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Not Only One But Many: How is the Islamic Educational Contest Shaping Indonesian Muslim Profiles?

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Abstract

Through the historical lens, we can see that the development of religious group diversity in certain religions is real and inevitable, including in Islam. Various factors can be put forward to explain this, but of all possible explanations, education surely has the crucial role. In the Indonesian context, the development of Islamic education has generated multi-faces of Muslims. Since the first educational reform in the early twentieth century, Islamic education has not only been a response to the colonial government's *ethische politiek* policy, but has also become a crucial factor in the making of Indonesian Muslim faces. This article attempts to explore how the Islamic educational contest generally has shaped the Indonesian Muslim profile, at least since the early twentieth century until nowadays, with heuristic and sociological approaches in the frame of process philosophy, specifically on development of education, rather than political and ideological debate. The aim of this article is to illustrate the extent to which educational developments and contestations among Islamic groups have general significance for the making of Indonesian Muslim profiles. This article found that: (1) educational contestation has a significant role in the making of multi-faces of Indonesian Muslims; (2) the diversity of Muslim profiles has steadily increased since educational reform and contestation took place; and (3) educational contestation occurs in a very dynamic way that involves not only ideological indoctrination, but also educational innovation and creative adaptation.

Keywords: *Islamic society, Indonesian Muslim, profile, educational contest*

Introduction

As the largest Muslim community in the world, Indonesian Muslims have many 'faces'. According to data from the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2022, around 241.699 million people identify themselves as Muslims, but that huge number is divided into a number of groups, both formally affiliated with religious organizations and not. Instead, this fantastic number has a complex diversity. In this context, it is not surprising that studies on Indonesian Muslims always involve categorization and classification as an attempt to unravel the phenomenon. Such an endeavor is considered important as one of the key aspects of understanding Indonesian Muslims. Muhamad Ali (2007), for example, tries to show how scholars have made such efforts, especially since post-independence. The categorization is based on many perspectives and covers a wide range of phenomena, from political ideologies and schools of thought to insights and attitudes and views on modernity. Ali, for example, notes the many categories that have emerged, including (1) *Santri-Abangan-Priyayi*; (2) Traditionalist-Modernist; (3) Political-Cultural; (4) Fundamentalist-Liberal; (5) Globalization-Local Perspectives; and (7) Great-Little Tradition or High-Low Tradition (Ali, 2007, pp. 33-62).

The most famous and influential early classification theory is of course that of Clifford Geertz through *the religion of Java* (1960). Geertz's categorization did speak to the context of Javanese Muslims, but was later adopted in general in the reading of Indonesian Muslim societies. Ricklefs (1981) and Beatty (1999, 115-116), for example, consider Geertz's categorization relevant and helpful, although they also provide notes. Slowly but surely, critiques of Geertz's thesis emerged. According to Ali (2007), scholars such as Eldar Bretan (1968, 1978), G.W.J Drewes (1968, 1978), Donald Emerson (1976), Harsja Bachtiar (1973), Parsudi Suparlan (1976), Dhofier (1982), Boland (1982) and Eldar Bretan (1999) provide substantial criticism. *For Priyayi* (aristocrat)*, Abangan* (traditional-syncretic)*,* and *Santri* (religious), categorizations are bound to the temporal context of time and space and can therefore be relevant at one time and not at another (Ali, 2007).

Furthermore, Masdar Hilmy (2018) asserts that Geertz's categorization contains many conceptual and empirical weaknesses. He argues that since the process of acculturation and Islamization continues, especially in the context of Javanese Muslims who are the object of Geertz's observation, in a fluid, dynamic, and multi-vocal manner, the hybrid identities are more accurate to describe it (Hilmy, 2018, pp.64-65). This argument is strongly supported by Carool Kersten's important research findings in *Islam in Indonesia: Contest for society, ideas, and values* (Kersten, 2015). Kersten carefully captures the dynamics of discourse contestation that developed among post-reform Muslims and their actors. Kersten recognizes that at the end of the twentieth century, there is a kind of blurring to map the profile of Indonesian Muslims absolutely. The intellectualism that emerged, he says, was able to break through the classic categories that were commonly used before (Kersten, 2015, p.42). Given the dynamic process of profiling Indonesian Muslims, it seems appropriate to borrow Kersten's term, that Indonesian Muslims are a representation of Islam with unity in diversity (Kersten, 2017, pp.131,169).

