reached seven million. It made London's population equal to the population of New York.²⁶

In the 21st century, the population in London began to increase again. In 2011, the population increased by 1.7 million people. This increase continued to accelerate in 2015 and 2016. A survey from the Great London Authority, a survey agency based in London, noted that in 2015 the population reached 8.63 million.²⁷ While in 2016, according to records from the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom, the population in London reached 8.77

²² Kettani, *Minoritas Muslim di Dunia Dewasa Ini*, p. 8.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

²⁴ Sadiq Khan, *London and the UK: A Declaration of Interdependence* (London: Greater London Authority, 2019), p. 13.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Greater London Authority (GLA), "Population Change 1939-2015," *London Datastore*, <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/population-change-1939-2015>, diakses 20 Juli 2021.



million inhabitants. The population growth was considered significant compared to other cities in the UK.²⁸ This data shows the rapid mobility in London.

Indonesian Muslim Immigrants: History and Existence of the Indonesian Islamic Center (IIC) London

Pre IIC

Indonesian immigrants also play an important role in increasing the number of Muslims in the UK, especially London. The initial number of their arrival was approximately ten thousand people with London as the destination. Indonesian immigrants showed different migration routes and patterns compared to other immigrants who were dominated by migrant workers from Commonwealth countries, refugees, exiles, asylum seekers, educated professionals, and Arab investors from the 1960s-1970s.²⁹ Even now, the composition of Indonesian immigrants in London globally is still as mentioned above. They have backgrounds as experts or professionals, students, and those who have interbred with local residents and with other ethnic minorities, said Eko Kurniawan, an expert in British Telecommunication in London.³⁰

For Indonesian Muslim migrants in London, their existence could be seen from the association they formed independently which became a forum for gathering (*silaturahmi*). In addition, they joined several associations or organizations representing mainstream mass organizations in Indonesia such the Nahdlatul Ulama Special Branch (PCINU) and the Muhammadiyah Special Branch (PCIM). Those who lived in London established a group such as Islamic lecturing (*pengajian*) of the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI), Indonesian Islamic Families in the United Kingdom (KIBAR), Al-Ikhlas Study, An-Nuur Study, and IIC.³¹

The existence of these Muslim religious groups had different goals with the same substance, that was to become a forum for *silaturahmi*. For instance, *Pengajian* of The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI), established in the 1960s, organized regular iftar activities during the Ramadan. *Pengajian* held by the Indonesian Embassy was also called the first *pengajian*

²⁸ Office for National Statistics, "Subnational Population Projections for England," *Office for National Statistics*, Retrieved on May 24, 2018, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/subnationalpopulationprojectionsforengland/2016based>, Retrieved on August 19, 2021..

²⁹ Wardana, "Encountering Muslim 'Others,'" p. 5.

³⁰ Eko Kurniawan, interviewed on telegram, January 18, 2021.

³¹ Ismail, "Religious Education an Indonesian Muslim Community in the United Kingdom," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan* 14, no. 1 (2016): 71.



attended by Indonesian citizens in the UK. In addition, *pengajian* of the Islamic Family Study of Indonesia in the United Kingdom (KIBAR) established in 1988 and led by undergraduate students who were sent by the Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology (*Badan Pengkajian dan Penerapan Teknologi/BPPT*) to study at Huddersfield University, England. The purpose of KIBAR was to serve as a forum for communication and coordination of Indonesian Muslim *pengajian* in the UK.³² Furthermore, *pengajian* Al-Ikhlas was a forum for Indonesian Muslims living around London. The activity was held every week located in the Indonesian Embassy in London and in the Al-Ikhlas Mosque at 30 Sutherland Groe, Southfields, London SW18 5PU.³³

IIC is a foundation that has received legality from the local government. The foundation is located in North London – where the majority of Indonesians lived. The foundation is now focusing on providing a forum to build mosques to organize various activities carried out by several Indonesian *pengajian* groups in London.³⁴ However, for Indonesian Muslims living far from it, it might be an obstacle. For example, Saranyowati, an Indonesian citizen who lived in London following her husband, a British citizen, joined other Muslim ethnic groups such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and India to pray together (*jama'ah*).³⁵

