



The Changing Roles of Ulama and the Evolution of Islamic Schools: Some Insights from Moroccan and Indonesian Cases

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ABSTRAK

Ulama, yang merupakan para sarjana dalam tradisi Islam, memainkan peran penting dalam melestarikan ajaran Nabi dan meneruskannya ke generasi berikutnya. Selain itu, mereka juga memiliki fungsi sosial lain yang penting. Kombinasi peran keagamaan dan sosial dalam ulama memungkinkan mereka memengaruhi perubahan sosial dengan legitimasi keagamaan. Artikel ini menjelajahi bagaimana peran sosial ulama telah berkembang dari waktu ke waktu dan bagaimana hal ini telah memengaruhi keberadaan sekolah-sekolah Islam. Untuk mengilustrasikan ini, contoh diambil dari literatur mengenai Maroko dan Indonesia selama abad ke-20 dan ke-21. Selama periode kolonial di Maroko, ulama dan sekolah Islam berperan sebagai pertahanan budaya terhadap pengaruh kolonial Prancis. Sementara itu, di Indonesia, sekolah-sekolah Islam yang dipimpin oleh Ulama menjadi landasan gerakan perlawanan Muslim terhadap pemerintahan kolonial Belanda. Dalam kedua kasus tersebut, sarjana dan sekolah Islam menunjukkan kemampuan mereka dalam merespons situasi sosial aktual, menyoroti kekuatan budaya dan pentingnya dalam masyarakat.

ABSTRACT

The ulama, who are scholars in the Islamic tradition, play a vital role in preserving the prophet's teachings and passing them down to future generations. In addition to this, they also have other important social functions. The combination of religious and social roles within the ulama allows them to influence social change with religious legitimacy. This article explores how the social roles of the ulama have evolved over time and how this has impacted the existence of Islamic schools. To illustrate this, examples are drawn from the literature on Morocco and Indonesia during the 20th and 21st centuries. During the colonial period in Morocco, the ulama and Islamic schools served as a cultural defense against French colonial influence. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, Islamic schools led by Ulama became the foundation of the Muslim resistance movement against Dutch colonial rule. In both cases, Islamic scholars and schools demonstrated their ability to respond to actual social situations, highlighting their cultural power and importance in society.

KATA KUNCI

Perubahan Peran Ulama; Sekolah Islam; Maroko; Indonesia.

KEYWORDS

Changing Roles of Ulama; Islamic Schools; Morocco; Indonesia.

A. Introduction

Islamic education is a dynamic socio-historical entity that has been evolving over time in a language that is deeply embedded in the education itself. The early spread of Islam was driven by the Prophet's goal of promoting equality and justice among people. As a result, the content of al-Qur'an and al-Hadith revolve around the history of mankind and how to interact with others. This serves as the basis for the "Muslims' way of life," which is considered a set of doctrinal values.

These doctrinal teachings have been passed down from generation to generation while adapting to the specific social circumstances without losing their essential ideas. The social responsibility of education has always been at the core of the teaching, with society being responsible for its conduct. After the Prophet's passing, Ulamas continued to spread Islam and maintain the teaching tradition. However, the evolution of valuing Islamic teaching and the role of Ulamas in early formalized Islamic educational institutions has been the subject of political conflict among Ulamas with different traditions.

Several previous studies have been conducted on the evolution of Islamic education and the role of Ulamas in shaping it. One such study, "The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern Ulamas in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," conducted by Azyumardi Azra, examines the contributions of Ulamas from Southeast Asia and the Middle East in shaping Islamic education in the region. The study emphasizes the importance of these Ulamas in passing on Islamic knowledge and promoting Islamic reformism.¹

M. Amir Ali's book, "The Spirit of Islamic Education," explores the concept of Islamic education and its relationship with the Islamic worldview.² The book contends that Islamic education differs fundamentally from traditional forms of education and emphasizes the importance of understanding the nature of Islamic education in order to appreciate its value and significance. The author investigates the principles and methods of Islamic education, drawing on classical Islamic texts as well as current field debates. He also discusses the modern-day challenges to Islamic education and suggests ways to reawaken its spirit and relevance. Overall, the book provides a thorough and insightful examination of Islamic education and its role in shaping Islamic societies.

