

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL of PESANTREN STUDIES

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IN *PONDOK PESANTREN*
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Juwariyah

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Editorial

Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) and *madrasah* (religious school) are two educational institutions that are common in Indonesia. Nowadays there are more than 24.000 *pesantrens* and *madarasahs* in which young Muslims learn religious knowledge as well as foreign languages, sciences and technology. These two institutions have also played an important role in the development of their surrounding societies. Many scholars are interested in doing research on them with interdisciplinary approaches: historical, religious, educational, sociological, anthropological, economic, and political. In this context, many interesting subjects are discussed, such as the educational system and management of *pesantren* and *madrasah*, and their social role, and their response to contemporary issues like democracy, gender equity, religious pluralism, technology of information and civic education. Other approaches might be done, because their continuity and change have occurred from time to time.

The *International Journal of Pesantren Studies* (IJPS) provides a tool for researchers and writers to publish their articles on the above mentioned institutions and Islamic education in general. The journal also receives book reviews which are related to the institutions as well as Islamic studies in general. All of these works are written in English or Arabic. Through this journal, it is hoped that the international community can receive more information about the education institutions. In addition, *pesantren* and *madarasah* may benefit from the writings in the journal for their future improvement in terms of educational system, management, usage of technology and so on.

Yazid, Abu (ed.). *Fiqh Realitas, Respon Ma'had Aly Terhadap Wacana Hukum Kontemporer*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2005.

PESANTREN DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF EDUCATION

Suwendi

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Abstract

This article deals with the question how *pesantren* responds to modernization. The author comes to the conclusion that it has the capability of adopting the modernization in certain aspects, but it is at the same time able to avoid negative sides of the modernization. The author also writes that this ability is different from that of many other education institutions which even disappeared in line with the wave of modernization. The endurance of *pesantren* cannot be separated from the characteristics of Indonesian indigenous institutions which are independent and non-centralistic.

Keyword: *Pesantren*, Development, Modernization

***Pesantren* and Modernization of Islamic Education**

Pesantren is the oldest education institution in Indonesia. It has established in the country long before other education institutions. Many challenges have faced it throughout history. One of those challenges is

modernization. M. Dawam Rahardjo once said that pesantren was the institution which strongly held backwardness and exclusivity. It looked like a big building which never changed. It encouraged society to change, while at the same time it never did by itself. It was based on this consideration that the state (the New Order) tried to bring modernization and development into pesantren.¹

From the perspective of education, pesantren is the only institution which was historically proved to be able to overcome the wave of modernization. In other parts of the Muslim world, many education institutions collapsed or transformed into general education institutions due to the expansion of modern system of education. Some other traditional institutions were forced to adapt and adopt the modern system and method. This fact can be seen in traditional institutions of education in the Middle East, including madrasah, kuttub, and masjid. Until the last half of the 19th century, these institutions remained the important centers of Islamic education, but they declined in the last quarter of the century due to modernization and renewal.

According to Azyumardi Azra, renewal and modernization of Islamic education was started in Turkey in the beginning of the 19th century which then spread over all areas of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. However, this education renewal did not include *medresse* (madrasah) into the project. Instead, it was to found new schools in accordance with European education system which was aimed at the interests of military reformation and bureaucracy of the Ottoman Empire. This was marked by the establishment of *Mekteb-ilm-i Harbiye* (military school) in 1834 which followed the French system. In 1924 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk erased *Medrese* and changed them into public schools.²

¹ See M. Dawam Rahardjo, "Dunia Pesantren dalam Peta Pembaharuan," in M. Dawam Rahardjo (ed.), *Pesantren dan Pembaharuan* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1995), p. 1.

² Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Atfenium Baru*, (Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu, 1999), pp. 95-96.