However, for all the complexities that surround the phenomenon, there is no denying the vital position of education. In the history of human civilization, it has played an important role in shaping society. Values, ideas, knowledge and beliefs that shape identities or profiles are transmitted through education. In the temporal context of space and time, education is the key to change or sustainability. There are several big questions that need to be answered, but this article will focus on (1) how is the Islamic educational contest shaping Indonesian Muslim profiles? (2) what are the emerging trends? And (3) and how do we interpret it? Of course, these are not easy questions to answer, given the time span, the diversity of factors and the size of the population covered. Generally, this article will focus on the key trends that have emerged in the wave of Islamic education reform since the end of the colonial period, from the early twentieth century to the current period, such as in the contestation of modernist and traditionalist education movements, up to the emergence of Islamic education movements sponsored by

transnational groups as new entrants in the arena of Islamic education contestation.

Method

The article is based on library sources. The author collected data from books, journals, articles, and websites which are relevant and connected to the topic of discussion, Islamic educational development and its contestation in Indonesia, without limiting the year of publication. This article uses two approaches to process, read, analysis and understand the data: heuristic and sociological approaches in the frame of process philosophy. The heuristic approach leads the author to collect historical data and capture important findings, including events. The sociological approach allows the author to analyse historical findings in their social context, especially in relation to action-reaction and social construction processes, such as the dialectic between externalization, objectivation and internalization (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). As a fundamental framework, the author uses the process philosophy theories from A.N. Whitehead (Whitehead: 1978), which allow the author to see historical and social phenomena as a dynamic and consistent process involving many actual entities, especially through his approach to the educational process as self-creation and holistic experience (Whitehead, 1967; Hill, 1988, p.60).

Results and Discussion

Education and Islamization

Education as a distinctive and important activity has deep roots in the early Islamic period (Al-Sadan, 1999, pp.5-18). The fact that Islamic education is directly connected to revelation and the prophetic tradition, making it develop rapidly as the foundation of Islamization activities in history, is also the basis of the development of a distinctive intellectual tradition, as stated by Bayard Dodge that 'Prophethood was like the planting of a seed, destined to blossom as the intellectual heritage of

Islam' (Dodge, 1962, p.1). The Prophet's teaching, which was continued by the Companions and subsequent generations, underwent significant development. The process of Islamization, which involved a wide area and a long period of time (Arnold, 1913, pp.10-11), provided theoretical enrichment and diversification of educational practices (Badran, 1989).

Of course, the fact that education is not the sole factor in the Islamization process must be acknowledged, but education is the most significant key and determining factor in profiling Muslim individuals and societies. First of all, in a philosophical context, considering that education is a process of installation, as Al-Attas (1999, p.13) states, 'education is a process of installing something into human beings', shows that education is not a passing phenomenon. Instead, education is a long process with significant impacts. Secondly, in a practical context, the existence of any ideology or school of thought that develops in the social, political, and cultural context of Islam is strongly tied to education. The sustainability, preservation, and even hegemony of certain groups in Islamic history is determined by the process of the accompanying education system. The role of education is very central and vital to build the foundation of scientific buildings, but also increase endurance, especially when it is not in line with political power. In the context of theological schools, for example, even though *Asy'ari*, *Atsari* (traditionist or *ahl hadith*) and *Maturidi* were once unsupported in the era of al-Makmun (813-833 A.D), they were able to survive organically.

Another example is the Islamization of the Malay-Nusantara archipelago, which has always been associated with two major patterns: Sufism through the Sufi movement and *fiqh* through the *fuqaha* movement. In the context of survival, there are various schools and groups that try to exist, but only a few stand out, such as *Asy'ari* Theology, the Shafi'i *Mazhab*, and the *Qadiriyyah* Order (Bruinessen, 2012). The ruling factor is very important in determining the existence of a group or sect, but it is incidental and tends not to be sustainable. In contrast, the education factor, even though it does not receive direct support from the ruler, if it has a good organization and independent funding sources, it will naturally increase the level of endurance of a group, or, in other

words, it can maintain the perceived Muslim appearance. As a thesis, this statement will be discussed further.

