

Pesantren and University: An Educational Networking in the Era of Globalization

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ABSTRACT

Globalization and the communications revolution have allowed vastly increased flows of ideas and people across the Islamic world, generating new social forms. As it is well known, these include transnational religious movements providing Islamic education (pesantren) services. Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim majority, has attracted Islamic activists from other parts around the world. What is little known is that some of the most active transnational Islamic movements in Indonesia in recent years originate from Turkey. This research introduces one of the lesser known of the major Turkish transnational piety renewal movement that have recently established their Pesantren in Indonesia: the Süleymançıs. This paper provides an example of how a new actor of Turkish Muslim organization comes to project itself into a new cultural environment and adapts to that new context as well as contested their religious authority in Indonesian Islam through establishing Pesantren (Islamic education institution). One obvious characteristics of the Pesantren is to works closely with Indonesian universities. This paper is based on ethnographic research conducted in Indonesia and additional observations made in Turkey, Germany, and Australia. The study aims at documenting of the arrival of the Süleymançıs in Indonesia providing service in the form of high quality religious education considering the available ‘opportunity spaces’. This paper will also illustrate that an educational networking between Pesantren and University shares mutual benefits in order to educate younger generation in both secular and religious education. This networking could be an alternative model for future of education in this globalized era.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Pesantren and University, Turkish Muslim Movement in Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Pesantren in many of its form could be said as the oldest Islamic educational system in Indonesia. It has survived through centuries and continues to play an important role in Indonesia (Dhofier, 2009). To begin with, Zamakhsyari Dhofier offers some basic elements to define pesantren. At the very least it requires a mosque (as its religious, social, and educational center), student dormitories (*pondok*), the students (*santri*), the pesantren leader (*kyai*), and the study of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) (Pohl, 2006).

The basic elements proposed by Dhofier are still relevant to some extent. However, pesantren has been developing and its focus expanding. This has led to a variety of pesantren types. According to Muhaimin (1995), pesantren can be classified into four different models regarding its Islamic educational system. The first one is the *traditional pesantren*. This type of pesantren does not offer a specific curriculum for study. Usually the santri live in the boarding house near the house of the Kiyai. The Kyai offers teachings in Islamic studies in a very traditional manner, known as *sorogan* (individualized instruction) and *bandongan* (collective learning) methods. The subjects are mainly the Arabic language and Islamic knowledge, such as *fiqh* and *ushul fiqh*.

The second type is *pesantren with madrasah*. This pesantren offers a classical teaching method in a madrasah (Islamic schools). The curriculum is set by its own kiyai or adopted from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA). The third classification of pesantren is fairly similar to the second one, only it offers an ordinary public-school education administered by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The last type noted by Muhaimin is the *boarding only pesantren* that only provides boarding accommodation to students. The santri of this kind of pesantren go to public schools outside the boarding complex. Even though the Kiyai still remains the central figure and charismatic person, the role of the kiyai is quite minimal compared to the other types of pesantren. Later developments of pesantren also include *salafi pesantren* which is organized mainly by Hadrami descendants and alumni of Middle Eastern education institution graduates. The salafi pesantren—to some extent—receive academic and financial support from Gulf countries (Hasan, 2006, pp. 51-58). The emergence of salafi pesantren points to the significant influence of recent Arabian alumni and the spread of Wahabism.

The role of pesantren is currently more widely recognized by various authorities. For example, the government is paying more attention to it and showing appreciation for the significance of pesantren. The growing number of pesantren means they play a significant part among the educational institutions in Indonesia. According to the report by the Ministry of Religious Affairs 2008, the number of Pondok Pesantren institutions in Indonesia was 21,000 with a total of 4 million students. The education system of Pondok Pesantren has been also formally acknowledged by the National Education Laws No II, 1989, which made Pondok Pesantren one of the nationally-recognised education systems (Zakaria, 2010).

Pesantren is not only noted for its educational role. Zulkifli (2002), for example, shows how pesantren has been playing an important role in maintaining Sufism in Java, Indonesia. According to his research, Sufism is practised and maintained in the pesantren milieu. The maintenance of Sufism in Java is seen in two different ways: First as an affiliation of a particular Sufi order and secondly as maintaining Sufi teachings without being necessarily affiliated with a particular Sufi order. Pesantren is recognized for the role it plays in civil society. The research of Florian Pohl (2006) has successfully described the role of pesantren not only in terms of Islamic education, but also in civil society. This is illustrated in the ways that Islamic education deals with such issues as antiviolence, interfaith dialogue and interethnic conflicts. Unfortunately, after the 9/11 tragedy, the image of pesantren is associated with the breeding ground of fanaticism, terrorism or radicalism (Shuja, 2005). In the Western mind, Islamic education has a bad reputation for promoting religious fanaticism and radicalism, backwardness and the oppression of women (Dijk, 2011, pp. 4-5; Pohl, 2006). So, it is commonly known that some Muslims might have adopted extremist interpretations of Islam. Some of them take part in religiously-motivated violence. But what is much less widely recognized is the extent of peace-building within the worldwide Muslim communities. The majority of Muslims condemn religiously motivated violence and are even shocked by the exploitation of their religion. Therefore, a number of efforts are being made by many Muslim organizations and leaders to promote peace education. Sufism, among other Islamic studies issues, is seen to be as a remarkable instrument for eradicating religious terrorism. It offers tolerance and acceptance which are profoundly important in establishing better relations between communities both now and in the future.