In the UK, every mosque is registered as a charitable institution. This is because the mosque building is not only used as a place of worship but is also used for other activities such as providing educational services for children and youth, legal advice services, accommodation or rental services, welfare and health services, holding activities for adults, and priest training. In addition, the mosque is also actively involved in raising funds for poverty alleviation programs and interfaith activities. Mosques that can register with UK charities are mosques that already have an income of more than £5000 per year. If the mosque is successfully registered, it will receive the support of a charity commission as a regulator. It will also get tax and reputation benefits.³⁶

³² “Tentang Kibar,” *KIBAR UK*, n.d., <https://kibar-uk.org/tentang-kibar/>, Retrieved on August 19, 2021.

³³ “Undangan Pengajian Masyarakat Indonesia Di London & Sekitarnya 28 November 2015,” *Pengajian Al-Ikhlas London*, <https://pengajianalikhlas.wordpress.com/>, Retrieved on August 19, 2021.

³⁴ Eko Kurniawan, wawancara melalui Telegram, 18 Januari 2021.

³⁵ Sulistyowati, istri seorang warga negara Inggris, interviewed on Telegram, January 17, 2021.

³⁶ Charity Commission, “Parliamentary Briefing: Survey of Mosques in England and Wales,” https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315594/p_brief_mosques.pdf, Retrieved on August 19, 2021.



The attempt of the Muslim community in Britain to establish organizations have been organized on a local scale. Usually, each local organization has its own mosque (or musala) for all Muslims in one city or part of that city. Most of these mosques are temporary mosques, but some are central to large communities, such as Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking, the Nour Al-Islam Mosque in Cardiff, and mosques in Coventry, Liverpool, Preston, Birmingham, Manchester, and Nottingham. Many churches have been abandoned and bought by Muslim groups and changed into mosques such as in Manchester, Bristol and Sheffield.³⁷ Similarly, the IIC London Foundation stays at a house in the area of 22 Wakemas Hill Avenue. They utilize the house into a prayer room and activities involving Indonesian citizens in it. Therefore, the existence of IIC is important because of the representation of Indonesian people living in London.

Indonesian Islamic Centre (IIC)

The absence of labour or refugee migration from Indonesia to Britain and the absence of long colonialism, even though the British had ruled Indonesia for several years in the 19th century, makes Indonesian immigrants came for different reasons than Pakistanis, Bangladeshis or Somalis. The arrival of Indonesians, like Arabs, was to do business or capital investment.³⁸ In 1970, the large income Indonesia received from oil boom and the opened investment policy of the early pro-Western Suharto regime enabled several Indonesian companies to open international branches in London and many British companies to start investing and opening offices in Jakarta. This resulted in the first generation of Indonesian Muslims in London consisting of professionals working for either Indonesian or British companies, and embassy officials and their families. In addition, some of them were Indonesian women who were married to white British men. They mostly met in Jakarta and were taken to London after marriage. The next arrival of Indonesian Muslims occurred in the 1990s and 2000s. They were professional students and low-skilled migrant workers, especially female domestic workers who previously worked in the Middle East.³⁹

³⁷ Kettani, *Minoritas Muslim di Dunia Dewasa Ini*, p. 61.

³⁸ Amika Wardana, "Being Parts of the Umma: Indonesians in the Multicultural Muslim Communities London", (Presented at the UCSIA Summer Seminar: Religion in the Globalised World, University of Antwerp, Belgia, 2010).

³⁹ Ibid.



London as a multicultural city due to the differences in ethnicity, culture, and religion of the inhabitants, makes Muslims become part of the Muslim diaspora in the city. The existence of this Muslim has different characteristics. Bauman asserted a fact that every mosque in England represents various ethnic-cultural, linguistic and national traditions and schools of thought in interpreting religion makes Muslim migrants aware of the internal differences within the diaspora.⁴⁰ However, according to Amika Wardhana, for the Indonesian people, Islamic diversity in the diaspora encourages them to participate in forming and introducing their own Islamic style. This awareness of the internal diversity of the diaspora community has given them a space to see and feel a distinct Muslim identity compared to other Middle Eastern and South Asian Muslim identities.⁴¹

