

ETHICAL POLITICS AND THE REVIVAL OF ISLAMIC TEACHING IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: This article aims to elucidate the interconnection between ethical politics and the resurgence of Islamic doctrine in Indonesia, which serves as the foundation for the enduring tradition of Islamic doctrine. The development of Islam in Indonesia is seldom connected to the history of colonialism. Nevertheless, numerous transformations in Islamic thought and teaching occurred in close proximity to the implementation of ethical policies in the late colonial era. This study employs a qualitative methodology with a historical anthropological perspective. The research data is derived exclusively from historical literature and is analysed in accordance with Foucault's theory of power relations. The study concludes that ethical politics exerts an indirect influence on the resurgence of Islamic teachings. The aversion to all things European among Islamic circles has resulted in the importation of comprehensive Islamic teachings from the Middle East as a foundation for the evolution of Islamic teachings in Indonesia. This article posits that colonial ethics played a role in the resurgence of Muslim intellectuals and reinforced the standing of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Keywords: Ethical Policy, Indonesian Islam, Islamic Teaching.

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Introduction

Rapid industrialisation and the growth of the bourgeois class in Europe encouraged the colonial regime to modernise the administration of the colonies, bringing with it modern ideas and attitudes. The traditional colonial model, which prioritised exploitation, lost its place and encouraged the birth of an ethical policy. This policy was also an attempt to overcome the potential impact of indigenous resistance.¹

The colonial regime, according to Ricklefs, was not really serious about implementing a political ethics that aimed to empower the natives and promote industrialisation. However, it cannot be denied that Van Deventer's political-ethical triad of irrigation-education-emigration made the appreciation of modernity, symptomatic since R.A. Kartini, increasingly rapid and unstoppable.²

Religious Muslims were generally less interested in appreciating the modernity brought by the colonialists. The relationship between indigenous Muslims and the colonial regime was one of disharmony, though not always conflict. The historical trauma of the Diponegoro War or the Java War seemed to be a separate sentiment, where local figures were reluctant to appreciate the traditions and progress of the European nation, while the colonialists kept their distance from the local community. The spread of sentiment between the colonialists and the local community had a long-term effect, until there were two cultures in the archipelago with relatively little interaction.

The Dutch style of colonisation was very different from that of the Spanish or Portuguese. The Dutch generally showed no interest in introducing their language, culture or religion into their colonies, preferring instead to proclaim the traditional freedom of faith as a consequence of the Erasmian school of thought in the Netherlands.³

However, this does not mean that there were no changes in Islamic teachings with the introduction of modern ideas, because during the same period many local scholars emerged who made great

¹ Dwi Nur Imsawati, Sri Handayani, and Sumardi. "The Intellectual's Contribution in the National Movement of Indonesia, 1908-1928." *Jurnal Historia* 1, no. 2 (2017): 283-4. See also A. Daliman, *Sejarah Indonesia Abad XIX-Awal Abad XX*. (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2012), 72.

² M.C. Ricklefs, *Sejarah Indonesia Modern 1200-2004* (Jakarta: Serambi Alam Semesta, 2007), 325-330.

³ Eva Kubatova, "The Dutch Colonial Presence in the West Indies in the 17th Century: A Historiographical Overview." *Historie-Otázky-Problémy* 2 (2016): 160.

contributions in various fields of Islamic scholarship and even went global, such as Imam Nawawi al-Bantani, Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani, Sulaiman ar-Rasuli al-Minangkabawi, Muhammad Mahfudz and so on. In addition to contributing to the development of various branches of Islamic scholarship, they became pioneers in the renewal of Islamic teachings until they became more established, in addition to many who chose to become figures of resistance against the colonialists.⁴

The traces of the renewal of Islamic education that they pioneered still survive in the tradition of religious education in various modern Islamic boarding schools and madrasas. Their presence changed the paradigm of Islamic education, which in earlier periods was elitist and emphasised the spiritual dimension. Since their time, Islamic education has become more systematic and comprehensive according to their respective fields, such as Aqidah, Fiqh, Sufism, to the teaching of Arabic language rules. Although they have been relatively less receptive to the ideas of modernity directly from the West, they have fundamentally renewed Islamic teaching by creating different methods and media for teaching Islam that are more practical and able to reach all groups.⁵

The perspective of this research uses Michel Foucault's theory of power relations, considering that the dynamics of Islamic teaching are the fruit of the dialectic of Islam with culture, tradition and power of the ethical-political era. Foucault's concept of "power" is an important aspect in building assumptions on objectification (prior objectification).⁶ Muslim society in the era of ethical politics is seen as

⁴ Agung Perdana Kusuma, "Relasi Ulama dan Penguasa Masa Kolonialisme." *Indo-Islamika* 8, no. 2 (Juli-Desember 2018/1439): 132.