Two Waves of Islamic Educational Reform in Indonesia

As a region far from the centre of Islam's emergence, South-east Asia in the last two centuries has played an important role in the development of Islamic education. Various models and institutions in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Patani (Thailand) have made valuable contributions to the innovation of Islamic education development (Sahad & Sa'ari, 2011; Latif & Musa, 2022; Siren, et al., 2018; Siren, et al., 2019). Its significant influence is not only at the local level as a representation of regional Islamic education, but also at the inter-regional level, such as in the case of Kulliyat Banat Al-Azhar, which was inspired by Diniyyah Putri Padang Panjang (Yusutria, et al., 2021). The fact that Indonesian Islamic education, for example, is able to inspire centres of Islamic education in the Middle East that were previously established, is evidence of the real contribution of the role of Islamic education in regions that are often considered peripheral (Ahmad, 2022).

The development of Islamic education in Indonesia since the establishment of Islamic political institutions, marked by the Islamic Sultanate in Samudra Pasai, has undergone a significant transformation. Local Islamic education grew organically, either with or without the support of the ruler, mainly in the hands of local ulama. Various local education systems emerged with their own local terms. Of course, the most prominent are *pesantren* in Java, *dayah* in Aceh, and *surau* in Minangkabau (Dhofier, 1982; Azra, 2003). Over a long period of time, these institutions have become agents of forming a distinctive Muslim community identity. In a long historical context, say from the thirteenth century to today, there are several crucial points that influence the development of Muslim education in Indonesia. But in general, the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been the most crucial. Of course, there is no disregard for the previous centuries, but the transformative changes that have impacted the various manifestations of

Indonesian Muslim society today are strongly influenced by this period (Kersten, 2017).

The arrival of colonialists and imperialists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a significant impact on Muslim societies, but did not have a radical impact until the early twentieth century. The massive emergence of colonial-formed educational institutions in the early twentieth century through ethical political policies was a serious challenge to Islamic education that had previously existed in Indonesia (Noer, 1991). Positively, through the Dutch East Indies educational institutions, a number of Indigenous children had the opportunity to receive an education, but this is where the challenge lies. Given that education is not only a process of installing knowledge but also norms and values, even a world view, a paradigm shift in thinking, including thoughts and attitudes towards traditional norms shaped by centuries of religion and custom, is a necessity. In the context of colonialism, the education provided by the Dutch East Indies government, instead of being an attempt to provide real education, led to colonial mimicry (Wesseling & Dane, 2018). This triggered the first wave of Islamic education reform in Indonesia, which directly or indirectly influenced the diversity of Indonesian Muslim societies (Noer, 1991; Kersten, 2017; Tayeb, 2018).

The ethical political policy produced various institutions, such as Volksschool, Europe Lagere School (ELS), Holland Chinese School (HCS), Hollands Indlandse School (HIS), Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs (MULO), Hogere Burgerschool (HBS), and Algemene Middelbare School (AMS), First Class School, and Second Class School that carried their own mission and world view, especially the secular world view that spread in Europe (Nasution, 2001). Especially in Java and Sumatra, the emergence of the Dutch East Indies government schools was a momentum for Islamic education reform. This momentum was utilised by the Indigenous Muslims, who were divided into two major groups, namely the Old and the Young, who were later more familiarly known as traditionalists and modernists. Broadly speaking, there were three models of new Islamic education institutions that emerged as a result of the transition from

traditional educational institutions (*surau, pesantren, dayah,* and *meunasah)*: firstly, the Old People's School, which carried out purely religious education; secondly, the Young People's School, which carried out religious education plus general subjects; and thirdly, schools that implement secular education plus religious subjects (Abdulah, 2018, p. 266).

Generally, this movement occurred in Java and Sumatra. In the context of Sumatra, especially Minangkabau, the first category of new institutions was driven by the 'Kaum Tua' who were members of PPII (Persatuan Pendidikan Islam Indonesia) which later became known as PERTI (Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah), while the second category was promoted by the 'Kaum Muda' who were gathered in Sumatra Thawalib and Diniyyah. The third category was first initiated by H Abdullah Ahmad through Adabiyyah School and several other schools. In Java, renewal involved Islamic organizations, such as Persis, Al-Irsyad, Muhammadiyah and NU. The latter two organizations significantly dominated the reform movement. Muhammadiyah tends to be in category two, while NU is in categories one and two. Within this renewal movement, especially in Java, the concept of Mu'allimin education also developed, especially among Muhammadiyah, NU, and Persis. Apart from these three organizations, there are also Mu'allimin education concepts that aim to produce young non-affiliated teachers, such as Kulliyatul Mu'allimin Islamiyyah (KMI) Darussalam Gontor. Other new madrasah models include Madrasah Tajhiziyah and Takhassus initiated by Al-Irsyad, and Madrasah Salafiyyah by NU (Maksum, 1999, p.110; Daulay, 2007, pp.97-99).