Britain was known as a friendly country to Islam compared to other Western European countries.⁴² As a minority group, Muslims needed a location that could mobilize their meeting which was then termed an Islamic Center – a place to accommodate prayer activities, religious lecturing activities.⁴³ In the UK, the Islamic Center was established according to the ethnicity of each nation, Middle East, South Asia or North Africa. This is due to the differences in culture and sects (*mazhab*) adopted by each ethnic group.⁴⁴

Like other ethnic Muslims living in London, in 2004 Indonesian Muslims established the Indonesian Islamic Center (IIC). IIC is an Indonesian Muslim charity foundation in London

⁴⁰ Gerd Baumann, *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 73-75.

⁴¹ Wardana, "Being Parts of the Umma: Indonesians in the Multicultural Muslim Communities London", p. 20.

⁴² British acceptance on Islam was motivated by several factors. According to Mohammad Natsir, the historical factors include: First, British orientalists were already acquainted with Islam and its culture compared to orientalists from other European countries. Second, some Islamic centers and Islamic organizations spread across Western Europe were based in London under the coordination of the Islamic Council of Europe. Third, Robert Ketton and William Bedwell were English scholars who translated the Qur'an into Latin in the 12th century. Fourth, Adelard of Bath was also an English scholar who introduced the works of Aristotle and the Arabic language. Fifth, EW Lane EW Lane was a compiler of the first Arabic-English dictionary. See Mohammad Natsir, *World of Islam Festival in Historical Perspective* (Jakarta: Media Da'wah, 1976); Faisal Ismail, "The Development of Islam in England," *Republika*, September 15, 2017. In addition, Britain's acceptance on Islam can be seen from the election of Sadiq Khan as the first Muslim mayor of London. He was a descendant of Pakistani immigrants who was born in London in 1970. In 2016, he managed to get the most votes in the London mayoral election belonging to the Labor Party. With the election of Sadiq Khan as mayor showed that the UK gave the right to have access to the political government. See "Sadiq Khan, wali kota Muslim pertama London," *BBC News Indonesia*, Retrieved on August 20, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/majalah/2016/05/160506_majalah_sadiq_khan_london.

⁴³ Wardana, "Being Parts of the Umma: Indonesians in the Multicultural Muslim Communities London," p. 22.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*



to run and serve socio-cultural activities for the Indonesian Muslim community.⁴⁵ Starting before 1996, the Indonesian Muslim community held *pengajian* carried out in private homes and moved every month. Indonesian Muslim communities such as those who were members of the United Kingdom Indonesian Student Association (*Perkumpulan Pelajar Indonesia United Kingdom/PPI UK*) thought that there was an urgent need requiring this small *pengajian* group to organize activities having the same vision and mission and that could be accepted by all communities. From a small *pengajian* group which was carried out in various places and then initiated the formation of the IIC which would become the centre of all religious activities for the Indonesian people, either permanently or temporarily living in London.⁴⁶

With the above objectives, the IIC London mission, according to Memet Purnama Hasan, chairman of the IIC, has three missions. IIC struggled to provide guidance to Muslims, especially to the Indonesian Muslim community in London - this is in accordance with the duty of a Muslim who must convey religious teachings even if it was only one verse. Second, the Foundation sought to introduce the Indonesian Islamic model to British society - this can be done by attending invitations to mosque associations in the UK to be a speaker. Finally, politically, if Indonesian Muslims have mosques in England like Malaysia and Bangladesh, Muslims there could speak up through IIC London - the manager of IIC Indonesians, expected that the IIC members (*jama'ah*) coming was not only from Indonesian Muslims.⁴⁷

Although it was only officially established in 2004, the IIC (formerly the Indonesian Islamic Society, IIS) has joined a *pengajian* group organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia - the first *pengajian* group attended by Indonesian Muslims in London. While, other members followed other *pengajian* groups that moved from one house to another.⁴⁸ This condition led the monthly-London *pengajian* group, religious activists and religious observers to form a foundation called the Indonesian Islamic Society (IIS) on January 5, 1996.⁴⁹ The struggles of IIC that have been and are being pursued to accomplish its missions are as followed;

⁴⁵ Erizal Erik Lugman, "Sejarah Singkat Tentang Indonesia Islamic Centre (IIC)," *Indonesian Islamic Centre (IIC) London*, 30 Oktober 2020, <https://iic-london.com/sejarah-singkat-tentang-indonesia-islamic-centre-iic/> Retrieved on August 20, 2021.