The same was with kuttub institutions in Egypt. In 1833 Muhammad Ali Pasha launched the establishment of elementary and secondary schools where general sciences such as geometry, algebra, painting, and the like were taught. In the inception, these schools went side by side with madrasah and kuttub. However, madrasah and kuttub did not developed significantly. Finally, in 1961 Gamal Abdel Nasser removed these madrasah and kuttub totally.³

The aforementioned examples from Turkey and Egypt demonstrate that many Islamic traditional institutions collapsed due to modernization. It seems that the social and political factors of pesantren development which were different from those two countries had made pesantren survive. In line with the global development, pesantren is faced with inevitable social and cultural changes. Pesantren is compelled to respond to them, and it cannot escape from them. The development of communication and technology has become embedded in pesantren. Social and economic dynamism either in local, national or international levels has forced pesantren to involve in the free market world. Many other challenges are facing pesantren. The question is whether pesantren is able to come to terms with such changes?

Reforming Pesantren

As a system, Islam can be distinguished into twofold. The first aspect contains basic teachings which provide Muslims with reference and solution to their problems. These teachings are absolutely true and unchangeable over times. They are universal and always relevant to places and times. They are codified into the Qur'an and the *hadith*. The second aspect of Islam is concerned with non-basic teachings which are result of interpretation of the basic teachings. Such non-basic teachings of Islam are related to practical and applicable aspects. They will never become a final truth and are normatively framed with places and times. Therefore, they can be both

³ *Ibid.*

true and false. Since they emerged from changing process, they can respond to every change. They are manifested in *kitab kuning* (classic Islamic books) which cover every aspect of life and become understanding of basic teachings of Islam.

Pesantren education seems to cover the second aspect. It even overemphasizes the importance of *fiqh*. It pays less attention to studies on basic teachings of Islam. This can be clearly seen in *kitab kuning* where *fiqh* is more dominant than other subjects such as *usul al-fiqh*, logic (*mantiq*), *tafsir*, *hadith*, *'ulum al-hadith*, *'ulum al-Qur'an*, and philosophy. Overemphasis on *fiqh* will lead to the significance of Quranic and *hadith* studies in pesantren education. Thus, the position of the Qur'an and *hadith* will become less important than others, whereas actually *fiqh* is derivative of both the Qur'an and *hadith*. *Fiqh* is not the absolute source of life. Therefore, understanding *fiqh* without referring to the Qur'an and *hadith* is useless.

Having the above facts in mind, some changes should be made. One of them is to change the method of pesantren education which has been inductive so far. At the first place, in pesantren particular disciplines such as *fiqh* and other practical traditions, called *'ilm al-hal*, are studied, and afterwards complementary disciplines are added in order to understand those basic teachings. The case will be different if the deductive method is used, through which complementary disciplines which are helpful to understand the basic teachings are taught and afterwards these disciplines are used in particular themes such as *fiqh* and modern development. This method is more qualified to develop reasoning process, creativity and dynamism in understanding Islam contextually than the first method which concentrates more on doctrinal aspects. However, the deductive method should take psychological aspects of santris and the development of imagination of reason structure into consideration. In doing so, curriculum organization and pesantren management must be developed first.

Another change that should be made to reconstruct pesantren education system is related to curriculum. Pesantren curriculum, which is

based on *kitab kuning*, includes only *fiqh*, theology, *tasawwuf*, and language. *Fiqh* taught at pesantren is confined to that of the Shafi'i school and pays less attention to other schools. This would hinder creative thinking and result in narrow-minded understanding of Islamic law. In addition, the Shafi'i school seems to pay less attention to rational explorations. In this school, the role of reason in law making (*istinbat*), which derives from the basic sources, is weak. To come to grips with this, comparative Islamic law (*muqaranah al-madhab*) must be taught in pesantren.

Next, the theological model developed in pesantren is generally concerned with the Ash'arite school. Compared to the Mu'tazilite school, this school gives less value to human reason. With the theory of *kasb* (acquired reason) the Ash'arite school plays down the position of reason and limits its power to engineer. According to this school, engineering can be made only if God's power and man's power are interlinked. Even, this school suspends its judgment as to the status of a believer (*mu'min*) who conducts great sin. This is because of the limitation of the Ash'arite's reasoning (*mantiq*). Sufism plays significant roles in pesantren, where Ghazali's Sufism is at the heart of the pesantren tradition. Sufi practices are manifested in various rites which emphasizes more on feeling than reason. Sufism is about feeling. At the same time, Sufi teachings which encourage worldly happiness are less emphasized. Wealth makes it impossible for people to attain true happiness. This makes pesantren economic worse.

