

ISLAMIC EDUCATION AS IDEOLOGICAL MARKETING IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN ISLAM

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Abstract

In reformation era since 1998, the religious movements have had momentum to express their ideological identities. This has an impact on the strengthening of contestation between religious groups in Islam. These religious groups use Islamic educational institutions as a forum to instill and promote their respective ideologies. This research aims to analyze the background of the historical ideological rivalry of religious groups, and how Islamic educational institutions serve as a marketing platform for their ideology. This research uses a qualitative approach with contestation theory as the analytic framework. This research argues that the use of Islamic educational institutions as a forum for ideological competition and promotion between Islamic groups today is a repetition of sectarian competition in the middle ages. However, it contemporary competition is more complex because it involves religious movements across the countries.

Keywords: Ideology, Islamic Education, Islamic Movement.

Introduction

The development of Indonesian Islamic Education tends to be complex. The problem faced is no longer a problem of epistemology - there is a gap between secular science and religion, as Jackson and Parker (Jackson and Parker 2008, 21–53) found. It is not as the challenge of modernization as Karel Steenbrink analyzes (K. A. Steenbrink 1994), secularization problems in the view of Tuna Mustafa (Tuna 2011, 540), or answering the religious and social expectations of the Islamic community as Azra views (Azra 2006; Burhanuddin and Afrianty 2016). Yet, the matter that is faced is an ideological, - the rivalry between Islamic groups that places educational institutions as the main instrument and place of contestation.

The collapse of the New Order and the beginning of reformation in 1998 contributed to strengthen competition between religious groups, in which there were ideological interests across countries to exert the influence (Meuleman 2011, 236). Reformation era provides an increasingly open space for the growth and emergence of various religious movements with their respective ideological identities, whether democratic, progressive or conservative. The

presence and development of transnational Islamic movements such as Salafis, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, Jama'ah Islamiyah, Tarbiyah - Ikhwan al-Muslim and Jama'ah Tabligh in various regions has further strengthened this trend (Van Bruinessen 2013, 21; Hefner 2009, 55). Based on Azra (Azra 2013, 72–73; Burhanuddin and Afrianty 2016) there are previous unknown religious movements such as the Ahlu-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah Communication Forum (FKASWJ), the Lasykar Jihad, the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) gained momentum.

The internal struggle of Muslims represented by religious groups have an impact on the increasingly diverse features and ideological orientations of Islamic educational institutions. Islamic boarding schools, Madrasa, and Islamic schools are not currently only established from the response of Indonesian localities, as held by Muhammadiyah, Nahdatul Ulama, and Nahdlatul Wathan but also by a typology of education that has affiliations with transnational religious ideologies, such as Salafi education, Integrated Islamic School affiliated with the Tarbiyah Ikhwan al-Muslim group, Shi'ah education, Jama'ah Tabligh education and the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia educational institution.

In Indonesia, even though madrasa and Islamic schools have become parts of national education system, but it is independently managed by the Muslim community. This is because Islamic institutions in Indonesia are under the control of the Muslim community rather than the state (Azra 2013). Therefore, the ideological control of religious groups on the substance and orientation of Islamic education is very strong. This is possible considering that at the national level 91% of the 78,035 Islamic education institutions at the primary school to higher education level are private (RI 2018), and most of them are operated by religious groups.

This research aims to analyze the background of the historical ideological rivalry of religious groups, and how Islamic educational institutions serve as a marketing platform for their ideology. Based on the results of empirical analysis using the contestation theory formulated by Antje Wiener (Wiener 2014, 3) this research argued that the use of Islamic educational institutions as a forum for ideological competition and promotion between Islamic groups today is a repetition of sectarian competition in the middle ages. However, this contemporary competition is more complex involving religious movements across countries.