⁴⁶ Memet Purnama Hasan, interviewed on WhatsApp call, Oktober 18, 2020.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ismail, "Religious Education an Indonesian Muslim Community in the United Kingdom," p. 71.

⁴⁹ Lugman, "Sejarah Singkat Tentang Indonesia Islamic Centre (IIC)," <https://iic-london.com/sejarah-singkat-tentang-indonesia-islamic-centre-iic/> retrieved on August 20, 2021



a. Fundriser: Building an Indonesian Mosque (1996)

A plan to build Indonesian Mosque got a support from the Indonesian Embassy in London and also the Indonesian-Owned Enterprises in London. Starting in 1996, the committee from IIS (the forerunner of IIC) focused on raising funds build mosques in order to maximize their services.⁵⁰ Therefore, fundraising was needed in a non-profit or social institution. According to Said, Abidin and Faiza, authors of "Crowdfunding Sebagai Pemaknaan Energi Gotong Royong Terbarukan", there are three patterns of classifying funds that can be carried out by social institutions:⁵¹

The strategies to raise public funds from individuals, companies and the government used direct mail, membership, special events, endorsements, and so on; community social fundraising through new sources of funds. The strategy used is the development of business units that generate income for institutions (earned income), corporate funds, religious funds, traditional funds, charity boxes, social gathering, media campaigns, and so on; and community social fundraising through non-financial sources.⁵² The strategy used is in kind donations, volunteerism, designated donations, and so on.⁵³

The fundraising with the first and third patterns from 1996 to 2003 received a significant response from donors. IIS received donations from Pertamina Pusat-Indonesia, Persero Pelabuhan II Indonesia (PT Pelindo II), the Ministry of Religion, Pertamina London Branch, PT Pemindo Oil Trading, and the Indonesian Ambassador J.E. Habibie. IIS also received assistance in the form of a house from Abu Hasan, one of *pengajian* members, which was handed over through Abu Hanifah to the IIS Foundation. Another fund also came from charities, routine alms from the Indonesian Embassy staff and all *pengajian* members.⁵⁴

The result of the fund-rising on 6 April 2004 was used to purchase a property at 22 Wakemas Hill Avenue NW9 0TY for £285,000.00.⁵⁵ The property located in the North-West area of London, was a house utilized as a mosque. The selection of this location considered the available funds. Moreover, North-West London was the area where most Indonesian Muslim lived. The area was also close to Muslim families from Pakistan and

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Maulana Irfan, "Crowdfunding Sebagai Pemaknaan Energi Gotong Royong Terbarukan," *Share: Social Work Journal* 6, no. 1 (2016): 36-37.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Lugman, "Sejarah Singkat Tentang Indonesia Islamic Centre (IIC)," <https://iic-london.com/sejarah-singkat-tentang-indonesia-islamic-centre-iic/> retrieved on August 20, 2021.

⁵⁵ Ibid.



expected to accept various activities held because they were in the same religious background. The fund-raising results was put in the current account at Bank BNI London.⁵⁶

Regarding the history that Muslims in London established an Islamic Centre instead of an Islamic Society, the IIS foundation was changed to an IIC foundation on January 4, 2004. In the UK, every mosque that stands as a charitable foundation such as the IIC, must be registered in the local government agency to get legality.⁵⁷ Thus, on 1st of September 2004, IIC foundation was officially registered in the British Charity Commission and Wales, with registration number 1105685.⁵⁸ Then, on 14th of January 2006, the property purchased by the IIS foundation was officially registered as a charity foundation in the Official Custodian of the UK Land Registry and in the Borough of Brent Council under the name Indonesian Islamic Centre (IIC). Henceforth, on March 18, 2006, the IIS foundation whose purpose was to raise funds to build mosques for the Indonesian Muslim community was disbanded because it had accomplished the duties and handed over the assets and administration to the IIC foundation.⁵⁹ This foundation was a place for *silaturahmi*, sports centre, arts and culture. This place also functioned to fundraise for help people in need, to provide information about Islam and Muslims, and to participate interfaith events (dialogue).⁶⁰

Many religious activities at IIC have been held since the first time this property was purchased. However, this property had limitations because Indonesian people living in the UK especially in London were increasing. In addition, IIC was also constrained by licensing

⁵⁶ Eko Kurniawan, interviewed on Telegram, January 18, 2021.