⁵ Departemen Agama (DEPAG). *Pola Pengembangan Pondok Pesantren*. Jakarta: Dittekapontren Ditjen Kelembagaan Agama Islam Depag, 2003, 10.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203604168>. Black Hawk Hancock, "Michel Foucault and the Problematics of Power: Theorizing DTCA and Medicalized Subjectivity", *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy: A Forum for Bioethics and Philosophy of Medicine* 43, no. 4 (2018): <https://doi.org/10.1093/jmp/jhy010>. Aaron L. Miller, "Foucauldian Theory and the Making of the Japanese Sporting Body," *Contemporary Japan* 27, no. 1): 13–31. DOI: 10.1515/cj-2015-0002. Nick Hardy, "The Contingencies of Power: Reformulating Foucault," *Journal of Political Power* 8, no. 3 (2015): 411–29. DOI: 10.1080/2158379X.2015.1099210. Robert Nola, "Knowledge, Discourse, Power and Genealogy in Foucault." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 1, no. 2 (1998): 109–54. DOI: 10.1080/13698239808403240.

a social entity with different values, traditions and cultures that have inherent power. They carry the power of discourse or knowledge regime in the midst of the ever-changing historical episteme, which contains a disciplinary order and can be linked to networks, productive activity structures and inherent in the will to know. The interweaving of knowledge and power is immanently supported by the knowledge regime that determines the course of the truth game in the history of the development of movements in the era of the national movement.

This research is carried out using historical anthropology, whose methodological basis is based on historical research methods, which Abdurrahman explains as a method of solving problems from a historical perspective.⁷ The data is organised into a set of information that can provide a construction of understanding about the aspects of the problem being studied. The data is tested by comparing one data with another to determine its validity. The research data is then analysed from a power perspective and leads to the final findings of the research.

Ethical Politics and the Revival of Islamic Science

Modernisation in Europe began with the discovery of various new technologies for agriculture, manufacturing, transport and the military, which made colonisation in the archipelago seem increasingly unshakable. The position of the colonial regime was not only supported by technology, but also by various new norms that were created as rules for business and government.

“The period around 1800 marked the beginning of a new era in world history, beginning with a worldwide revolution, of which the American Revolution was perhaps the beginning and the French Revolution the culmination. The shockwaves of the revolutions would be felt for a long time, not only in Europe but in other parts of the world. The political revolutions of the decades around 1800 were themselves a consequence of the great European cultural and intellectual revolution known as the Enlightenment”.⁸

⁷ Dudung Abdurrahman, *Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2007), 53.

⁸ Wim van den Doel, “The Dutch Empire: An Essential Part of World History.” *The International Relevance of Dutch History* 125, no. 2-3 (Juli 2010): 182.

Colonialism is the extensive control by one nation over another nation, which dominates, oppresses and exploits other nations for its own interests.⁹ This is not to say that the colonised nations did not contribute, although the strong traditions and cultures of the nations of the archipelago made them follow the mindset and traditions of the European nations almost unchanged. Socially, economically, politically and culturally, the local communities were indeed disadvantaged, but European scientific and technological products more or less paved the way for the revival of local traditions and cultures. Improvements in the quality of science and technology in the medical field, although still limited, were able to increase life expectancy. Advances in transport infrastructure, such as railways and shipping networks, facilitated the more dynamic mobilisation of people from one place to another.¹⁰

The increasing frequency and quality of services managed by modern companies made the mobility of the local population relatively more dynamic and encouraged interest in performing the Hajj pilgrimage. In fact, the Hajj pilgrimage became a dilemma for the colonial government because its social and political impact was so risky for the continuation of its power in the archipelago, as Burhanudin noted:

“... For the Dutch colonial power, Mecca was seen as the centre of an international conspiracy that inspired the spirit of the anti-colonial movement in the Muslim world..”¹¹

On the other hand, the Hajj was a lucrative business and the colonial government could not allow this opportunity to be taken by companies owned by other nations. In fact, Dutch shipping was facing increasing competition from large shipping companies from England, Malaya and the Arab mainland.¹²

Even without the help of the colonial government, the pilgrimage was commonplace in the past, despite various difficulties. Although it was relatively difficult with traditional means of transport,

⁹ Patrick Zultener and Daniel Künzler, “Impact of Colonialism: A Research Survey.” *Journal of World-System Research* 19, no. 2 (2013): 291.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 310-5.