Furthermore, Muhammad Khalid Masud's study "Islamic Education in British India: Efforts of Darul-Ulum Deoband and Aligarh Movement" delves into the ways in which two major Islamic educational institutions, Darul-Ulum Deoband and Aligarh Muslim University, helped to further Islamic education in the colonial era of India.³ This research sheds light on the vital part these organizations played in disseminating Islamic knowledge and protecting Islamic traditions throughout the colonial era.

The objective of this paper is to investigate the role of Ulamas in the evolution of Islamic education and their impact on the shaping of educational institutions with unique social functions. The significance of comprehending the historical development of Islamic education cannot be overstated, as it sheds light on the role it played in shaping Islamic societies and its continued relevance in contemporary times. The study will provide examples from Morocco and Indonesia to illustrate how the influence of Ulamas has shaped Islamic educational institutions and society in general.

¹ A. Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia : Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulamā' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulamā' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden, Boston : BRILL, 2004).

² M. Amir Ali, *The Spirit of Islamic Education* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1990).

³ Muhammad Khalid Masud, "Islamic Education in British India: Efforts of Darul-Ulum Deoband and Aligarh Movement," *Islamic Studies* 38, no. 2 (1999).

B. Evolving Values and Changing Roles

To discuss how the values of Islamic education developed and the role played by Ulama in this evolution, it is important to first determine the period of transition from traditional Islamic education to the early stages of formalized education. This transition can be distinguished based on the structures and purposes of educational institutions. Hefner describes traditional Islamic education in the 8th and 9th centuries, where students would gather in informal group studies called Halaqah, guided by an orthodox teacher (Sheykh), usually in a mosque, and without charging tuition fees.⁴ These Halaqahs were supported by donations from the society. In contrast, formalized Islamic educational institutions were closely linked to state power. Institutions like Madrasahs were sponsored by the state, resulting in changes to their structure and functions. In other words, the Madrasahs somewhat lost their autonomy, especially in terms of providing teaching materials, due to state restrictions. According to Hefner, this was intended to enhance the quality of Madrasah education and ensure that the direction of education favored the state.⁵

Hourani posits that Ulama played two important roles in their communities before madrasahs were supported by states.⁶ Firstly, Ulama were responsible for preserving human morality and were regarded as agents to continue the role of the prophet on earth. Their duty was to guide the Prophet's followers into the path of the prophet's life as mentioned in al-Qur'an (2:30). Secondly, Ulama acted as authoritative agents in determining Islamic laws, which were tied to particular schools of thought (Madhhab) in Syariah and Fiqh.⁷ To avoid the domination of certain Madhhab in a particular area, divergent views on determining Syariah and Fiqh towards a problem were inevitable.⁸ Despite not being affiliated with any governmental institutions, traditional Ulama held a strong social capital to issue religious statements dealing with something (Fatwas) and actuate people.

The social capital possessed by the Ulama could have both positive and negative effects on the state in which their followers lived. While the Qur'an (4:59) instructs humans to follow their leaders, obedience to God and the Prophet takes precedence over all else. This means that compliance with the Ulama is strongly legitimized by invoking the names of God and the Prophet. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why the state sought to infiltrate the educational system of the Ulama. The state may have felt threatened by the power and influence wielded by the Ulama over their followers, and sought to assert its own authority through controlling the educational institutions. However, at the same time, the state could also benefit from the social capital of the Ulama, by aligning itself with them and co-opting

⁴ Robert W. Hefner, "Introduction: The Culture, Politics, and Future of Muslim Education," in *Schooling Islam : The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*, ed. Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 8.

⁵ Hefner, in *Schooling Islam : The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*, 8.

⁶ Albert Habib Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge, Mass. : Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), 158.

⁷ Hourani, 159.

⁸ Hourani, 159.

their religious legitimacy to further its own political goals. Ultimately, the relationship between the state and the Ulamas is complex and multifaceted, and depends on a variety of factors including the historical context, political climate, and the nature of the educational system in question.