Interestingly, however, despite the anti-colonial motive and the improvement of the level of Islamic education, rivalry and contestation occurred among Indigenous Muslims. It is common knowledge that contestation between modernist and traditionalist Islamic education often occurs, as in the case of the relationship between Muhammadiyah and NU, which are the largest representations of both Indigenous Muslim groups. Both play a major role in shaping the mainstream face of Muslim society and forming a distinctive Muslim profile. In the context of

religious views, Muhammadiyah-NU have relatively different attitudes, especially in terms of the connection between pre-modern intellectual traditions and the adoption of modernity discourses (Maemonah et al., 2023). Early Muhammadiyah displayed a critical attitude towards a number of things that were considered normal by NU. It can be said that Muhammadiyah has a puritanical style, although in the context of the mainstream it is not to the extreme and rigid. After the establishment of the *Tarjih* and *Tajdid* Assembly, Muhammadiyah widely held views that were at odds with NU. In addition to Muhammadiyah's connection to the global Salafis movement, whether promoted by Muhammad Ibn Abdil Wahhab, Muhammadiyah's egalitarian and critical character are defining aspects that distinguish it from traditionalist groups, especially NU, which allow *taqlid* (imitation) behaviour and emphasize the importance of continuity with tradition, as well as its preservation (Arifin: 2016).

The peaks of differences between the two can be observed in their political track records, which are open and easy to highlight. NU's departure from Masyumi, for example, indicates the existence of differences that at the time could not be resolved through dialogue. Another practical motive that can be understood is that NU's large mass base wanted political independence (Fealy & Platzdasch, 2005). Apart from Muhammadiyah, another modernist group that received privilege was Persis. Compared to Muhammadiyah, Persis's political character is stronger, reflected in the many Indigenous Muslim political elites with Persis backgrounds, such as Mohammad Natsir, Isa Ansary, Mohammad Roem, and others. Compared to early Muhammadiyah figures, Persis figures were more prominent in their political movements in Masyumi. In the context of legal debates regarding socio-cultural phenomena, such as *tahlilan* (religious ceremony after death), the contestation of discourse between Persis and NU was more heated. Persis figure Ahmad Hassan, for example, engaged in open and lengthy debates with traditionalist figures (Federspiel, 1996).

Both modernist and traditionalist groups developed their own distinctive education systems. Muhammadiyah, for example, in the first half century, had a high level of adoption of science and the teaching of

non-Arabic foreign languages. For example, Kweekschool Moehammadijah, known as Madrasah Mu'allimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta today, taught German. This was not uncommon at the time, where the majority of schools only taught Dutch or Malay outside of Arabic, as the language of religious studies. In addition, the teaching of astronomy is also something that is most striking among other sciences. In the context of the early modernist generation, Muhammadiyah in particular, such a curriculum structure gave its students more access and scientific abilities than the traditionalists (Muttaqin, 1995). Faster adoption and adaptation to modern science became the initial capital of the early modernist group to gain wider access in the world of public higher education and could compete with graduates of pre-independence Dutch East Indies government schools and the post-independence Indonesian government. This also had a further impact on the students' probability of entering the professional world of work, whether in government has significantly increased in urban society.

In the early decades after independence, at least until the reform era, modernists had better access to government. Even though, during the New Order era, there were restrictions on political Islam, including for modernists, which reached its lowest point through the dissolution of the Masyumi Party, modernists still had better access to formal education. However, in the last two decades of the twentieth, government's attention to updating and developing Islamic education at the tertiary level paved the way for traditionalists to flourish (Watson, 1996).

The last two decades of the twentieth century saw a 'new era' of relations between traditionalists and modernists. Mainly through the climate of intellectualism in universities, group egos could be suppressed and brought into academic discussions instead of emotional debates. Rivalry seems to be fading and starting to lead to collaboration and cooperation, especially on issues of concern to the government, such as the promotion of religious moderation to establish cosmopolitanism (Jubba, et al., 2022). This is why, as Kersten (2015; 2017) points out, after the reformation there began to be a kind of blurring in judging whether one is part of a modernist or traditionalist Muslim group. The boundaries