¹¹ Jajat Burhanudin, “The Dutch Colonial Policy on Islam Reading: The Intellectual Journey of Snouck Hurgronje.” *Al-Jami'ah* 52, no. 1 (2014): 28.

¹² Erlita Tantri, “Hajj Transportation of Netherlands East Indies, 1910-1940.” *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage* 2, no. 1 (Juni 2013): 119.

this did not dampen the desire to worship in the Holy Land. Without the help of the colonial government, the pilgrimage was affected by the season, the weather, security, and the need to stop at various ports, starting from Aceh, India, Hadramaut or several other ports to reach Jeddah.¹³ Performing the Hajj pilgrimage is a common practice that has been going on for a long time and has opened up good business opportunities for Hajj travel agents in the Dutch East Indies and those in the Hijaz. These agents work with guides, sheikhs in the Hijaz region, who are usually called *Jawah*.

Even without the facilitation of the colonial government, in the past, the pilgrimage was commonplace despite facing various difficulties. Although it was relatively difficult to do with traditional transportation equipment, it did not dampen the desire to worship in the holy land. Without the help of the colonial government, the pilgrimage was influenced by the season, weather, in addition to security, to having to stop at various ports, starting from Aceh, India, Hadramaut or several other ports in order to get to Jeddah. Performing the Hajj pilgrimage has been common practice, and has been going on for a long time and has opened up good business opportunities among Hajj travel agents in the Dutch East Indies and those in the Hijaz. These agents work together with guides, sheikhs in the Hijaz region who are usually called *Jawah*.

The colonial government's ban on the Hajj pilgrimage was also impossible to enforce because it was not only difficult to control but also had the potential to provoke resistance, so it was carefully managed and served. The government's intervention in facilitating the Hajj pilgrimage benefited the people of the archipelago because, as citizens of the East Indies colony, pilgrims from the archipelago were treated with the same respect as Europeans in the Hijaz. They were not seen as South Asians, who were generally less valued by local officials, but as Muslims from East Asia, who were administratively classified as Europeans.¹⁴

Before the era of ethical politics, the relationship between the Santri and the colonial regime was harmonious, but in fact secretly filled with disharmony. The trauma of the Java War seemed to create its own sentiment, with local figures reluctant to appreciate the

¹³ Ibid., 123.

¹⁴ Martin van Bruinessen, "Muslims of the Dutch East Indies and Chaliphate Question." *Studia Islamika* 2, no. 3 (1995): 116.

traditions and progress of the European nation, while the colonialists themselves kept their distance from interaction with the local community. The spread of sentiment between the colonialists and the local community had a long-term effect, until there were two cultures in the archipelago with relatively little interaction.

“The Dutch style of colonisation was very different from that of the Spanish or Portuguese. The Dutch generally showed no interest in introducing their language, culture or religion into their colonies, preferring instead to proclaim the traditional freedom of faith as a consequence of the Erasmian school of thought in the Netherlands”.¹⁵

This situation provided space for Islamic boarding schools and village kyai to express their roles and knowledge in building religious culture, while the colonial regime could explore economic resources without much interference from society.

After the inter-island and inter-national trading culture ceased, Mecca and Medina became the travel destinations for some of the Nusantara community, including Java. Hajj became a special moment for the indigenous community, where in addition to the purpose of worship, the status of hajj provided added value to increase a person's social status in the midst of their community. Hajj was also a moment to absorb new knowledge and inspiration from outside. Moreover, some of the hajj pilgrims from the archipelago visited the Hijaz not only for worship, but also to trade and to study the Islamic religion.

This makes the Hajj pilgrimage, according to Kartodirdjo as Istikomah, a social source for the revitalisation of the religious life of the Santri community in the archipelago, which at the same time creates a current of change among the indigenous Muslims. Encounters with different cultures have become a means of gathering information and new knowledge that is bringing about change in the country. Like Azra, Istikomah noted that the student community from Java and the archipelago who settled in Mecca began to be exposed to ideas of resistance to European colonialism.¹⁶

¹⁵ Kubatova, “The Dutch Colonial Presence in The West Indies in The 17th Century: A Historiographical Overview”, 160.

¹⁶ “Pelaksanaan Ibadah Haji Abad Ke-19 dan Dampaknya Terhadap Perlawanan Rakyat Terhadap Kolonialisme Belanda.” *Tamaddun* 5, no. 2 (Juli-Desember 2017): 126-35.