Hourani recorded the very early support by state to Ulamas in terms of providing education. Madrasah Nizam al-Mulk (1018-92) was attributed to the first monarch of Baghdad.⁹ Furthermore, Hefner mentions the emergence of *étatization* of madrasah beginning in 1453 by Turk in which to bring madrasahs under state control.¹⁰ This means that the state can control the educational direction of madrasahs with assistance of state-based Ulamas only.¹¹ In other words, the vision of madrasah was aligned with the vision of the state which was very political. There is an advantage of having this *étatization* as well as having its drawbacks. In one side madrasahs were regulated in the same management for certain purposes, so the output fitted to meet standard. However, special characterized identity and thought from diverse Ulamas went disappear due to this effort. Furthermore, madrasahs later became an institution to spread certain political doctrine for state purposes. As a result, protests from Ulamas couldn't be avoided when conflict between state and Ulamas resulted in conflict and direct violence in form of the new school attacks in 1880s by conservative ulamas.¹² In other words, both the Ulamas and the state were struggle for power through madrasahs existence.

From the historical facts above, roles of Ulamas shifted in several ways after the institutionalization of madrasah. First, although some Ulamas stayed "conservative" and played role as agents of social change and enlightenment, some others moved to higher social strata due to state support. Second, apart from state's political agenda, Ulamas as the preservers of God's message were no longer solely responsible to spread the religious teaching, but also they were responsible to deal with standardization in order to ensure the quality of their students. In this context, Ulamas played role as reformers to adapt religious teaching into the situation in its age. Third, Ulamas must deal with political situation whether they had to be affiliated with the state or not. Not all Ulamas' visions were aligned with the state's vision. Therefore, Ulamas in the opposition side played role as keeper of political equilibrium due to the fact that the state could not totally force their influence to the people. Last but not least, due to the wide number of their followers, Ulamas were able to direct "mankind historical power" into deserved future. This is possible because of the existence of *Taqlid*.

9 Hourani, 163.

10 Hefner, in *Schooling Islam : The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*, 13.

11 Hefner, in *Schooling Islam : The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*, 14.

12 Hefner, in *Schooling Islam : The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*, 17.

C. Islamic Educational Institution Gradation in the *Rite de Passage* Episode

The shift from traditional Islamic education to a more formalized system brought about significant implications in the way educational institutions were established. This change in establishment was heavily influenced by the evolving roles of the Ulama who led these institutions. In this *Rite de Passage*, madrasahs were situated in a transitional period between traditional and institutionalized approaches. During this time, Ulama faced various challenges, including competition with institutionalized madrasahs, the need to balance Islamic values and state power, the imperative to reform the educational system to incorporate scientific knowledge and modernity, and the necessity of obtaining state support for certain purposes.

John Esposito presented a dilemma in which traditional religious education was contrasted with modern secular education. Each system has its own strengths and weaknesses. The traditional system emphasizes the training of religious leaders, teachers, and scholars, but it has not kept pace with the demands of modernity.¹³ In contrast, the modern secular system is supported by government funding and offers better prospects for future careers. The affiliation of Ulama with state power should not be misconstrued as an attempt to elevate their social status. While there are advantages to state support, there are also risks associated with compromising religious integrity and autonomy. Therefore, Ulama must be careful in navigating their relationship with the state and the larger society, as they strive to fulfill their religious obligations and preserve the sanctity of Islamic education.

To be conservative for some other Ulama means to preserve the tradition existing from the earlier age of Islam. Therefore, conservatism means an effort to preserve the genuine of what constitute as Islamic matter. The issues on defining what genuine become central as the entity of “genuine form of Islam” did not link to modernity context in some in certain points. It is the fact that the way of appreciating what constitute as Islamic matter is debatable, which modern Muslim speaking in a language of modernity can be considered of bringing *bid’a* by traditionalist and traditionalist can be considered as conservative by the modern milieu.