became increasingly blurred. Interestingly, along with the phenomenon of harmonization of Indonesian modernist and traditionalist Muslim groups that soon formed a new identity which was more fluid for Indonesian Muslims, the last two decades have been a space and period of rapid growth for transnational movements. The most prominent of these movements were *Salafism*, the Muslim Brotherhood (*Tarbiyah* or *Ikhwanul* Muslimin movement) and Hizbut Tahrir (Liyanti, 2017). Starting from activities through education, the three movements found some great momentum to become a forum for the remaining post-Masyumi Islamic political forces that were not strongly affiliated with existing Indonesian Muslim organizations. The success of the three organizations in attracting the masses, especially from among urban Muslim modernists, cannot be separated from the modern Islamic education system that they offer and present. If Muhammadiyah or Persis, for example, as the two major modernist elements, build their modern Islamic education innovations more organically, the three transnational movements bring bolder and even revolutionary innovations. It can be said that the programs of institutions affiliated with these three movements are visualised more freshly and adequately, so that they eventually become trendsetters; for example, archery and horseback riding training programs in major Salafi boarding schools, such as Islamic Centre Bin Baz Bantul (2023) and Isy Karima Karanganyar (2023), two of the major Salafi schools in Indonesia. Another example is the robotics extracurricular program (HKTV, 2023), which has become the trend of Islamic education today, initiated by the transnational movement's leading educational institutions, such as Nurul Fikri Boarding School Lembang (2023) and Pondok Pesantren Husnul Khatimah Kuningan (2023), which are affiliated with the *Tarbiyah* Movement or *Ikhwanul* Muslimin. These new educational program innovations are generally supported by adequate educational facilities and infrastructure, also also a willingness to experiment with educational programmes.

Salafi madrasas in Indonesia, for example, have been able to grow so fast because they are patrons of the international *salafi* movement centred in the Middle East. Not only do they get fresh funds for

infrastructure development, they also get sufficient human resources. Moreover, after the opening of Salafi-affiliated high schools (Ma'had Aly) in a number of locations, the resources of Salafi madrasas are increasing every day. The opening of LIPIA, for example, is a major milestone in the spread of the Salafi movement in Indonesia (Hasan, 2008). Recently, however, Salafi groups have also diversified considerably. Their phenomenon of peer criticism (*tahzir*) confirms the multiple faces of the Salafi movement. There are a number of Salafi groups that exist such as Sururi-Turotsy, Hajury and Muqbily-Rabi'iy. In the context of contestation, the first group is the most rapidly growing; in addition to financial support from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf countries (Hasan, 2010; Aidulsyah, 2019), their ability to innovate, adapt, and openness is higher than other groups. This is evident in their ability to network with each other, including through the web directory of the Sururi-Turotsy, *www.sekolahsunnah.com*, which gives a compiled network of educational institutions throughout Indonesia.

Of course, the acceleration and innovation of education cannot be separated from funding or financial support from outside parties. It is common knowledge that educational institutions from the three transnational movements have strong international donor networks. This kind of condition is certainly a serious challenge for educational institutions formed with local funds and thoughts. The positive impact is that both traditionalist and modernist Indonesian Muslims are urged to immediately innovate in order to have a foothold in educational contestation (Jahroni, 2020). This, in turn, fuelled the second major wave of change that gathered momentum in the early twentieth century. Reformasi was the gateway to this change. Transnational movements which previously moved relatively underground while building a base have now surfaced and become 'new challengers' as 'the new santri' to the old contestants. If in the past the contestation arena of Indonesian Muslims was 'contested' by local modernist and traditionalist groups that have relations with more classical traditions, now the tradition of international Muslim thought and ideology has entered the arena. Interestingly, the three transnational movements that have entered and

developed in Indonesia often do not get along, making the contestation map to show the face of Indonesian Muslims more vibrant and interesting to observe. In addition, there are many new discourses that complement the various polemics of the old discourses that have not been resolved, further heating up the contestation arena. In this context, education is key, not only as a forum for regeneration, but also as a proxy in the contestation arena. Educational institutions are not just a place to instill doctrine, but also the foremost shopfront of Muslim groups to attract the masses, for the sake of group sustainability, including political interests (Kersten, 2015; Saat & Burhani, 2020).