Ideological Contestation in Education: Historical Reflection

Ideology can proceed and move in all spheres of life, especially education. As a social forum that collects and forms the structure and culture of society, education is considered a strategic institution for the dissemination and production of ideological apparatus, whether based on religion, ethnicity, economy, or politics (M. Apple and Apple 2018; Bartolomé 2008;

Yusuf 2020). Moreover, educational institutions can become - what Leonardo (Leonardo 2003) called as marketing ideology place, in which ideology is nurtured, produced and promoted. It is inevitable to have the view that there is no neutral education or it is free from ideological interests.

The relation between education and religious ideology in Islam has existed for long time in line with internal dynamics of Muslims. It starts from a theological issue, then developing into a communal bond, and institutionalizing it as an ideological social and political movement. Syalabi (Syalabi 1954, 40) reveals that the presence of Madrasa Nizamiyah, the first madrasa in the Islamic world cannot be separated from ideological motivations. According to Shalaby, this madrasa which is dedicated to the name of its founder Nizam al-Mulk was founded with the aim of promoting the ideology of Sunny sect in order to dispel the dynamics of Shi'ah ideology. Ideological linkages with educational institutions have made Madrasah Nizamiyah not only an instrument to reinforce certain ideologies, but also as part of an effort to perpetuate political interests and power (Syalabi 1954, 40). It is not an exaggeration if the results of Safi's study shows that Nizam al-Mulk is the personification of the Seljuq dynasty religious ideology that manifests orthodox Islamic science in the political realm (Safi 2006, 203). However, Madrasa Nizamiyah is seen as the prototype of a modern educational institution in the future and a vehicle for the revival of a prominent Sunni doctrine (Azra, Afrianty, and Hefner 2007, 56). This condition shows that madrasahs have two sides, namely as Islamic educational institutions and a medium for transmitting certain religious ideologies.

In line with Shalaby, dialectic of religious ideology and education on the one hand, and power on the other is shown by Omid Safi (Safi 2006). By making the Seljuq dynasty an object of study, Safi presented a close relation between education, ideology and power. Educational institutions, in this case, the Nizamiyah Madrasa, according to Safi, are an important instrument, based on the Khanaqah (Sufi institutions) and Iqta (financial management institutions) in the spread of Sunnis as the official state ideology, that Shi'i Ismailism opposes as opposition. By using Althusser's ideological state apparatuses theory in analyzing this phenomenon, Safi shows that Nizam Mulk succeeded in synergizing knowledge (Islamic orthodoxy) and politics by utilizing educational institutions, Sufism, and several other state institutions to support his power. In fact, based on Stanton, besides successfully using waqaf as a source of funding, Nizam Mulk has also succeeded in developing Shafi'ism by placing staff, teachers, preachers, and librarians in madrassas. In this context, al-Ghazali based Stanton has an important role (1990).

This connection also continued and had the dynamics of Islamic education during the Fatimiyah Muslim dynasty. The penetration of religious ideology in Islamic education at this time is reflected in the content of the curriculum in which the educational process takes place. The madrasas that were originally developed and the curriculum contained the Sunny ideology. It have now turned into seedlings for Shi'ah understanding, the ideology of the rulers. Like madrassas, mosques do not only function as places of prayer, but also as educational institutions where fiqh scholars gather with Shi'ah schools to design books as teaching materials for the community. Other educational institutions, such as palaces, al-Azhar Mosque, and other educational components such as libraries and references are used as a medium for socialization and internalization of Shi'ah ideology.

Previously, The results of Tariq Rahman's (Rahman 2008, 63–65) study of education in Pakistan showed diversification - what he called the religious *maslak* (stream) under the umbrella of the two major Sunni and Shi'ah ideologies. In the Sunni, there are three sub-sects reflected in the three madrasas; Doebandis, Barelwists, and Ahl-hadith (*Salafi*). Besides Shi'ah as the second group, there is Jama'ah Islami which also has its own madrasah. Furthermore, These madrasa become a place to penetrate the principles according to their respective ideologies. These groups ideologically and geneologically have relations that are transnational, including Indonesia. Through the Haramain Islamic Foundation, Ahl-Hadith madrasa received financial support from Saudi Arabia, while the Shi'i received financial support from Iran. The same phenomenon also occurred in India. The results of Arshad Alam's study show that *dastur al-'amal*, the constitution for madrasas in this country, clearly states that madrasas must be based on *ahl-sunnah wa al-jama'ah*. This is reflected in the curriculum, text books of student life, and a number of study groups. This pattern is also evident in the Doebandis institution known as madrasa Wahabi. Alam concluded that Islamic education in India is not a monolithic reality, but plural ideologically (Alam 2007, 48).