⁵⁷ <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/briefings/1744-role-of-the-charity-commission>, "Role of the Charity Commission," NCVO, retrieved on August 20, 2021.

⁵⁸ "INDONESIAN ISLAMIC CENTRE - Charity 1105685," CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/?p_p_id=uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=maximized&p_p_mode=view&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_regId=1105685&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_subId=0, retrieved on August 20, 2021.

⁵⁹ Wardana, "Being Parts of the Umma: Indonesians in the Multicultural Muslim Communities London", p. 22.

⁶⁰ "INDONESIAN ISLAMIC CENTRE - Charity 1105685," CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/?p_p_id=uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=maximized&p_p_mode=view&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_regId=1105685&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_subId=0, retrieved on August 20, 2021.



issues. IIC properties had a permit as a place of residence not as a place of worship, so they had limitations to organize activities as common mosques functions.⁶¹

Since 2004, these facts encouraged IIC to strive for a representative Indonesian mosque in London. Planning for the construction of the mosque was carried out in North London area. The reason for choosing the place was because most Indonesian citizens living in London live in the North London. The existence of the Indonesian Mosque in London was expected to be able to represent the peaceful spirit of Indonesian Islam from *jama'ah*. Besides, the construction of this mosque received support from several parties, including the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in London, the representatives from the Ministry of Social and Culture, and the ambassadors. Apart from government officials, support also came from Indonesian citizens living in London. In like manner, the committee were struggling to help to build Indonesia's first mosque in London. They were trying to find suitable properties, raising funds for publications, collaborating with *pengajian* held in England to disseminate plans for mosque construction. These efforts were carried out until 2014.⁶²

Fund-rising for Indonesian Mosque establishment in London continued. In 2015, IIC London management consisting of Memet Purnama Hasan, Berry Natalegawa, and Hamin held a meeting with Vice President Jusuf Kalla in Jusuf Kalla's daughter's house, Lisa. During the meeting, they submitted a hard copy of the IIC London proposal to the Vice President. In this meeting, IIC management also conveyed the aim of IIC London to become a centre for Islamic religious learning, worship and commemoration of Islamic holidays, especially for the Indonesian Muslim community in London. For this reason, Vice President Jusuf Kalla paid much attention to the presence of IIC London which planned to have an Indonesian mosque in the United Kingdom.⁶³

In 2016, the Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia in London, Rizal Sukma, said that he had heard of the plan to build an Indonesian Mosque in London since 1992. However, until 2016 the plan to build a mosque had not come true. Therefore, he urged

⁶¹ Eko Kurniawan, interviewed on Telegram, January 18, 2021.

⁶² Ahmad Bukhori, interviewed on Telegram, May 28, 2020.

⁶³ Erik Purnama Putra, "Rencana Pembangunan Masjid Indonesia di Kerajaan Inggris Kekurangan Dana," *Republika Online*, last modified May 17, 2015, <https://republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/15/05/17/nogyv2-rencana-pembangunan-masjid-indonesia-di-kerajaan-inggris-kekurangan-dana>, retrieved on August 20, 2021.



Indonesian Muslim community in England to help to build the first mosque in England. Rizal Sukma, served as the Chairman of the Institute for International Relations and Cooperation of the Central Executive of Muhammadiyah, said: "Let's work out a strategy together in realizing the Indonesian mosque in London".⁶⁴

Since 2016, IIC's annual financial reported to the British Charity Commission used the services of a British public accountant. This was to comply with the required regulatory standards and for good financial internal control of the British Charity Commission as the receipt of funds exceeded a predetermined limit - over £25,000.00 per year.⁶⁵ The British Charity Commission has registered and ratified the Indonesian Islamic Centre, so all activities related to fundraising carried out by the IIC were considered legal by the British government.