Anatomy of Islamic Education Contestation in Indonesia

As mentioned earlier, there have been at least two most important waves of Islamic education reform since the early twentieth century in Indonesia. Of course, events such as the State's recognition of the formality of madrasah education in Law No. 4 of 1950 on Education in the Soekarno era and the 1975 Joint Decree of Three Ministers in the Soeharto era were also crucial (Tayeb: 2018). However, in the context of a more organic and natural contestation, the two moments mentioned above became fulcrums or fulcrum points that became the ground or arena for future contestation. As civil power, including Muslim power, looks and feels more fluid and consolidated, something that has long happened after the early Masyumi movement, the arrival and development of transnational Islamic ideological movements provides its own colour in the contestation of shaping the face of Muslim society and profiling individual Muslims (Jung, 2020).

Both the contestation of the first wave of educational reform in the early twentieth century, and the contestation of the second wave that began in the late twentieth century until now, have their peculiarities. However, before moving on to discuss their uniqueness, it is important to uncover their common ground. If we observe carefully, the two waves of renewal have several similarities as process. Firstly, the spirit of the times (*zeitgeist*). In general, we find that any change must be connected to an

idealized impulse that generates zeal. Both the early and late twentieth centuries had the same *zeitgeist*; namely, that Islamic education needed to adapt to the changing times. The fact that the adaptation has to be done will inevitably lead to a number of direct and indirect consequences, and therefore the renewal of Islamic education must consider what aspects should be retained and what needs to be changed. In this context, the attitudes of the actors involved in the reform of Islamic education can be said to be not monolithic. Ideological and historical backgrounds that act as collective memory become the most important reference in this case and therefore necessitate diversity considering that Islamization in Indonesia went through many channels. However, what deserves attention is that there is a difference between the indoctrination of rigid theological views and the renewal of non-theological aspects that takes place very dynamically as 'process' (borrowing Whitehead's term), namely through innovative educational activities.

Aside from the spirit of the times, it is also important to recognize practical motives. The fact that education is not only a tool to preserve values, norms, or doctrines, but also a political tool to gain power, cannot be ignored. Taufik Abdullah, through his dissertation, carefully and straightforwardly shows how schools and politics are like two inseparable coins, especially in the context of the political impact of Islamic education reform in Minangkabau. The fact is that knowledge is valuable capital to mobilize people and increase the masses, which ultimately leads to a political movement (Abdullah: 2018). In the context of the second wave, we can also clearly see that educational reform as a preparation for educational contestation is the earliest and basic capital of practical motives, including political motives. It must be recognized that Muslim groups in Indonesia have certain political desires (Wahyudhi, 2015; Arif, 2016). It is true that financial support in a democracy is important, but the long-term loyalty of the masses is supported by education. Through education, collective memory is built, doctrine is embedded, and ideals are unfurled. Old Muslim political forces, such as Muhammadiyah and NU, for example, are no longer present as political parties but consciously

encourage their cadres to emerge as leaders and to be recognized as cadres. Track records are important, including educational track records.

With regard to the differences between the two waves of renewal, we can start with two main points; namely, the landscape of the contestation arena and the profile of the contestants. The context of the early twentieth century was the Indigenous movement against colonialism that had made them miserable for a long time. Educational reform, at that time, not only acted as an expression of preserving religion or educating the lives of the people, but also carried further ideals, namely the existence of political unity, which also meant the desire for independence. Islam as the majority religion at that time was a primordial bond that strongly supported the national movement. True, there was a fierce ideological contestation after independence in the constituent assembly over the establishment of the basis of the State that led to the 'defeat' of the Islamists, but this does not diminish the evidence of the strong influence of Islamic education on its adherents who were committed to the formation of a nation-state political entity. Residues of disappointment, even today, of course still remain, but this is only the case for a small segment of the Muslim community, where the mainstream has gracefully accepted this, and moved on to other equally crucial issues (Jung, 2020).

The landscape of the late twentieth century, of course, is different. After a long period of confinement by authoritarian regimes, with strict surveillance on activities that could potentially destabilise the regime, reformasi has been a long wait for freedom of expression, including for Muslims. However, since the context of reformasi is different from that of independence, especially in terms of the main topics that are discussed and debated, the anatomy of the contestation is also different. If in the pre- and early independence contexts, the debate on the basis of the State was the top topic, even among Indonesian Muslims, this theme can be considered relatively obsolete, especially practically, while theoretically it is needed as an academic study. Themes such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights, justice, public space, and tolerance emerged in its place. Of course, some of these debates include

various ideologies and a number of interlocutors, but ideology is not displayed in a vulgar way, but is tucked behind the various structures of the arguments that are built (Kersten, 2015).