In the context of Indonesian Islam, social movements driven by religious ideology are the most important parts of the diversity of Muslims. The ideological controversy that was raised in this educational institution actually has had historical roots since the early 20th century, between the Ulama Association, Muhammadiyah and Persis on the one hand, and Nahdlatul Ulama on the other (Esposito 1995, 190–93). It is because the diversity of Islamic societies in Indonesia has non-singular features and characteristics. This is a manifestation of the various articulations of Islamic doctrine. This phenomenon is a synthesis of the doctrine of normativity and historical dimensions. Therefore, it brought up to an understanding and meaning of different religious doctrines. In the end, it will result in different religious behavior (Jamil

2007). Geneology of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals with the Middle East on the one hand (Azra 2004), and its struggles with Indonesian cultural localities are considered as the diversity factor (Federspiel 2001).

Ideological Marketing in Islamic School: The Islamic Movements Roles

After the end of President Soeharto era in 1998, religious movements have obtained a large enough space after a long period of laying down and carrying out movements on a limited scale. Entering the reformation era, the struggle between Islamic education, democracy, and social change was marked by the emergence of religious movements on the one hand, and the strengthening of State-sponsored democratization on the other hand, was increasingly intense (Hefner 2009, 55). These religious movements are not only established from the response of Indonesian locality, such as the Muhammadiyah Islamic organizations and Nahdatul Ulama, also transnational Islamic movements such as Jamaah Islamiyah, the Tarbiyah movement of the Muslim Brotherhood, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, Hizbut Tahrir, and the Salafi Group (Van Bruinessen 2013). This condition resulted in a variety of movement patterns and thoughts, both radical, moderate and democratic. These movements had an impact on the diversity of Islamic education in accordance with the ideology and orientation of the organizing organization. They consider education as a strategic vehicle to strengthen and develop and strengthen their existence. So that it can be witnessed the diversity and dynamics of Islamic education not only as an academic institution, but also as a forum for dissemination and contestation of each ideology (Saparudin 2017c; Mujiburrahman 2019).

When the diversity above is institutionalized and metamorphosed in the form of mass organizations, and it is used as justification and legitimacy for religious behavior, these social processes lead to discourse battles for Islamic hegemony which is seen as the most authentic (Arifin 2008, 41), as (Wiener 2014, 3) called legality and legitimacy based on norms. The institutionalization of diversity represented in the form of community organizations such as Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Persis, al-Irshad, the Salafi movement, Nahdlatul Wathan, and several other Islamic groups have had a broad impact on the diversity of Muslims in Indonesia. An ideological movement articulated in various forms and aspects of life makes these groups tend to negate one another. The expansion of effect and expansion of the proponent in order to strengthen existence can be seen as the main motivations for this trend. Even historically, the establishment of the Nahdatul Ulama has reflected a form of competition if not resistance to other Islamic groups (K. Steenbrink 1994, 68–69)

Those Islamic movements above consider and build the education as a strategic place for their struggle. Organized by religious groups, Islamic education can create, strengthen, and clarify the diversity of internal Islamic religious patterns. Saparudin's (Saparudin 2017, 81) research shows that Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama as the largest Islamic group in Indonesia have succeeded in organizing educational institutions in the form of Islamic boarding schools, madrasas and Islamic schools. In fact, in line with the mobility of Muslims, supported by openness and information technology, Indonesian Muslims have been presented with educational institutions that organize salafi movements. Hefner also presented how the dakwa movement turned into a political movement, - or at least combining da'wah with politics, as reflected in the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*) that is now penetrating the world of education. PKS views education as a strategic vehicle for achieving political interests and Islamist ideology. Although it is not openly, all proponents of the Integrated Islamic School are encouraged to be affiliated with PKS (Hefner 2009, 73–78). Supported by the thoughts of Ismail al-Faruqi and the Middle East Ikhwanul Muslim movement, schools initiated by PKS elites grew and developed in Indonesia (Bryner 2013, 250–52).