Revitalization of Local Islamic Science

In addition to worship and its impact on social status, the Hajj pilgrimage also became a means of perfecting Islamic traditions and understanding from more authentic sources. The Hajj pilgrimage, which also became a means of learning Islam, gradually not only revived the ethos of religiosity but also perfected scientific traditions. The scientific tradition of Islamic boarding schools, which in earlier periods had taught more about mysticism and spirituality, gradually began to shift towards teaching Islam in more detail and in its entirety. The limitations of sources and references in the past meant that Islamic teachings were often presented through *sêrat* and *suluk*,¹⁷ a work that combines Islamic and local values, with more obvious local elements and colours.

The advancement of transport technology owned by European nations opened access to a wider Islamic scientific tradition, which scholars obtained after direct access to sources of Islamic religious teachings in the Middle East. After the return of students from the Hijaz, Islamic sciences developed more fully. Islamic religious sciences began to be taught in a structured and systematic manner, both in their fields and in their levels, and were also supported by richer references, especially by referring to the works of the Imams of the Mazhab and their successors.¹⁸

Without, however, eliminating spiritual teachings and nuances, more constructive and complete Islamic religious sciences began to be taught in various Islamic boarding schools in the country, based on their fields of study, ranging from theology, jurisprudence, Islamic ethics to Sufism. In addition, various traditional Islamic boarding schools taught supporting sciences such as Arabic grammar (*qawā'id*), from the science of nahwu, sharaf, to balāghah; the sciences of the Qur'an, from its rules of reading (*tajwid*), the sciences of ushūliyah, the rules of interpretation, to various books of interpretation; hadith, with

¹⁷ *Serat* and *Suluk* are Javanese literature that is often used as a means of education and information in literary form and language.. I Nyoman Suarka, "Sastra Jawa Kuno Sebagai Cermin." *Avatisme* 12, no. 1 (Juni 2009): 31-5. Quoting Hartono, Mudlofar explains *suluk* as a genre of Sufistic *sastra* that is usually aimed at moral instruction. M. Mudlofar, "Suluk Saikh Majnun (Nilai Sufistik dan Tradisi Pesisiran)." *Bastra* 2, no. 2 (Desember 2015): 116.

¹⁸ Amrizal, "Eksistensi Tradisi Kajian Kitab Kuning dalam Lingkup Perubahan Sosial (Studi Kasus di Pesantren Darun Nahdhah, Darel Hikmah dan Babussalam)." *Jurnal Sosial Budaya* 12, no. 1 (Juni 2016): 73-4.

various books on the sciences of hadith (*musthalab*); and history (*tārikh*). It is not known for certain who initiated the teaching of a more systematic Islamic religion, but it is clear that by the beginning of the twentieth century many large Islamic boarding schools had begun to teach it.¹⁹

The emergence of great scholars who wrote their own works from the Indonesian archipelago in the Arabian Peninsula seems to have contributed greatly to the reconstruction of the tradition of pesantren scholarship in Java and the archipelago. Some students from the archipelago who studied in the Hijaz plains even grew up to become prominent scholars in the Arabian peninsula and became very influential sources of Islamic teachings in the country. The emotional, cultural and linguistic proximity made scholars from the Indonesian archipelago in the Hijaz a destination for Muslim students from the Dutch East Indies, such as Sheikh Ahmad Khatib, Nuruddin Ar-Raniry, Muhammad Yusuf al-Makassary and Imam Nawawi al-Bantani. The graduates of the education in the Hijaz also spread the teachings of these scholars to the people of their own country.²⁰

The students from the Middle East were pioneers in improving the tradition of knowledge in their respective Islamic boarding schools. By the beginning of the twentieth century, several Islamic boarding schools had developed with different characteristics and advantages in certain fields of knowledge. Some Islamic boarding schools had advantages and were more prominent in the teaching of Hadith, other Islamic boarding schools were prominent in the science of tools and so on. For example, in the past, Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School was known to be prominent in teaching Hadith, and Ploso Mojo Kediri Islamic Boarding School was more prominent in the science of tools (*nahwu, sharaf*). These differences made the students who were thirsty for religious knowledge travel from one

¹⁹ Although there are not many of them, Berg, as reviewed by Bruinessen, said that the yellow book began to be used in some pesantren on the island of Java in the 1880s. Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu", in *Bijdragen tot-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 146, 1990, 226.

²⁰ Erawadi, "Akar Tradisi Integrasi Pengetahuan dalam Naskah Klasik Islam Nusantara." in *Conference Proceedings Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies (AICIS XII)*, 3179-80.