In 2017, in order to look for potential donors in Indonesia, the management of IIC London managed a representative in Jakarta. The IIC administrators disseminated the plan for the Indonesian Mosque establishment to some institutions in Indonesia such as kitabisa.com, Aksi Cepat Tanggap, Baznas. The cooperation with Aksi Cepat Tanggap and Baznas has been carried out since 2017 by campaigns, marketplaces, social media, and other activities such as *pengajian*.⁶⁶ It should be noted that in 2017, it was estimated that the number of Indonesian people in the city would reach three thousand people. They came from a variety of different backgrounds, including professional workers, casual workers, students, and Indonesian citizens who interbreed with local residents (whites) or other ethnic minorities who already had a permanent residence permit in London. Their presence in London was considered a minority because they were different in race, ethnicity, and belief. The efforts continued and in 2017 IIC published a global and open publication to reach a wider range of donors on website. In addition, IIC also made a committee for the IIC-London Mosque establishment to be more focused and enthusiastic in efforts to encourage fundraising for the Indonesian mosque construction.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Surya Dinata, "IICL akan Buat Masjid di London," *Republika Online*, 6 February 2018, <https://republika.co.id/share/p3qhgvy216>, retrieved on August 20, 2021,.

⁶⁵ Lugman, "Sejarah Singkat Tentang Indonesia Islamic Centre (IIC)."

⁶⁶ Ahmad Bukhori, interviewed on Whatsapp, April 17, 2021.

⁶⁷ Ahmad Bukhori, interviewed on Telegram, May 28, 2020.



In the process, building a mosque in London was not as easy as when building a mosque in Indonesia. For example, it was difficult to find buildings with prices according to the funds collected. Therefore, the committee continued to raise funds and support. Once suitable location building was obtained, the next process was to administer the legal permit for the building used for various religious and social activities. This licensing process involved residents around the mosque building, as well as the local government.⁶⁸

b. *Religious Education: Learning Islam and Reading Qur'an*

In England religion is taught scientifically. Accordingly, parents with Muslim backgrounds shared the same concern that the religious needs of their children have not been fully obtained. Therefore, every parent had their own way of educating their child. For parents having sufficient religious knowledge, they would teach and guide their children at home after school. Some other parents used the services of Indonesian students who were continuing their education in the UK. There were also parents who actively involved their children in *pengajian* organized by certain associations.⁶⁹

IIC often held *pengajian*. This group was later called “Pengajian an-Nuur” established by students working in London and those living at IIC. *Pengajian* were regularly held every two weeks. In fact, since the purchase of the property at 22 Wakeman's Hill Avenue in 2004, IIC has mobilized many Indonesian community gatherings such as breaking fast together in Ramadan (*ifthar*), having *silaturahmi* and religious discussions, thanksgiving, and having *tahlilan*.⁷⁰ It can be concluded that having regular meetings indicates that as immigrants, they wanted to present Indonesian nuances in the midst of cultural differences in the place where they lived.

Along with the increasing number of students around the Collindale at that time, the idea was born to establish Al-Qur'an Learning for Child (*Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an/TPA*) starting from the age of three to twelve. The existence of this TPA received a positive response from the Muslim community in Indonesia, the members of the IIC. Since 2016, this foundation provided Al-Qur'an learning facilities for children of Indonesian citizens in

⁶⁸ Eko Kurniawan, interviewed on Telegram, January 18, 2021.

⁶⁹ Ismail, "Religious Education an Indonesian Muslim Community in the United Kingdom," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan* 14, no. 1 (2016): 71-72.

