

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I was born in a small village called Pulorejo . Pulorejo is a rural area with only a small population, where many interesting traditional forms of social culture can easily be found. With several rivers flowing around it, and some rice fields evenly spread out, my village is full of good memories of my childhood . Swimming in the river, running to catch a kite, looking for dragonflies in the rice field, fishing in the natural port, or playing marbles with village friends are among my good memories of childhood .

I feel so lucky to be born in one of the rural areas of Central Java Province. By living in such a traditional area, especially during my childhood, I was able to find many examples of meaningful aspects of human life such as austerity , solidarity, and sharing things with other members of society. That time was one phase when I felt the existence of what, probably, Durkheim calls the mechanical solidarity of society life. Simple, humble, prosperous, generous are among the attributes of my childhood.

I was born on July 12, 1982. My parents gave me the name Sugiyanto, a real Javanese name, of which I did not understand the real meaning until today. Indeed, I asked relatives and some people in my village what the meaning of my name was. Each had his own understanding, so then I just enjoyed it and did not try to find out the exact meaning until now. I was born in a family which did not have a strong religious tradition. Hence, it is not surprising that my parents gave me such a name.

I had nowhere where I could access both modern and religious knowledge when I was a child. The circumstances were extremely 'Javanese' and traditional. It was not until an idea came into my mind that I had to be better in the future. I told my parents that I would leave the village to broaden my knowledge and more experience. I thought that it was only by taking such a decision, that everyone would be better-off in the future. I was so grateful, because both my parents gave their blessing for my decision. Therefore, since the beginning of my junior high school, I have lived far away from my parents.

In 1995, I entered the State Islamic Junior High School in Gubug, Grobogan Central Java. I started learning many subjects about modern knowledge as well as religious studies. Since studying here, and then in the Islamic Senior High School *Futuhiyya* Jeketro Gubug Grobogan Central Java in

1998, I began to understand things more deeply. Once graduating from Senior High School, I continued studying in the State Institute for Islamic studies *Walisongo* Semarang central Java Indonesia.

I felt that time passed quickly. For four and a half years, I studied in the university, then in April 2006 I got my bachelor's degree from the Education Faculty of the State Institute for Islamic Studies *Walisongo* Semarang. I wrote about the educational principles according to Tao and Islamic perspectives for my bachelor's thesis.

After graduating, I tried to find a job in Indonesia. I also followed a training programme for the alumni of the Islamic University conducted by MORA (Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia), until I was selected as a participant in the Indonesian Young Leaders Programme to study at Leiden University. Before coming here, I could only dream about Leiden University -- where according to many people, a lot of Indonesian history resources could be found. Now the dream is a reality, and for me it is a big opportunity to learn more and more about the progress of knowledge in this international university.

February 18, 2008  
Leiden, Zuid Holland