

MOVEMENT OF TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS IN INDONESIA-CENTRIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Islamic boarding schools—red. Pesantren, as educational institutions in Indonesia were born from rural areas and the concept of pesantren education is a traditional education concept so that it is easily accepted by the wider community. The establishment of pesantren as a counterweight to formal education aims to produce human characters to suit the changing civilization. Along with the changing times, pesantren are able to adapt without losing the old traditions and teachings. The research uses descriptive-qualitative method, and is included in library research. This article elaborates Pesantren in an Indonesiacentric perspective. From the study conducted, it can be seen that during the colonial period, Islamic boarding schools and the Dutch (West) colonial government had a dialectical-resistance relationship. On the other hand, in this modern era, Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions tend to be more dialectical-negotiable towards developments or educational systems originating from the West.

Keywords: Movement, Indonesiacentric, Perspective, Islamic Boarding School

ABSTRAK

Pesantren sebagai lembaga pendidikan di Indonesia yang lahir dari wilayah pedesaan dan konsep pendidikan pesantren merupakan konsep pendidikan yang tradisional sehingga mudah diterima oleh masyarakat luas. Pendirian pesantren sebagai penyeimbang dari pendidikan formal bertujuan untuk mencetak manusia berkarakter agar sesuai dengan perubahan peradaban. Seiring dengan perubahan zaman, pesantren mampu menyesuaikan tanpa menghilangkan tradisi dan ajaran yang lama. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif-kualitatif, dan termasuk dalam penelitian pustaka atau library research. Artikel ini mengelaborasi Pesantren dalam perspektif Indonesiasentris. Dari kajian yang dilakukan dapat diketahui bahwasannya Pada masa penjajahan, pesantren dan pemerintah colonial Belanda (Barat) memiliki hubungan yang dialektis-resistensif. Di sisi lain, di era modern ini pesantren sebagai lembaga pendidikan cenderung lebih dialektis-negosiatif terhadap perkembangan ataupun sistem Pendidikan yang berasal dari Barat.

Kata Kunci: Gerakan, Indonesiasentris, Perspektif, Pesantren

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia in addition to formal education, namely the elementary level from elementary to tertiary levels, Islamic boarding schools are also the foundation for developing the influence of human civilization (Krisdiyanto et al., 2019). This is a means of gaining knowledge and religion (Muttaqien, 1999). *Pesantren* is one of the educational institutions that has existed for a long time, *pesantren* is one of the incubators in shaping the character of the nation's children (Dhofier, n.d.). The Islamic boarding school's scientific area includes the study of religious sciences.

It is inseparable in Indonesia as a country with a diverse cultural history that influences the point of view from an Indonesiacentric perspective, thoughts from East and West which are the reference are combined with the cultural history found in Indonesia (Hakim, 2018). This nation is said to be adherents of Dutch or Netherlandscentric thinking because of its inherent influence after approximately 3.5 centuries of colonization (Rasyidi, 2020). So, at that time the *pesantren* as a form of a combination of symbols of resistance to the lower community movement was considered suitable. Historically, Islamic boarding schools have focused on their

main goals. Theoretically and philosophically, combining national traditions which are understood as the orientation of spiritual values in Indonesian society in an effort to unite the unity and integrity of the nation (Isnaini, n.d.).

Pesantren as a strong culture is considered as an ideal alternative in the formation of ideological values. *Pesantren* is considered as a counterweight to formal education which tends to give thought to the theory of Western heritage (Maulida, 2017). Many studies say that Islamic boarding schools are considered to have a gap with the outside world, thus creating a problem that must be addressed. Zamakhsyari Dhofier thinks that *pesantren* has its own way of stemming influences that come from outside (Dhofier, n.d.). However, *pesantren* also began to experience changes but seemed slow (Sukawi & Haryanto, 2014). More than just the statement above, there are some who think that *pesantren* is the basis of traditionalism, and has a very old-fashioned nature (Haedari, 2006).

In contrast to the previous opinion, KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, who is familiarly called Gus Dur, also has the opinion that the learning carried out by Islamic boarding schools does not only

focus on religious issues and cadre institutions for scholars. Furthermore, the *pesantren* at that time had made public education, which did not only teach religion (Haedari, 2006). In addition, Gus Dur emphasized that Islamic boarding schools are dynamic, open to change, and capable of being the driver of the desired change. Even more than that, Gus Dur also included a description of the Islamic boarding school culture, which Gus Dur called a “subculture” of its own (Haedari, 2006).

In this study, the author focuses on *pesantren* in an Indonesiacentric perspective in the pre-independence *pesantren* movement until now to show the civilization of *pesantren* from the symbols of *pesantren* or *pesantren* figures and to review the pre-independence period of Indonesia as an example to fight for independence.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research type is library research. This means that in this study the author focuses on the use of data and information with the help of various kinds of materials found in the library, such as books, journals, historical documents, and so on. in this case followed by writing, editing, clarifying, reducing, and presenting data (Kartini, 1996).