The contestation arena has also become more lively, because the profiles of the contestants is increasingly diverse (Hidayah, et al., 2024). The entry of transnational Islamic movements into the contestation arena is the most striking variable. Of course, when it comes to politics, the emergence of PKS as the political channel of the Muslim Brotherhood is the most phenomenal, while the Salafi movement at the grassroots has increasingly made the old contestants nervous. Hizbut Tahrir (HT) was the first contestant to fall out of the political arena, as its revolutionary and radical ideas were deemed off-side by the government and eventually disbanded. However, as an organizational movement in the education sector, Hizbut Tahrir still has significant influence. Its sympathisers are still loyal enough to educate the younger generation in their own educational institutions. Compared to Hizbut Tahrir, the Salafi Islamic Schools movement and the Integrated Islamic Schools of the Muslim Brotherhood's Tarbiyah movement are much more desirable given the softer nature of the movement and its ability to adapt to public desires and expectations (Machmudi, 2008; Makruf & Asrori, 2022; Maksum, et al., 2022).

At the very least, the current contestation of Islamic education to shape the face of Muslim society and the profile of Indonesian Muslims occurs in three stages, each of which represents what Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1991) termed externalization, objectivation and internalization. Firstly, is the indoctrination phase, which is the most fundamental process of education. Secondly comes the validation phase that tests the extent to which the influence of indoctrination affects students. These tests will appear when a person starts to go out of his environment and interact with other groups. Thirdly, comes evaluation and finalisation, which is when the results of the validation phase begin to crystallize, so that a person who has received a certain Islamic education begins to critically examine the process of his journey and begins to decide on his final attitude. These three phases can occur

repeatedly in the life of a Muslim. For example, it is possible that when entering the primary education stage he was educated in the Muhammadiyah environment, during secondary education in NU institutions, and higher education in universities that teach the doctrine of Salafism. The phases that a Muslim goes through contain these three stages, and therefore become dynamic as a process.

Islamic Education Contestation and the Interface of Indonesian Muslims

Considering that Islamization in Indonesia took many paths with various backgrounds, it is almost certain that Indonesian Muslims are not a monolithic entity. The contestation of Islamic education since the beginning of the twentieth century has given a lot of meaningful colours to the search for the identity and appearance of Indonesian Muslims. Broadly speaking, this contestation needs to be grateful considering that, outside the categorization of Islam, Indonesian society is already so plural. There are at least two main notes on the phenomenon of this contestation of Islamic education: first, theoretical notes; and the second is more practical.

The theoretical impact of the contestation over Islamic education in Indonesia is multifaceted. However, two of the most important are discourse struggles and educational innovation. In the context of the struggle for discourse, we will broadly see an increase in the abundance of perspectives from the various discourses that are raised. Education as a facility for indoctrination of values and ideologies can provide valuable capital to enter into contestation. Keep in mind, the contestation of Islamic education can no longer be simplified in the form of institutional contestation, but also the contestation of ideas, especially those that are the focus of local and global publics. The fact that the world today is connected and has become a kind of global village—borrowing Marshall McLuhan's term—requires Muslim communities not only to be aware of events and topics of issues discussed globally but also to give opinions and assert their attitudes.

As for educational innovation, it is common that the more fierce the contestation, the greater the impetus to innovate. As mentioned earlier, the innovative ideas of the transnational Islamic education movement, even if they go against the grain, are alluring. Take, for example, the exclusive crash course of the Qur'an *tahfiz* program. For the traditionalist group of *madrasah salafiyyah* with a tradition of Qur'anic memorisation that has been established for hundreds of years, this phenomenon is contrary to the generality and values that are adopted, including that memorising the Qur'an is not an instant process, but happens through a long and rigorous process. In addition, the process of memorising the Qur'an must also be accompanied by teaching the sciences that complement it and, more than anything else, the whole process is under a teacher with a chain of transmission. But in fact, tradition-bound logic is not the only response. In this context, even market logic applies. The exclusive and fast-paced description becomes a distinctive distinction that attracts the Muslim community at large, especially those who are not affiliated with any religious organization. Considered more efficient and effective, such educational programmes began to receive a positive response and appreciation, even becoming a trend (Maghfirah, et al., 2023).