Eickelman's chapter on *Yusufiya* provides a valuable example of traditional Moroccan education and the relationship between students and their *Sheikh*.¹⁴ In this tradition, the transfer of knowledge was typically oral rather than written, and students rarely engaged in a question-and-answer process due to their deep respect for the *Syeikh* and the close relationships between them. As a result, Eickelman notes that students had limited opportunities to apply their knowledge to real-world issues.¹⁵ From a modern educational perspective, evaluating students' academic achievement was challenging since the learning process was strictly one-way, with knowledge flowing solely from the *Syaikh* to the students.

¹³ John L. Esposito, *Islam : The Straight Path*, Rev. 3rd, updated with new epilogue. ed. (New York: New York : Oxford University Press, 2005), 246.

¹⁴ Dale F. Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco : The Education of a Twentieth-Century Notable* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1985).

¹⁵ Eickelman, 95.

When traditional institutions compete with formalized ones, issues of standardization inevitably arise. In the rapidly changing world, universal recognition of the output of madrasahs through degree-granting has become essential for students to have a bright future. Ulama are thus faced with a difficult decision of whether to keep their institutions traditional, with top-down teaching, ijazah certification, and community support, or to formalize their approach by incorporating inquiry-based methods, granting degrees, and seeking state support. This decision has serious implications, as it affects not only the quality of education provided but also the ability of graduates to succeed in their careers and contribute to society. Furthermore, the decision impacts the ulama's role in preserving and transmitting Islamic values, as well as their relationship with the wider community and the state. In this context, ulama must carefully consider the balance between tradition and modernity in their approach to education.

The shift from traditional to formalized Islamic educational institution could impact the shift on paradigm of religiosity and the social pattern of Muslim community itself. I would use Erich Fromm terminology to describe the Faith. The shift in educational system can place Muslim society in a continuum between "Irrational Faith" and "Rational Faith". Erich Fromm defined rational faith as the result of active attitude series of action in one's mind. On the other hand, irrational faith is the agreeing that something is right disregarding whether it is or not. The source of irrational faith is an idol or a leader's statement with regard something.¹⁶ When Ulama decided to formalize the Islamic educational institutions, they had constrained their "resource of knowledge" authority because people were no longer *Taqlid*. In terms of social structure, some Ulama move up to elite position and getting stronger in spreading their influence. This would cause the idea of superior and inferior Ulama. Also, there would be dualism in learning purposes. On one side students should embody the Islamic values solely because of God. However, this would be difficult as degree oriented for better future is also important. Here Ulama must be more intelligent to teach people of working on both sides. Regarding to this, prophet said "Work for your world as if you would live forever and work for your hereafter as if you would die tomorrow". This means that there is no contradiction between "religious" purpose of education and the "material" one. As the world is always changing, Ulama are always challenged to be more universal to respond Islamic educational institution and its relation to modernity, social change, and politics.

D. Preservation and Transformation of Islamic schools in the 20th – 21st Century: Examples from Morocco and Indonesia

In the late 20th and early 21st century, traditional Islamic schools were faced with the challenge of balancing preservation of their traditions with the need to adapt to the modern world. Despite their universality across Muslim countries, these schools varied in terms of their approaches to balancing

¹⁶ Erich Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope, toward a Humanized Technology*, [1st] ed. (New York: New York, Harper & Row, 1968), 14.

tradition and modernity. One traditional characteristic of these schools was the method of teaching through memorization, which was seen as a way of preserving the connection between current practices and the original teachings from the time of the Prophet. According to Boyle, this method was also a way of adjusting to the demands of modern society.¹⁷

The shift towards more modern Islamic schools could only be implemented if the idea came from insiders due to their legitimation. In addition to preserving and transmitting knowledge, these schools have always played a significant role in serving low-income individuals in times of social and economic hardship.¹⁸ For example, in regions where modern schools were inaccessible, such as rural areas in Morocco or Indonesia during the pre and post-independence period, Islamic schools provided education to low-income families.¹⁹

Another important aspect of traditional Islamic schools was their emphasis on practical skills that would enable their students to compete in the social and economic spheres. For example, in West Africa, Islamic schools were often connected to commercial sectors and provided internship opportunities for their students. Additionally, these schools contributed to the eradication of illiteracy by using Arabic transcripts in local languages.²⁰

Despite these traditional characteristics, many Islamic schools have begun to modernize in recent years by adopting inquiry-based teaching methods and offering degree-granting programs. However, this process of modernization has been met with criticism from some who argue that it risks diluting the traditional teachings and practices of these schools.