Language studies in pesantren emphasize more on cognitive aspects than affective and psychomotor aspects which are paid less attention. Arabic grammar taught in pesantren could not be used to communicate effectively. This is because the emphasis is placed more on memorization (*tahfizh*), not on the implementation of language in conversation. This has impacts not only on conversational skills of pesantren people, but also their ability to understand *kitab kuning*. Such pesantren curricula result in exclusivism. Virtually all aspects of Islam are studied under the frame of the schools of Shafi'ite (in *fiqh*), Ash'arite (in Islamic theology), and al-Ghazali (in Sufism).

Such exclusivism has caused to the lack of criticism and analytical reasoning in the pesantren education.

Pesantren tradition looks down academic freedom and *munazharah* (academic debate) system. Deconstruction and reconstruction of the old truths hold by pesantren people are considered impossible. As a result, in the pesantren education system the product of individual reasoning (*ijtihad*) by previous ulama could not be re-evaluated. Re-evaluation and re-actualization of various concepts in *Kitab Kuningi* could not be realized. This is in contradiction to what previous ulama did. Even ulama practiced *ijtihad* and readjusted their thinking to the contemporary needs.

On the other hand, philosophy is considered as anathema to pesantren education, since philosophy is considered to reduce the established and fixed truth that pesantren people hold so far. However, even though *'ilm usul al-fiqh* (science of Islamic law principles) is taught in pesantren, pesantren people are not aware that this science is inevitably influenced by Aristotle philosophy. This indicates that pesantren education only receive Islamic classic thought without criticism.

Another important thing that must be highlighted is management which determines the success or failure of pesantren education system. This is in accord with the principle that *al-haqq bi-la al-nizham yaghlibuh al-batil bi al-nizham* (a truth that is managed unsystematically will be worse than that managed systematically). Pesantren education pays less attention to systematically managed aims and without any significant attempts at revitalization based on changing needs. Take as an example, the enrolment of new students (*santri*) is open for all candidates without considering the variety of ages and backgrounds. They are accepted without prior test.

Currently, pesantren must be open to changing worlds. Cooperation should be made between pesantren and other institutions in order to produce transforms within pesantren community. Such cooperation should be made to meet contemporary complicated challenges so that negative associations such as alienation, exclusivity, conservatism, and status quo become less attached to pesantren.

Characteristics of Santri

The above explanation has emphasized the reconstructive attempts at the formation of the soul of pesantren. Method, curriculum and management are necessary requirements to inculcate noble Islamic values in pesantren. Such values are manifested in five characters of pesantren students (*santri*) as follows.

First is sincerity. *Santris* must not be tempted by worldly interests. They are committed only to the devotion to God. This sincerity is reflected in their action and behavior. This is based on the belief that Allah will reward the good with the better. This is up to the will of God. The second is simplicity and nobility. Simplicity does not mean passivity and poverty. It contains power, firmness, and self-control in facing difficulties. In simplicity there lies a strong will to face social dynamism. The third is democratic *ukhuwwah islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood). Dialogic situations that *santris* create among themselves every day will result in peace and tranquility. This will help *santris* to maintain their idealism. Their diverse cultures, races, tribes, and social status will not become obstacles for them to create brotherhood. They are spiritually unified. The fourth is self-dependence. This not only means the self-independence of *santris* in their individual matters but also in making their pesantren an independent Islamic education institution. The fifth is freedom. This means that *santris* must be optimistic in facing their future. The freedom also means self-dependence.

Pesantren as an Indigenous institution

Pesantren is the base of traditional Islam which has inherited and maintained the continuity of Islamic tradition from ulama through times. Its survival has proven that traditional Islam has been able to face modernization. At the early process of modernization, there was a wide gap between pesantren and the world outside. However, gradually pesantren accommodated modernization and change with its own modification. Such accommodation was made without leaving its main characteristics.

The survival of pesantren is not only due to its accommodation to modernization, but also its basic characteristics. As Nurcholish Madjid said, pesantren is not merely an Islamic institution but also an indigenous Indonesian institution. It emerged from Indonesian sociological experiences so that pesantren and society are inseparable from each other. This can be seen, for instance, from the fact that historically pesantrens were often established in lands endowed by surrounding people. As compensation, pesantren helped them to come to terms with their social, cultural and economic problems. It was from this role that pesantren and kyai became cultural brokers as Clifford Geertz ever termed.