This is certainly a serious challenge for both established and standardized contestants, as well as new contestants. Old contestants, as long-established authorities, need to evaluate and innovate to make their programs more efficient and organized without losing their fundamental values. As for the new contestants, these fundamental criticisms need to be answered because they are related to the legitimacy and quality that they want to build. In addition, the relation between technical innovation and ideological firmness is an important issue. Sometimes, ideological firmness, which is fundamentally vital because of its position as one of the educational cores, can be compromised, if not 'defeated' by market demand that is embedded in the process of technical innovation.

Notes on practical impacts are equally interesting. Of the many notes, the question of mass struggle and its impact is crucial to highlight. The fact that education is an indoctrination tool, one of whose outputs is

to produce a new generation of masses, whether as conservators, innovators, or just followers, presupposes the logical consequences of mass struggle, especially after the indoctrination phase. As mentioned earlier, the validation phase after indoctrination will test the extent to which the internalization of doctrine will survive when met with thoughts or actions from different educational backgrounds. Loyalty, preference, and profile identification will generally occur after passing through this phase. For example, a person who was educated in a Salafist institution may disbelieve in *tahlilan*. When the education process is over and the individual returns to the community or society and interacts with a different environment, such as the NU milieu, which fully accepts *tahlilan* culture, the revalidation phase will take place, which leads to someone going to the evaluation and finalization phase to itself, made his externalization output in Berger's term. Of course, there are several possibilities that result from this process, generally compromised or non-compromised, according to how intensive the communication is and how good the dialogue is. In this context, we can assess the extent to which education can be a determinant factor in shaping the profile of a Muslim, and, by extension, an Islamic society. The depth of understanding through indoctrination is an internal determining factor, although external factors such as *sungkan* (uncomfortable feeling towards others) also have a strong influence, especially in the Indonesian context.

As a closing note, I agree with Khairudin Al-Junied's thesis on South-east Asian Muslim cosmopolitanism, including in Indonesia. According to Al-Junied, Indonesia is a secular-pragmatic State. The history of government since Seokarno and Soeharto, until the reform era shows the clear position of the authorities that Indonesia is not an Islamic State but a religious State, meaning that religion is an important factor that is not separated from State life. Therefore, the relationship between religion, especially Islam as the majority entity, and the State must be maintained. Tensions among political Islam occurred in various leadership regimes, but the Soeharto period was one of the most decisive for the model of Islamization and furthermore the development of Islamic education and the appearance of Indonesian Muslims. Soeharto's

depoliticization of Muslims through the single principle policy led to a non-political Islamization organizational movement that shaped the character of Indonesian Muslims today (Al-Junied, 2018, pp.175-185). This period is also a new round of contestation in Islamic education, as transnational movements begin to move in, grow and, in turn, become part of major changes of Indonesian Muslim profile, for example through the jilbab revolution (Al-Junied, 2018, p.136). Another crucial part is the homework of managing fanatical and extremist individuals in every Indonesian Muslim group. Contestation will actually be a promising arena to improve the overall quality of Indonesian Muslims, and this opportunity will fade if individuals who are too fanatical become representatives of their groups. In this large context, Islamic education plays a key role. It is a tough task to oversee this whole process well, but if it is successful, in the sense that the contestation is really able to increase the capacity and capability of Indonesian Muslims, not just adding to its diversity, then the author agrees with Robert W. Hefner's optimism that Indonesia will have a bright future and will influence the global world (Hefner, 2022).

Conclusion

The process of educational contestation has not ended and will continue as long as Islam remains a primordial part of Indonesian society. This contestation is dynamic and fluid, but sometimes it also creates conflict. Education, as the most fundamental dimension in shaping the face of Indonesian Muslims, has experienced at least two major waves of renewal, namely in the early twentieth century and in the late decades and early twenty-first century. Especially after the reformation, when the old contestants from modernist and traditionalist circles began to merge and collaborate, new contestants from transnational movements emerged and became serious challengers. The changing landscape of contestation, with more and more diverse participants, makes the contestation more fierce and, of course, increases the diversity of profiles. In the end, winning the struggle for discourse and control of the

masses become the two most important focuses to be able to submit a claim representation of the Indonesian Muslim profile. However, as far as the author's observation goes, mainstream Indonesian Muslims have so far shown a fluid, cosmopolitan, and sometimes even hybrid profile. This confirms that educational contestation has a strong role in shaping the profile of Indonesian Muslims on the one hand, but on the other hand it also confirms that education does not fully guarantee profile formation. There are areas outside formal education institutions that are also determinant, such as cultural background and cultural condition.

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