Islamic education has three distinctive characteristics that shape its identity and values. However, with the emergence of modern educational systems in the 20th century, some Islamic schools have undergone modifications to adapt to the changing times without abandoning their traditional roots. The question arises as to what prompted these institutions to undergo such transformations and how they managed to strike a balance between modernization and preservation of their core values.

There were various internal and external factors and agents that contributed to the modernization of Islamic schools. One of the internal factors was the desire of some Ulama to keep pace with the rapidly changing times and to provide their students with relevant skills and knowledge that could enable them to compete in modern society. Another internal factor was the need to address

¹⁷ Helen N. Boyle, *Quranic Schools: Agents of Preservation and Change, Reference Books in International Education* (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2004), 34. Publisher description <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0647/2004004904-d.html>.

¹⁸ Jarmo Houtsonen, "Traditional Qur'anic Education in a Southern Moroccan Village," *Int. J. Middle East Stud* 26, no. 3 (1994), <https://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800060761>.

¹⁹ M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since C. 1200*, 3rd ed. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001). Table of contents <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/fy031/2001090449.html>

Contributor biographical information <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0710/2001090449-b.html>.

²⁰ Peter Easton, and M. Peach, *The Practical Applications of Koranic Learning in West Africa*, 1997, Nonformal Education Working Group Research Studies Series 8, London.

the shortcomings of the traditional educational system, such as its limited scope, top-down teaching approach, and lack of critical thinking skills.

External factors also played a significant role in pushing for the modernization of Islamic schools. For instance, the influence of Western education and culture led to a growing demand for modern education among Muslim communities. In addition, the availability of state funding and support for formal education systems provided incentives for Islamic schools to modernize and gain official recognition and accreditation.

The process of modernization varied depending on the context and the agents involved. Some Islamic schools opted to introduce new teaching methods and technologies while retaining their traditional curriculum and values. Others embraced the formal education system by adopting a more structured and standardized curriculum, introducing certification and degree programs, and seeking official recognition and accreditation from the state.

Overall, the modernization of Islamic schools was a complex and multi-faceted process that required a delicate balance between preserving their traditional identity and values and adapting to the demands of modern society. The ability of Islamic schools to navigate this process successfully was crucial in ensuring their continued relevance and contribution to the education and development of Muslim communities around the world.

This paper aims to discuss the modernization and traditionalism of Islamic schools, with a focus on changes in educational methods and the influence of Western education. Additionally, the power structure and roles of Islamic leaders within these institutions will be explored. The case study of Qur'anic preschool in Morocco will be used as a representative example of the adaptation of educational methods to Western styles. Furthermore, the paper will discuss the involvement of Muslim leaders in the Indonesian independence movement as an example of the role of Islamic education within different political regimes.

Islamic Schools as Cultural Defense of Colonial Domination in Morocco

During the French Protectorate period, the emergence of modern schools alongside traditional Islamic schools brought about the concept of modern education to the community. However, it was perceived as a privilege solely for the children of the bourgeoisie, while Islamic schools (Kuttabs) catered to students from rural areas with lower economic backgrounds.²¹ This resulted in a clear divide in the education sector, with modern schools being accessible to only certain segments of society.

How did traditional Islamic schools respond to this situation and what were people's preferences in education? In the early years of post-independence, western-style education became increasingly influential due to the opportunities it provided for graduates to obtain government jobs. As a result,

²¹ K. Bouzoubaa, *An Innovation in Morocco's Koranic Pre-Schools*. Working Papers in Early Childhood Development, 1998, The Hague.

religious schools were relegated to a secondary level of education in the country. To address this issue, the government granted legal status to pre-school education under Kuttabs. The aim was to instill Islamic identity and concepts in children at an early age while preparing them for elementary school. This educational reform introduced a modern touch to the traditional Kuttabs, with the addition of desks, chairs, blackboards, and other Western-school equipment.