The process of collecting data in this study is by observing, in the sense of tracking various references that have relevance to the focus of the study, both from books, articles, and so on that function to support these data. (Moleong, 2006). The data analysis technique used in this research is the method of content analysis (content analysis). In this analysis, the process of selecting, comparing, combining, and sorting information obtained from related data sources will be carried out to obtain valid inferences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia

In simple terms, *pesantren* is a gathering place for people who study religion (Maulida, 2017). *Pesantren* is the oldest educational institution in Indonesia, to this day *pesantren* still exist in giving birth to people who have morals, character and are in accordance with the teachings of the scholars in fighting for the independence of the republic of Indonesia. (Wahyuddin, 2017).

Pesantren is present in its history in the community, *pesantren* was born in rural areas at that time with the aim of playing its role in Indonesia (Sayono, n.d.). If viewed from the internal

structure of Islamic education and the educational practices implemented, *pesantren* can be categorized as educational institutions on a traditionalist basis (Mahrisa et al., 2020).

There are many theories that explain the emergence of *pesantren* in the archipelago. The Netherlands in 1819 conducted a survey of Islamic boarding schools and found that many *pesantren* existed in the community, such as in Pekalongan, Rembang, Priangan, Kedu, Madiun and Surabaya (M. Dzul, 2020). It was also said by Soebardi that the oldest Islamic boarding school is the *pesantren* located in the north of Surabaya, namely the Giri Islamic Boarding School which was founded by Sunan Giri in the 17th century AD.

On the other hand, seeing the abundance of natural resources in Indonesia so that the Dutch's goal changed, Entering Indonesia with the initial aim of trading, in the end the Dutch's goal changed from trading to wanting to control the archipelago (Jaelani, n.d.).

We know the 3G mottos, namely Glory (victory and power), Gold (gold or the wealth of the Indonesian nation), and Gospel (crusade efforts against Muslims in Indonesia) (Rasyidi, 2020). Dutch power began to comb the field of

education by establishing Christian schools, the Dutch strategy to dominate by opening these schools to the public with the target community (Margana et al., 2017).

Madrasah is one of the Islamic educational institutions both individually and in groups to respond to the competitive attitude of Muslims towards the Dutch who established Christian schools. Islamic boarding schools developed structurally and their educational curricula were more stable during the post-independence period of Indonesia, since the transition to the New Order because at that time economic growth was developing

Islamic Boarding School Movement during colonialism

The Netherlands is a country that colonized the archipelago for a long period of about three and a half centuries (Subekti, 2012). The Dutch issued various policies that did not want to harm them. One of the Dutch policies that greatly influenced the world of education was ethical politics and the Ordinance, namely regulations on teachers/schools (Jaelani, n.d.).

In 1901 the implementation of ethical politics which we know as the politics of reciprocity with the aim of building the colony. Ethical politics has a

good side because it is profitable, namely siding with the people, but in this economic realm it is very exploitative and launches colonial works with the liberals. (Hakim, 2018).

The first Islamic boarding school during the colonial period, apart from being a place to gain knowledge, was also an important place for the resistance movement of the Dutch East Indies government. *Pesantren* is a comfortable place because it represents the culture of the outskirts of the place that cannot be influenced by the palace culture and Western culture which was accommodated by the Dutch colonial colonizers (Untung, 2013). So it is not surprising that most *pesantren* were established in rural areas, quiet and integrated with the local community (Dhofier, n.d.).

The Dutch Colonial In the 18th century made a policy of Ethical Politics, by issuing laws governing population, citizens were divided into three classes; first class (Western foreigners), second class (Eastern foreigners), and third class (natives) (Untung, 2013). Then the third class is divided into two, namely: the citizens of the palace community and also the rulers, and the commoners or the people below the periphery (Hakim, 2018). The citizens of the community

called the kraton class and first class get educational opportunities in Dutch schools with general lessons. In addition, the indigenous class who has closeness to the rulers such as the Governor, Regent, also gets the same opportunity (Jaelani, n.d.).

At the end of the 19th century, the Dutch East Indies government established Western-type schools for the indigenous population at the suggestion of Snouck Hurgronje. The establishment of these schools aimed to give the colonial government influence on society in countering the influence of *pesantren* which was so strong in society (Sukawi & Haryanto, 2014).

The Dutch government at Snouck's suggestion realized that the future of the Dutch colony would depend if it could influence the culture of the Indonesian people with Dutch culture. By providing Dutch colonial education, it is hoped that there will be a reduction in reducing and even defeating the influence of Islam in Indonesia (Dhofier, n.d.).