This paper will examine another development of pesantren, which could be called as a transnational Pesantren (Bamyeh, 1993; Hopkins, 2002; Vertovec, 2009; Vertovec & Robin, 1999; Wajdi, 2015). This pesantren, the Suleymaniyah, originally comes from Turkey and then established its branches in Indonesia since 2005. This paper will particularly address the topics on networking the pesantren with the university to establish its role in the society. This will also show the uncovered role of the university within the society, including the one surrounding the campus.

DISCUSSION

The Suleymancis in Indonesia has established a pesantren. The terms itself has been changing from asrama, to pesantren tahfidz, and later Yayasan Tahfidz Suleymaniyah (Uicci, 2018; Wajdi, 2015). This transformation was a glocalization (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2006, 2007; Roudometof, 2005) process to meet the Indonesian context needs regarding the pesantren or Islamic education institution in general. Although the pesantren name has changed during the time, the foundation in which the pesantren Suleymaniyah managed is still the same. The foundation is called, The United Islamic Cultural Center of Indonesia (UICCI) which is an Islamic social organization founded in 2005 by both Turkish and Turkish Muslim volunteers based in Istanbul Turkey (Uicci, 2018).

UICCI dormitory branches are already available in some parts of Indonesia and also in almost all countries of the world. The UICCI Foundation is a social and educational organization established in 2005 by Turkish and Indonesian volunteers to provide scholarships to junior high school, high school, students and Allied Quran recipients in the form of complete facilities, and religious and linguistic education in free with funds raised from Muslim communities, both in Turkey and Indonesia. Currently UICCI has branches spread in Jakarta, Jogjakarta, Medan, Puncak, Bandung, Surabaya, Semarang, Aceh, Klaten, Sukabumi, Temanggung and Pangkalan Bun (Kalteng) with more than 700 students. UICCI invites all Indonesians to actively participate in UICCI's various activities, through your participation, UICCI will continue to expand its reach to all corners of Indonesia (Uicci, 2018).

In the Suleymaniyah, the students are expected to gain both general studies and religious knowledge. The general studies subjects are taught outside the Süleymancı schools in the public-school system run by the government or in Islamic schools that offer general

curriculum studies. Therefore, the Süleymancı students may go to government schools from junior high to university level during the day time. Or they may attend the program of religious schools such as Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) or Madrasah Aliyyah (MA). While some students do go to MTs, other UICCI students attend general high schools (Sekolah Menengah Atas [Senior High School]) or vocational schools (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan). This policy is also adopted at the university level. The UICCI does not limit admission to university students doing religious studies courses, and some UICCI students are in university faculties such as economics or health. To ensure the high achievement of its students in their general education, the UICCI also provides support and assistance—for example, in the form of an enrichment program in general sciences, which is delivered by young teachers of the UICCI (Wajdi, 2015).

In this sense, the Pesantren Suleymancis has managed to establish networking and mutual agreement commitment with universities around their branches. One of the universities is Universitas Negeri Jakarta. This university, particularly is located nearby the central of the Suleymancis branch in Jakarta Timur. Many of the religious students of the Suleymaniyah are also university students at the Universitas Negeri Jakarta. The curriculum has been designed to meet this need. Normally the religious activities and studies starts at early in the morning and stops at around 7 to allow the student preparing and pursuing their ‘secular’ study at the universities. And then later in the afternoon the religious study is begin again.

Pesantren Suleymaniyah is a huge network of pesantren with excellent facilities. Therefore, the Suleymaniyah benefit the transnational management to support the pesantren, the establishment and as well as the development. The Suleymancis also implements multilevel management. From the lowest level, ie branch / center, then State level, then region and then all concentrated in Turkey. Transnational, there are about 33 branches that have been established in Indonesia. Each of these branches or dormitories is managed by one of the directors / persons responsible for the dormitory. The entire dormitory is then managed by a UICCI director at the State level. Related to management, these levels are hierarchical and solid, in the sense that they cannot be broken through. Everything must be tiered and obeyed in every level.

Interestingly, with a range of transnational organizations that can promise a variety of posts, no definite career path. In fact, the abi who already qualified in the field of Sufism because

provided from the beginning and then strengthened again when *tekamul*, thinking not to seek position. This appointment system is trust and the arena of recommendations from top to bottom. Positions such as directors or others are seen as responsibilities that have high consequences, so they do not think to pursue them. Better not to have extra responsibility because the responsibility is also extra. "If you have a high position, it will come with high responsibility and ultimately higher accountability." Some abi also there are tend to focus on the aspects of teaching. Prefer to be a teacher. However, it does not mean they are anti to enter the managerial world. There is even a strong understanding that when given the mandate to be part of the managerial of Suleymancis, they should not refuse. Because, the task is given also along with his help. That is, any task that is charged, it will be supported by Suleymancis.

CONCLUSION

Globalization has allowed a traditional mode of Islamic education institution such as Pesantren to wider its connection with a modern secular education institution such as university. This cooperation has produce a wider role of Islamic education instruction such as pesantren to allow its graduate to have carrier in religious field of secular one. This paper also shows that university can play a role by establishing the cooperation with another education institution to allow more wider audience for education in Indonesia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to thank the participant of this study which have allowed the completion of this paper. My sincere thanks goes to the management of the Suleymancis in Indonesia and across the world for their permission to me to conduct an ethnographic study in their organization. I would like also to thank my students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta who are also *santri* at the Pesantren Suleymaniyah for their information, support, and time for discussion.

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