Ideology struggle is also shown by Shi'ah, a group that is often considered as "non-Islamic" by some people. Zulkifli's findings showed that the implementation of formal schools is not only a place for the formation of Shi'ism identities, but also as a way to gain recognition from the majority of Sunni groups in Indonesia. According to Zulkifli (Zulkifli 2014), one of the targets of organizing this school is the conversion of students to *shiism*, or at least obtaining recognition and tolerant views from their students. By combining formal, non-formal, and informal learning, Shi'ism finally has obtained recognition as a religious group among moderate and Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia.

Through the educational institutions that have been built, these Islamic movements can deliver the desire to (more) survive and develop their existence in accordance with their respective ideologies. Educational institutions such as madrasa and Islamic schools serve as what Leonardo called as a marketing ideology in which ideological messages are disseminated and articulated (Leonardo 2003, 26). This characteristic assumes that ideology is a fundamental element in the survival of a social group or organization. Fundamentally, ideological penetration tends to be hegemonic in nature, that dictates all tastes, moral habits, religious and political principles throughout social relations, especially in moral and intellectual perspectives (Burke 2005, 127). As explained by Bartolone (Bartolomé 2008), it has the potential to be interpreted discriminatively in the learning process in the classroom. By

quoting Gramsci's opinion, Bartolome shows the possibility to be realized both through the literature and the education system, and other supporting media in culture in educational institutions. There is even a possibility that hegemony will occur to strengthen ideology, that is manifested in various cultural forms, interpretations, rituals, and provides opportunities to represent the status quo (Kincheloe 2008, 266). Ideological interests are felt so strong that they tend to "ignore" the reality of diversity and society's expectations of education.

As long as the metamorphosis continues, education where ideology is in it, it can be reduced by non-academic forces and interests. Perhaps this trend is assumed by Nottingham as the background for the birth of the anti-institutional tendency of religion in the form of Religious Mass Organizations, where religion can be ridden with other world interests and concerns (Elizabeth 2002, 128). This view also reflects how religion is often used as a justification and legitimacy for political, group and even economic interests.

The intersection of religious ideology, science and political interests can have implications for what Apple calls official knowledge where knowledge as legitimate of particular interest (M. W. Apple 1993; Michael 1993) It can even become what Leonardo called that knowledge is form of commodity (Leonardo 2003). In this condition, the curriculum that actually reflects the needs of society, must be subject to a certain ideology. Knowledge is developed to the extent that it can support and strengthen the ideology of the organizers, in which teachers are positioned as the main agents. The implication is that educational institutions can lose their scientific vision and blur the boundaries between ideological interests and scientific interests.

Responding to the increasingly strengthening discourse and demands of multiculturalism education today, Amin Abdullah revealed that the never-ending problem is the distinction between religions and internal religions. Moreover, the issue of internal religious differences is still difficult apart from political and ideological interests. According to Abdullah, the difference in opinion and interests of NU and Muhammadiyah is a clear example of how negative interest involves theological and ideological sentiments that have penetrated in various fields, including education. Academic institutions that should prioritize rationality, objectivity, and personal qualities have not yet been able to escape from the ideological rivalry among Islamic groups (Abdullah 2005). This condition will become even more pronounced when the infiltration of the conservative puritan Salafi Wahabi transnational ideology penetrates the world of formal education in Indonesia.