At that time, *pesantren* became an educational institution that accommodated indigenous people who could not study at Dutch schools (Syafe'i, 2017). Therefore, government-owned public schools and Islamic boarding

schools compete with each other for expansion of influence.

The existence of *pesantren* which became a rival to Western-type education which was influential and disturbing by the Dutch government, so that at that time the Dutch East Indies government often issued policies that deliberately made it difficult for *pesantren* (Mahdi, 2013). Like the Dutch policy in 1825 to limit the number of pilgrims by requiring each pilgrim to buy a passport for 110 guilders, a very expensive amount at that time (Krisdiyanto et al., 2019).

Pesantrens have always been consistent with rejecting Dutch ideas, including when offering subsidies to *pesantren* institutions (Wahyuddin, 2017). *Pesantrens* refuse on the grounds that worship activities cannot be paid for. The extreme attitude of the *pesantren* at that time even referred to the Netherlands as a term *londo* (*alon-alon mbondho*) Even more extreme, the *pesantren* circles forbid everything that resembles the Netherlands, such as a tie (Dhofier, n.d.). This is because of the assumption that Dutch *pesantren* are infidels.

The attitude of opposition is always shown by the Islamic boarding school against the Dutch because it gives the influence of Christianization and considers their own religion to be the

right one. The Netherlands also often prohibits the holding of other religious ceremonies openly (Mahrisa et al., 2020). The Dutch among Islamic boarding schools were considered as colonialists who greatly oppressed the people. So in the administration of Dutch education, it became a competitor to the world of people-based boarding schools. On the other hand, from a religious point of view, they portray the West as infidels (Dhofier, n.d.).

Traditional Islamic Boarding School Movement

The beginning of the emergence of *pesantren* is related to the place of education that is typical of the Sufis (Mahdi, 2013). In the process of spreading it, it is explained that *pesantren* is related to the Sufis because it is rooted in the Islamic tradition itself, namely the tarekat tradition (Mahrisa et al., 2020). Second, Islamic boarding schools which we know are referred to as diversions from the Hindu's *pesantren* system, before Islam entered Indonesia, *pesantren* were found as places of learning Hinduism in fostering cadres to spread Hinduism. (Saifuddin Alif Nurdianto, 2017).

Islamic boarding schools were established since Walisongo spread Islam in Java (Indianto et al., 2021). In the

course of the process, the *pesantren* is very developed in terms of the number, system and methods taught. There is even a boarding school called *Pesantren Singosari* that provides general lessons, for example Indonesian, Dutch, arithmetic and history. (Mubin & Aziz, 2020).

The history of *pesantren* is divided into several periods, namely the history of *pesantren* in the period before independence when the Dutch colonized Indonesia. *Pesantren* institutions have strict control from the Netherlands. The old-fashioned and oppressive attitude of the government made the teachings of the *pesantren* at that time lead to a strong attitude of patriotism and fanaticism so that educated cadres had resilience and opposed colonialism (Dhofier, n.d.).

Many of ulama and figures, whom defend of *pesantren* from ideology, politics and ideals in fighting for independence to the point of sacrificing their body and soul for Indonesia. The next period is the post-Independence period, precisely at the beginning of independence, along with debates regarding the national education system to be implemented, Islamic boarding schools that have developed in each region emerged as an alternative to the national education system, although they

failed. However, the existence of *pesantren* is getting stronger with the activeness of *pesantren* in building quality human resources (Sabarudin, 2015).

The awareness of *pesantren* as part of Islamic education has an important role in seizing the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia. After that period, it entered the period of development of the Modern Islamic Boarding School (Muttaqien, 1999). Modern Islamic boarding schools are Islamic boarding schools that seek to fully integrate the classical system and schools into the Islamic boarding school (Sabarudin, 2015). The recitation of classical books is still there but no longer stands out, some are even complementary and turned into subjects such as Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School, Jombang Modern Islamic Boarding School, Al-Zaitun Modern Islamic Boarding School, and so on. This is a renewal effort carried out by Islamic boarding schools so that they can continue to exist in the era of modernization (Maulida, 2017)

Indonesiacentric Perspective

The Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia for centuries brought a lot of Dutch influence into this country. Their colonial system made the natives the lowest caste in life, this was a crime and created a structure that was detrimental

to the natives. The Dutch who indirectly removed the role of indigenous peoples in history (Jaelani, n.d.). Ir. Soekarno once said "O, indeed, ancient times were feudal times and today is modern times". That is, the present era is independence for the Indonesian people. Even Ir. Soekarno said that humans themselves can form a civilization (Jaelani, n.d.).

Indonesia's proclamation on August 17, 1945, the proclamation of this nation explains the political condition of this nation which is already sovereign. Independence is used as a reflection and a new spirit and free the people from the wrath of the invaders so that a new attitude emerges towards the past (Rinardi, 2017).