Pesantren and Social Change

In addition to the above characteristics, plurality and heterogeneity is another characteristic of pesantren. Such pluralism can be seen from the absence of rules related to management, administration, bureaucracy, structure, culture, curriculum or politics. Even religious rules as prescribed in Kitab Kuning, RMI (*Rabithah Ma'ahid al-Islamiyah*), Association of All-Indonesian Pesantren, and NU (*Nahdlatul Ulama*) cannot take force on pesantren. It is due to such independence and pluralism that it is difficult to make a conceptual definition of pesantren.⁴

Because of this independence of pesantren, Martin van Bruinessen, Dutch observer of Indonesian Islam, believes that pesantren potentially creates a civil society. However, for him, it cannot be expected that democratization emerges from pesantren, since the leadership of kyai or ulama is based more on charisma. Charisma and democratization never coexist.⁵ However, traditionalists, including pesantren people, in developing

⁴ Marzuki Wahid, "Pesantren di Lautan Pembangunanisme: Mencari Kinerja Pemberdayaan", in Marzuki Wahid, et.al (ed.), *Pesantren Masa Depan: Wacana Pemberdayaan dan Transformasi Pesantren* (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1999), pp. 145-147.

⁵ Martin van Bruinessen, "Konjungtur Sosial Politik di Jagat NU Paska Khittah 26: Pergulatan NU Dekade 90-an", in Ellyasa K.H. Darwis (ed.), *Ga Die, NU, dan Masyarakat Sipil*, (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1994), pp. 77-78.

countries cannot be regarded as resisting and threatening modernization.⁶ In this regard, Snouck Hurgronje said,

Traditional Islam in Java is, by some people, considered too static and very much tied with the thoughts of the medieval ulama. It is not so. They experienced fundamental changes, but such changes were made through complex and unseen steps. Thus, observers with less knowledge of the thinking patterns of traditional Islam could not see such changes; even they occurred in front of their eyes, except for those observing thoroughly.⁷

The pesantren's resistance to centralization is significant to engage with social transformation. Inevitably, pesantren has played important roles in modernization, especially in empowering the poor and oppressed. Pesantren has proven to be able to participate in socio-cultural and political life.⁸

Conclusion

The discussion above clearly demonstrates that pesantren has internal forces in dealing with modernization. As an education institution, pesantren did not decline due to modernization. This is different from other education institutions which even disappeared in line with the wave of modernization. The endurance of pesantren education cannot be separated from the characteristics of Indonesian indigenous institutions which are independent and non-centralistic. Some aspects of pesantren must be reformed. The ability of pesantren to survive is a decisive capital of community empowerment.

⁶ "Pengantar" in Martin van Bruinessen, *NU: Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa, Pencarian Wacana Baru* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1994), p. vi.

⁷ Quoted in Clifford Geertz, "Modernization in a Moslem Society: The Indonesian Case," *Quest*, vol. 39 (Bombay: 1963), p. 16.

⁸ See Abdurrahman Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-esai Pesantren* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2001).

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THE PERSONALITY OF SANTRI EXPRESSED IN KITAB TA'LIM AL-MUTA'ALLIM

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Abstract

In this article, the author explores the thoughts of al-Zarnuji in his *Ta'lim al-Mut'allim*, using a content analysis and sociological approach. He mentions that al-Zarnuji's ethical ideas have shaped the personality of santri in order that they can reach their goals of learning. These are related to methods of learning, some of which are rational physical and irrational non-physical ones. The rational physical method is commonly called *usaha lahir* (physical endeavours). This can be drill, trial and error, and others. On the other hand, the irrational non-physical methods are about ethical aspect that should be done by the *santris*. The combination of these two methods have been conducted by them in their lives in *pesantrens*.

Keywords: methods of learning, ethics, personality of santri.

Introduction

Ta'lim al-Muta'allim (henceforth: TM) is a book or handbook on Islamic ethics commonly taught at traditional pesantren at intermediate levels. At modern pesantren, this book is rarely taught and even virtually