The diversity of religious movements with their respective ideologies that have strengthened since the 1998 reformation, has strengthened the complexity of Islamic education in Indonesia. If it is conducted historical reflections on the relation between the state and Islam,

Islamic education in the form of Islamic boarding schools, madrasas and Islamic schools show a rhythm that is full of processes of negation (in the early days), negotiation, and finally integration. This dialectic is the consequence of the political dynamics of the nation and state, in which religion is a central issue. Islam in this context, through its religious organizations and educational institutions, determines the face of the nation and it is increasingly being realized that it can't be ignored. The spirit of transforming education into national education is not only a strong desire to equalize the position and quality of Islamic education with general education, it is also for the government to ensure that Islamic education runs in accordance with the national vision. The establishment of the *Surat Keputusan Bersama Tiga Menteri* (the agreement of three Ministers) in 1975 is one of the state strategies to manage and orient the Muslim community to accept the Pancasila ideology and its development (Porter 2004, 52–56). Being part of the national education system, according to Jackson and Parker, Islamic education has a responsibility not only to form good Muslims and to become good citizens, but also to be able to respond to the challenges of development and modernization (Jackson and Parker 2008, 45). Thus, the diversity of religious ideologies developed in Islamic schools and madrasas can be protected by the Pancasila ideology. When the status is juridically equal, Islamic education seems not ready to give up its ideological identity, even though it accepts Pancasila as a common ideology.

The dissemination of ideology in education shows that madrasas have two sides, first, as Islamic educational institutions, and second, as a medium for transmitting certain religious ideologies (Saparudin 2017). According to Charlene Tan (Tan 2014), cultural framing as an estuary of ideology places educational institutions as text (doctrine) and context (place) of indoctrination. As a text, educational institutions present various sources and learning materials that are specifically relevant to the ideological mission. Meanwhile, as a context, educational institutions can become social settings or cultural framing platforms. In this context, it allows what Apple called knowledge as legitimate certain interests (M. W. Apple 1993; Bryner 2013).

On the other hand, ideology can also work in a positive sense. Zeus Leonardo in his book “Ideology, Discourse, and School Reform” (Leonardo 2003), discusses the positive value of ideology. I identified at least three matters that show the importance of ideology in this book. First, ideology can be a strategy to formulate the meaning building of life. Ideology creates the social world and gives its meaning. Second, ideology can be a medium for shaping and organizing experiences. Third, ideology can also be used to fight domination and injustice. Therefore, Leonardo emphasized that ideology as a mediator is not a determinant of

consciousness. Therefore, ideology can be used as a collectivity energy in carrying out educational reforms to improve academic quality, as long as it is placed within this positive meaning framework.

The significance of religious ideology in Madrasas and Islamic schools managed by the Islamic groups seems to be confirmed by the emergence of urban Muslim “elite” schools. For example, the Islamic schools of al-Azhar, al-Izhar, Madania, Sabilillah School, Madrasah Pembangunan, and the Gontor educational institution, as well as several other Islamic educational institutions, is a contemporary trend. These institutions that carry the spirit of pluralism and do not identify with and are affiliated with certain religious ideologies, have turned out to be favorite and quality institutions, and thus, they have received high appreciation from the public (Azra, Afrianty, and Hefner 2007, 70). In this condition, as revealed by Amin Abdullah, and Suprayogo above are strengthened. On a different side, in general madrasas and Islamic schools managed by Islamic groups, despite their long history and dominant numbers, still occupy the second line position as the community's choice, after state education institutions and elite schools in various regions, that are not ideological affiliated.

Conclusion

The rivalry among Islamic groups make Islamic education as ideology marketing place. Increasingly diverse religious groups use Islamic education institutions as a platform to instill and promote their respective ideologies to strengthen their existence amidst the competition. Although this phenomenon has been very visible in the last 10 years, it turns out that sectarian competition among groups in Islam has been going on for a long time, especially in the Middle Ages. The difference is that today's competition is more complex and broad, involving very diverse groups, economic and political aspects. Meanwhile, competition in medieval times involved limited groups, and was more focused on theological issues. It means that the use of Islamic educational institutions as a forum for ideological competition and promotion between Islamic groups today is a repetition of sectarian competition in the middle ages.

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