History is placed as an important science in shaping the character of the nation's children in reflecting the meaning of independence which will be applied to the process of life. The difference in perspective on the past seen from the present is an effort to formulate Indonesiacentric history, Indonesiacentric is said to be the identity of Indonesian historiography (Hakim, 2018).

Pesantren is an Islamic educational institution that has produced many prominent scholars and warriors of this nation, the efforts of *pesantren* in order to accommodate the lower class of society

who cannot go to school. In the end, the *pesantren* was established using a system, a pattern that was in accordance with the needs of the community at that time (Dhofier, n.d.).

The idea of a foreigner has recently been rife in Indonesia. This causes bad prejudice for the foreign designation itself. People are always curious to discuss foreign issues in Indonesia which we think are a scary threat.

Similarly, foreign mention of foreign scientific thought is considered a threat to our society. Scientific discussion is basically inseparable from the western world and the eastern world, these two regions are represented by countries in Europe and America (Margana et al., 2017). Orientalist or it can be said that Western thought and Occidental Eastern thought are certainly not understood in the same way, but in variants of thought, of course there are many differences related to the logic of thinking (Zaman, 2020a). All of that must be combined in the form of interests and also a combination of the history of each country's environment. Thus, it should be studied in depth in order to be able to recognize so that it does not seem threatening and does not look scary. When we fully understand, we will

certainly understand scientifically to be able to correct, assess, and even take the positive side in it.

Pesantren is seen as an institution that has an educational base that has the power to influence the outside world (Dhofier, n.d.). This can be seen from the strong faith as the main root of Islamic boarding school education. Islamic boarding schools have strong elements, namely the existence of Kyai who provide teaching, there are students who study and live in cottages, and the existence of a mosque or similar place as a place of worship and also recites the Qur'an (Zaman, 2020b). This is a strong method of *pesantren* that has existed in Indonesia for a long time and still exists today.

The pattern of Islamic boarding school leadership that is independent and not co-opted by the state. The existence of the use of general reference books that have always been used for centuries and the value system used is part of the wider community, making Islamic boarding schools can be said to be the grassroots of education in Indonesia (Sabarudin, 2015).

Post-independence from colonialism, *pesantren* which has a historical range that is not good with the Dutch, it is not surprising that until now

the world of *pesantren* still tends to carry out resistance to Western influences. This is what underlies the influence of the life attitude of the *pesantren* which is simple and full of togetherness (Muttaqien, 1999).

In the current era of globalization, Islamic boarding schools realize that interaction with the West is not only with physical invaders, but also with Western cultural values. They generally realize that the West has advantages in the fields of technology and science, but also brings negative values such as individualism and liberalism which are very different from the spirit of *pesantren*. Therefore, *pesantren* began to open up, for example by opening public schools but based on *pesantren* education so that they were still able to filter the negative impacts caused by modernization (Mubin & Aziz, 2020).

During the periodization before independence, the *pesantren* also provided general lessons for students about Indonesian, history and even Dutch. This proves that in the history of Islamic boarding schools. *Pesantrens* are very accepting of knowledge from Western culture to be adopted but without losing Indonesian traditions. The demands of progress in the era of globalization require *pesantren* to innovate in the

educational process, thus giving rise to renewal ideas from *pesantren* (Basyit, 2017).

The factor of dissatisfaction with the results of traditional education in studying the Qur'an and Islamic religious knowledge, became the basis for the renewal of the Islamic education system in Islamic boarding schools (Fuady, 2020). In the first half of the 20th century, when the natives, including the Islamic boarding school, had ample opportunity to get an education, it became the starting point for Islamic educational institutions, which slowly began to adapt the Dutch education system (Prayudi & Salindri, 2015).

The renewal is intended to answer the challenges of colonialism and Christianization of Islamic education. It is in this context that we can witness the emergence of two forms of modern Islamic educational institutions. The first is the Dutch model of public schools but is given the content of Islamic teaching. Second, modern madrasas which have limitedly adopted the substance and methodology of modern Dutch education (Mubin & Aziz, 2020). The system and institutions of Islamic education have long begun to carry out capacity renewal, it can be seen by the continued establishment of many new

pesantren in various places, so that *pesantren* from this point of view can be referred to as people's education which is quite popular (Sukawi & Haryanto, 2014).

CONCLUSION

During the colonial period, Islamic boarding schools and the Dutch colonial government had a resistanceist relationship. Based on the interactions that took place, it was proven with *pesantren* as an opposition movement, the Netherlands was imaged by *pesantren* as colonizers who intimidated the people into being called infidels, thus the Netherlands became a competitor to the world of people-based *pesantren* education. Furthermore, in the modern era, Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions slowly began to follow the development of the era of globalization by also implementing public schools that adopted Western thought but still cannot be separated from the combination of religious knowledge as the basis of Islamic boarding school education.

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