⁷⁰ Ibid



TPA named An-Nuur.⁷¹ Students in this TPA were children who did not get Islamic religious subjects in depth and in their schools. Therefore, the existence of the TPA was very helpful for students in order to know how to read the Qur'an. The TPA teachers were the students and workers living in the North London.⁷²

All religious activities in IIC were considered illegal because the function of the property was for residence, not as a centre for community activities or the Islamic religion. However, according to Memet Purnama Hasan, the chairman of IIC, said:

“So far, Indonesians who often carry out religious activities at IIC properties maintain good relations with their neighbours. As long as we carry out these religious activities, there have been no complaints from neighbours because they also know that at this property, we often carry out Islamic religious activities. Like when we celebrate of Islamic holidays, we invite our neighbours and provide them Indonesian foods. Also, during the month of Ramadan, we also invite neighbours for about 15 to 20 people to break their fast together. At the same time, we also have a lecture session (*pengajian*) where the delivery of the lecture is in English. This is intended so that they understand what we believe in this religion of Islam. Due to the constraints of incomplete facilities, the participants are the neighbours around the IIC property, ninety percent of which can be ascertained to be non-Muslims.”⁷³

The existence of the IIC, which mobilized Indonesian people's meetings, became means for social solidarity. They could release their longing for the nuances of Indonesia. It could be seen when they met the people with the same region, they would speak in their regional languages. Additionally, tasting Indonesian food, which deliberately served during events such as bazaars and other activities, could also release their longing for Indonesian nuances. For female workers, this opportunity could be a place to strengthen each other, help each other, and build friendships. Furthermore, the existence of this meeting increased solidarity between individuals so that it raised the belief that there were still families of one nation in other country. As Muslims, they would also strengthen their faith so that they could still be enthusiastic about living life as minorities in London. In fact, IIC also provided affordable rental room for muslim students or workers with low costs.⁷⁴

c. *Islamic Wadding*

⁷¹ Hana Hanifah, interviewed on Whatsapp, April 13, 2021.

⁷² Hana Hanifah, interviewed on Whatsapp, February 3, 2021.

⁷³ Memet Purnama Hasan, interviewed on WhatsApp call, Oktober 18, 2020.

⁷⁴ Ahmad Bukhori, interviewed on Whatsapp, April 17, 2021.



Indonesian citizens who will marry abroad have to complete all marriage requirements. The requirements are same as in Indonesia. However, what distinguishes it is related to the administrative process carried out at the embassy where the marriage is held. Muslim Indonesian citizens who will get married in the United Kingdom can get married according to Islamic law. After that, they will register their marriage in an institution administer the marriage in the region where they get married. The institution will issue a Certified Copy of an Entry of Marriage-Pursuant to the Marriage Act 1949 to consider the marriage is legal under the British law.

In the UK, Indonesian citizens who will marry according to Islamic law can be held at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (*Kedutaan Besar Republik Indonesia/KBRI*) in London. However, since 2004, IIC has had a privilege compared to other Indonesian muslim organizations, that ICC is able to issue a Marriage Certificate which will be used by the bride and groom to register their marriage in Indonesia. IIC London is legal to issue a Marriage Certificate because this organization is a legal entity. The Marriage Certificate issued by IIC was brought to the Indonesian Embassy in London for legalization. When both husband and wife are married in Islam, they can only submit marriage documents to the local British Civil Registry Office to be legalized by the state. The existence of a Marriage Certificate issued by IIC will accelerate the marriage process for Indonesian citizens and their spouses in the UK.

Those who marry are not only from among Indonesian citizens, but also foreigners who interbreed with Indonesians. Therefore, IIC not only issues a Marriage Certificate but also opens a marriage consultation. Marriage consultation at IIC does not officially open an office that handles preparations and problems of domestic life. The consultation provided was a light discussion attended by IIC *jama'ah* while attending routine *pengajian* at IIC.

Conclusion

From this research, some conclusions are found. First, the Indonesian muslim minority in London interacted with other ethnic muslim minorities since their arrival. The population of the Indonesian muslim community in London keeps increasing. However, they are aware that they are minority, so that they established IIC as an attempt to release their longing for the



nuances of Indonesia. Second, the existence of IIC is designed to give one colour to Indonesian Islam. Therefore, IIC was established for Indonesian muslims living in London and other cities in the UK. Moreover, IIC is expected to become a symbol of Indonesian Islam or *syi'ar* for locals and muslims of other ethnicities. Thus, it makes IIC becomes more intensive than the other Indonesian muslim communities in mobilizing religious and socio-cultural gatherings.

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