Islamic boarding school to another, depending on the field of knowledge they wanted to study.²¹

Revitalization of Islamic Teaching

The arrival of new sources of knowledge from the Middle East became a challenge for the Kyai and religious figures. The language factor was the first challenge to be overcome in teaching the various new knowledge. This encouraged them to develop various works of their own aimed at facilitating the teaching of Islam to students and local communities. Many works in the field of religion were written by Islamic figures in the archipelago. They produced religious works framed in local languages and written in Pego Arabic or Jawi Arabic.²²

Islam, which used to be taught in an elitist way through *sêrat*, *babad* and *suluk*, has recently begun to be taught in different variations and levels, from popular to academic approaches. The changing times have changed the teaching materials in Islamic boarding schools and the *santri* community, where the spiritual approach has gradually been replaced by pedagogical and scientific approaches. Although there is no classification like the modern educational hierarchy, educational materials and approaches have begun to be hierarchical from the lowest to the highest level. Islamic religious education is also based on hierarchies in terms of the level of difficulty of knowledge, although there is no standard and systematic classicalisation.²³

Education at primary and general levels is often provided through *singiran* or *sy'iran*.²⁴ *Singiran* is a learning method commonly used in Islamic boarding schools and Muslim *santri* communities, especially for children or students at the early levels, written in the Arabic *Pégo* script. *Singir* for beginners generally teaches the requirements of attitudes and behaviour, morals, for children and

²¹ In the 19th century, Islamic boarding schools started to teach Fiqh. Ronald Lukens-Bull, "Madrasa by Any Other Name: Pondok, Pesantren, and Islamic Schools in Indonesia and the Larger Southeast Asian Region." *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 4, no. 1 (Juni 2010): 5.

²² Nurcholish Madjid, *Bilik-Bilik Pesantren* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), 34.

²³ Ronald A. Lukens-Bull, *Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia: Continuity and Conflict* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 12

²⁴ *Singir sastra* has received less attention, and some of it is no longer recognised even by the *nabdliyyin*. Moh. Muzakka, "Puisi Jawa Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Alternatif di Pesantren (Kajian Fungsi terhadap Puisi Singir)." *Makalah Kongres Bahasa Jawa IV* (Semarang, 2016): 2-10.

society, as well as teaching Islamic sciences at beginner level. This change makes Islamic teaching more down-to-earth and deeply accepted by traditional society. In addition to rural areas, Islamic education is also taught in primary and secondary Islamic boarding schools through *singiran*, and is not limited to one or two areas of knowledge. For example, *singiran* is widely used to teach theology, fiqh, history (*tārikh*) and various moral codes.²⁵

There are many collections of past *singir* that have not been studied, and there are also many *singir* that were once popular in the Santri community until the early twentieth century, the continuance of which is unknown because they were probably lost with the death of the people who taught them. Among the *singir* that have survived, although they are rarely used as teaching aids, is the *Jawharat al-Tawhīd*, a collection of *singir* that teach the essence of aqeedah or monotheism.

In the field of morality there are several *singir* such as *Mitra Sejati* and *Alāla*; there are also *singir* that teach Islamic law (fiqh) such as the procedures and laws of prayer, namely *singir fasholatan* and *singir* about marriage; *singir laki rabi*; *singir* about history there is *singir paras nabi* and *singir siti patimah*; and *singir* about *tasawwuf* there are *erang-erang sekar panjang* and *singir sekar melati*, *singir tanwirul qari'* which teaches *tajwid*, *singir bahasa arab* which teaches Arabic vocabulary, and so on.²⁶

The method of learning Islam through *nadzām* and *syi'ir* is influenced by Arab traditions. *Nadzām* is usually used by teachers to make it easier for students to memorise teaching material. While *syi'ir* is actually a literary work that is expressive with deep messages, full of symbols and literary in nature,²⁷ in practice both are confused in Javanese and Malay traditions and cultures. In Javanese and Malay traditions, *singir* is positioned like *nadzām*, namely learning through songs that are pleasant to pronounce and easy to understand the meaning of. In the pesantren environment, the *nadzāms* of education

²⁵ Salfia Rahmawati, Rahmawati, Salfia. "Ajaran Islam dalam Naskah-naskah Singir Koleksi FSUI sebagai Bentuk Persinggungan Budaya Islam-Jawa: Kajian Intertekstualitas." *al-Turās* 21, no. 2 (Juli 2015): 253.

²⁶ Moh. Muzakka, "Puisi Jawa Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Alternatif di Pesantren (Kajian Fungsi terhadap Puisi Singir)." *Makalah Kongres Bahasa Jawa IV* (Semarang, 2016): 10.

²⁷ Achmad Tohe, "Kerancuan Pemahaman antara Syi'ir dan Nadzam dalam Kesusastraan Arab." *Jurnal Bahasa dan Seni* 31, no. 1 (Februari 2003): 51-2.

and teaching are actually called *singir* (*syi'ār*) and the learning activities are known as *singiran* or *nadzāman*.

At the middle and high levels, students study written sources in the form of classical books, from the simplest to the most complex, from the legalistic to the most philosophical, and requiring a high level of reasoning. Various branches of knowledge are taught, from the most basic to linguistics, from *nahwu-sbaraf* to *balāghab*; fiqh, from ushul fiqh to the *madzhab* books; history; to Sufism, which is based on books that have been tested among sunnite Muslims, *al-kutub al-mu'tabarab*.²⁸

In the twentieth century, many Islamic boarding schools developed with established classical scientific traditions and became references for society. Traditional Islamic boarding school education reached its peak of maturity when it began to emphasise the tradition of medieval science, both in terms of the substance of the science to be studied and the ethics of the pursuit of knowledge. There are hundreds of collections of yellow books that are read and referred to in Islamic boarding schools, generally grouped into different categories, and generally taught through learning levels that are generally divided into three categories, namely basic, intermediate and advanced.²⁹

Like Mujab, al-Rosyidin stated that the yellow books in the pesantren tradition are not only an orientation for learning in the pesantren, but also contain a value system that shapes the colour of their religious understanding and practice.³⁰ The tradition of pesantren scholarship up to modern times has not included open scientific studies, but rather normative studies. New classical books were accepted as standard norms to be accepted and implemented, not as scientific treasures to be criticised.

For Islamic boarding schools, Islamic education has reached a point of stability that is approaching its end. Its role as an agent of scientific transmission is becoming more and more complete, as all

²⁸ Shiddiq, Ahmad. "Tradisi Akademik Pesantren." *Tadris* 10, no. 2 (Desember 2015): 225-6.

²⁹ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia*. Jakarta: LP3ES, 1984, 87.

³⁰ Al Rosyidin, "Pembelajaran Kitab Kuning di Pesantren Musthafawiyah, Mandailing Natal." *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 1, no. 1 (Januari 2017): 42.

fields of Islamic knowledge are taught in Islamic boarding schools.³¹ Islamic boarding school education is more oriented towards personal development, namely preparing students to become good and valuable people religiously and spiritually, so that it is not an exaggeration when Lokens-Bull states that:

“...Culturally, the Javanese values the traits attributed to Kalidjaga and attempt to cultivate the in themselves, this makes for a feedback loop between this ideal held for society and characteristics of man considered sainly....”³²

However, according to Zarkasyi, as reviewed by Hasyim, there are several weaknesses in traditional Islamic boarding schools, especially regarding the evaluation system and the unclear limits of the study period. The measure of scientific maturity is often measured naively, based on the length of time spent in the Islamic boarding school environment. In addition, some learning methods, especially Arabic, are seen as impractical and not fast enough to help students master the basic knowledge that is a tool for studying Islamic sources.

“Well versed in the traditional pesantren Islamic education system, Imam Zarkasyi was fully aware of its advantages and disadvantages, especially in its teaching method and curriculum. He criticised the method of teaching the Arabic language, which was found to be inadequate... In fact, in the old pesantren system there was no set period of time to complete studies. This was closely related to the curriculum of the pesantren”³³

The widespread growth of Islamic boarding schools and the increasing number of santri communities encouraged local students to study in different Islamic boarding schools, even across regions. As a result, until the early twentieth century, many Islamic boarding schools were filled with students not only from the local area but also from outside the region. Many famous Islamic boarding schools on the island of Java are often the destination for students from outside the region. After completing their studies at the Islamic boarding

³¹ Syahrul A'dam, “Implikasi Hubungan Kyai dan Tarekat pada Pendidikan Pesantren.” *Kordinat* 15, no. 1 (April 2016): 21.

³² Ronald A. Lukens-Bull, *Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia: Continuity and Conflict*, 149.

³³ Rosnani Hasyim, ed., *Reclaiming the Conversation: Islamic Intellectual in The Malay Archipelago* (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2010), 217-8.

school, they usually become pioneers in developing similar education in their home regions.³⁴

The reluctance to imitate and follow the culture and traditions of European nations is expressed in the tendency to value more the knowledge, culture and traditions that come from the Islamic community itself and not from the European nation. When the modern age entered the Dutch East Indies, the tradition of Islamic knowledge and religion had reached its final point, with various foundations of classical Islamic knowledge covering different aspects, so that society began to find stages and priorities in equipping its children with religious knowledge, which generally began with reading the Qur'an and performing various obligatory and Sunnah rituals of worship.³⁵

As a tradition, Islam is increasingly established with the support of informal education in Islamic boarding schools that are able to produce figures, kyai, with qualified scientific abilities. The difficulty of understanding Islamic sciences that follow the rules of language and the rules of *ushūliyyah*, makes Islamic boarding schools also a vehicle for selecting community intelligence. Graduates of Islamic boarding schools can provide an overview of who has the capability to develop science and achieve the highest level of Islamic science to be considered worthy to be a role model for others. Traditional Islamic boarding schools in their development have not only produced spiritual figures, but also intellectuals with a strong foundation of science and social insight, even though their lives are still limited to rural environments.

Establishment of Spiritual Network

The spiritual tradition that has been closely associated with the lives of Muslims in the archipelago in earlier periods has been strengthened by the presence of various doctrines and groups of Tarekat. Tarekat is a mystical and spiritual movement in Islam that is managed in a guided and coordinated manner, so that in Fazlur

³⁴ Nurcholish Madjid, *Bilik-Bilik Pesantren* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), 79.

³⁵ Ulfatun Hasanah, "Pesantren dan Transmisi Keilmuan Islam Melayu-Nusantara: Literasi, Teks, Kitab dan Sanad Keilmuan." *Anil Islam* 8, no. 2 (Desember 2015): 13-4.

Rahman's terms, it is referred to as Fata, organised Sufism,³⁶ organised Sufism.

The tarekat evolved into an institution that helped the Muslim community to follow the mystical path through methodical stages (*sufi order*) under the authoritative guidance of a teacher who acted as a guide (*mursbid*). The tarekat became a vehicle for the guided search for the divine essence so as not to go astray, and the guidance was considered legitimate through a series of *sanads* that were *mutawātir* up to the Prophet.³⁷

Sufism was one of the first Islamic religions to spread in the archipelago. According to historical records, Sufism entered the archipelago in the 12th century and converted Meurah Silu, the ruler of Perlak, in the 13th century.³⁸ This is in line with the mystical tradition that developed with Hinduism and Buddhism, making it easier for Islam to be accepted by the people of the archipelago relatively without significant turmoil. The similarity of the religious traditions makes conversion between the two religions, and between adherents of local traditions, easy without causing significant turmoil.

Several centuries later, Tarekat figures came to the archipelago, beginning with Hamzah Fansyuri's affiliation with the Tarekat Qadiriyyah in the 16th century. It was not until the 19th century that the influence of Sheikh Ahmad Khatib revived the Tarekat tradition by uniting the Tarekat Qadiriyyah and the Tarekat Naqshabandiyah.³⁹ The spread of this order in Islamic boarding schools cannot be separated from the role of Sheikh Khatib's disciple, Imam Nawawi, whose works are required reading in almost all Islamic boarding schools in Java and the Indonesian archipelago.⁴⁰

³⁶ *Tarekat* is a spiritual path in order to get closer to Allah that is pursued through a Sufistic path and is believed to be in line with the demands of the Prophet Muhammad. Muh. Nasir S., "Perkembangan Tarekat dalam Lintasan Sejarah di Indonesia." *Jurnal Adabiyah* 11, no. 1 (2011): 121.

³⁷ Ahmad Khoirul Fata, "Tarekat." *Jurnal al-Ulum* 11, no. 2 (Desember 2011): 375-6.

³⁸ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad VVII dan XVIII; Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia, Edisi Perennial* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2013), 29-30.

³⁹ *Naqshabandiyah* is a *tarekat* that aims at purification from elements that are seen as *bid'ah*, which therefore refers to al-Ghazali who is seen as emphasising the moral aspect more than the mystical. Muhammad Noupal, "Tarekat Naqshabandiyah di Indonesia Abad 19: Dari Ortodoksi ke Politisasi." *Intizar* 22, no. 2 (2016): 301.

⁴⁰ Nur Hadi Ihsan, "Sejarah dan Perkembangan Tarekat di Indonesia." *Jurnal Kalimah* 10, no. 2 (September 2012): 98-9.

According to Dhofier, the Tarekat complements the three pillars of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, which include faith, Islam and *Ihsān*.⁴¹

The kiai and ulama in the pesantren and in society in general are both practitioners and teachers of tarekat. According to Hasyim Asy'ari, as reviewed by Madjid, the concept of *ihsān* applied through tarekat is necessary to grasp the truth in its entirety from different dimensions, which is often difficult for humans to do. Humans can find the wholeness of truth through process and practice (*riyādlah*) in order to reach the essence and not just stop at the exterior.⁴²

Teachers of the tarekat, or those who have reached the level of hakekat, will become wise people in the true sense of the word, and may even be led to a level of knowledge that transcends the limits of the five senses, *kashshāf*. Teachers of the Tarekat are often seen as having spiritual advantages that most people rarely possess. This usually increases the charisma of a figure in front of his followers. As'ad has stated that each kyai usually has certain spiritual advantages and is believed to be a source of blessing to the community who seek his blessing through the path of *ta'ẓīm*. It's just that the parameters of these benefits are subjective because they are based more on the recognition of their supporters. Support will be stronger if it comes from other kyai or scholars who are also believed to have the same benefits and *karāmah*.⁴³

Followers of the tarekat are a society that holds their *mursbids* in high esteem (*ta'dẓīm*). They assiduously follow various Tarekat rituals, which are attended by the entire community, which means friendship and brotherhood. In addition to strengthening ties of friendship, various tarekat rituals are also ties of brotherhood between individuals outside of ritual activities. The rituals of wirid, *tanbih*, *manaqabah*, *tawassul* and so on are symbols of collective expressions of feeling as a

⁴¹ Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai dan Visinya Mengenai Masa Depan Indonesia*, 136.

⁴² Nurholish Madjid, "Islam, Iman dan Ihsan sebagai Trilogi Ajaran Ilahi." in Budhy Munawar Rahman, *Kontekstualisasi Doktrin Islam dalam Sejarah*, 478. Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995, 478.

⁴³ Syahrul A'dam, "Implikasi Hubungan Kyai dan Tarekat pada Pendidikan Pesantren", 19.

spiritual community bound by one doctrine, one path and one teacher.⁴⁴

Sociologically, tarekat means reinforcing the hierarchy of the kiai in the minds of its followers, increasing respect (*ta'dzim*) and perceptions of the height of the spiritual level, *karāmah*. A kiai with the predicate of tarekat teacher has a higher status, which in the West Java region is higher than that of a mere scholar. Ulama are only experts in the field of legalistic orthodoxy, while kyai or anjêngan are charismatic spiritual leaders. The power structure in the tarekat environment seems to represent a spiritual kingdom with an absolute hierarchy of power, even the leader of the Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah basically has the title of caliph, who is placed like the successor of the *al-Khulafā' al-Rāsyidūn*,⁴⁵ who are spiritually sovereign.

Conclusion

The ethical policy of the Dutch colonial era was not aimed at strengthening the understanding and militancy of the Islamic religion. Ethical policy opened up opportunities for the revitalisation of Islam in Indonesia, which had an impact on strengthening the character and tradition of the more militant doctrine within the framework of tradition. Although Islam inherited the sentiments of the legacy of the Diponegoro War, it could not escape the onslaught of the modern episteme since the Dutch colonial regime introduced ethical politics. The emergence of ethical politics provided the convenience of modern transport, which unexpectedly opened the way for the transformation of knowledge into a new Islamic style. The ideological legacy of the Diponegoro War set a limit for Muslims to appreciate the modernity of European nations. Indonesian Muslims preferred the Arab world as the '*keibla*' of tradition and thought. At the same time, this revitalised Islamic teaching in Indonesia, which was initially spiritualistic, syncretic and elitist, becoming more formalistic and populist despite its spiritualistic character.

Islamic teachings became more established and systematic as aspects of Aqidah, Sharia, *Muamalah* and Sufism began to be sorted out, complemented by the development of Arabic language rules for teaching, which to this day have become the standard pattern of

⁴⁴ Fasihul Lisan, Ulfatmi Azlan, and Solihah Sri Rahayu, *Syariat, Tarekat dan Adat: Studi Etnografi Islam di Tatar Sunda* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Deepublish, 2015), 82.

⁴⁵ Dudung Abdurahman, "Pesantren, Tarekat dan Kedamaian", 49-50.

traditional Islamic teaching. Religious figures were also increasingly productive in producing various Islamic teaching materials and media that were no longer elitist in nature in the form of *serat* and *suluk*, but popular in the form of poetry and various works in Jawi Arabic that were easily understood by people at different social levels, making Islam no longer an elite consciousness but a wider community consciousness.

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