According to Boyle, there are two distinct educational traditions between French colonialism and Morocco. The French educational system emphasized rationality, universalism, and utility.²² This approach was based on the idea of rationalism, where everything had to be measurable and predictable in order to control the future. In other words, the decision-making process was characterized by empiricism. Conversely, the Moroccan Islamic school took a spiritual and intuitive approach to education. While it did train for rationality, there was no context given to implement it.

Despite the proliferation of modern public schools, Islamic schools have remained popular even beyond their direct practical function. While the number of full-time Qur'anic schools has decreased significantly in the last half of the 20th century, public schools have adopted memorization practices to a limited extent.²³ This phenomenon implies that Islamic schools have undergone a transformation in their structure, influenced by both internal and external factors.

To begin, Islamic schools in this context can be defined as institutions that have been integral to Moroccan identity and tradition, passed down through generations. Moroccan values and historical patterns distinguish them from other educational institutions. Therefore, the preservation of this identity and the conceptualization of Islam and tradition must remain even within public schools. This importance of identity can be likened to the psychoanalytic concept of Vital Interest, where inherent values in individuals actuate them to gain, preserve, and defend it.²⁴ This concept is particularly relevant as the survival of Islamic schools was perceived as a threat to French schools during the colonial era.²⁵

Secondly, both Islamic schools and modern schools have their own distinct functions and can coexist in today's era. In the past, Islamic schools had an economic function, with some teachers being affiliated with economic activities and people in the circle being bound by brotherhood spirits, according to Easton and Peach. While it is still possible to apply this in today's situation, it is limited to casual business activities. The modernization of education has led to more structured business activities, and therefore, there needs to be a division of tasks between Islamic schools and modern schools. For those seeking government jobs or other formal professions, modern schools offer more promising opportunities.

²² Helen N. Boyle, "Modernization of Education and Kuranic Adaptation in Morocco," in *Educational Strategies among Muslims in the Context of Globalization : Some National Case Studies*, ed. Holger Daun and Geoffrey Walford (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2004), 128.

²³ Boyle, "Modernization of Education and Kuranic Adaptation in Morocco," in *Educational Strategies among Muslims in the Context of Globalization : Some National Case Studies*.

²⁴ Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, 1st Owl book ed. (New York: New York : H. Holt, 1992).

²⁵ Bouzoubaa.

Finally, it is important to consider the role of modern education in shaping social and power structures, especially in the context of Western influence and democratization in Morocco. Critical theory suggests that power structures can be used to address inequalities and prevent privileged groups (such as the bourgeoisie) from dominating in a democratic society. While Islamic schools may promote equality in theory, modern schools are better suited to teach practical mechanisms for achieving this goal in a modern governmental context. Therefore, a balance between traditional Islamic schools and modern schools is necessary to ensure the successful transformation of Moroccan society in the face of Westernization and democratization.

Islamic Schools as the Base of Muslim Movements in Pre and Post-independence of Indonesia

Indonesia provides an example of how Islamic education is formally integrated into the government system, as there are significantly fewer informal Islamic schools compared to formal ones. In tracing the roots of formal Islamic schools during the pre-independence period, it can be concluded that they served as a form of political opposition against education provided by Dutch colonial rulers. At that time, education was only accessible to the upper class and aimed to produce more cooperative, westernized local elites while reducing Islamic fervor.²⁶ Examples of such schools included OSVIA (Opleidingscholen voor inlandsche ambtenaren, or Training Schools for Native Officials) and STOVIA (School tot opleiding van inlandsche artsen, or School for the Training of Native Doctors), which were only affordable to the wealthy.

In response to the demand for education among the local population, numerous Muslim movements such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah established hundreds of formal Islamic schools. This movement persisted until after independence when Indonesia's first President, Soekarno, established the Ministry of Religion and NU members gained control over it.²⁷ The dominance of Muslim movements was reflected in the 1955 election results where Masyumi, NU, and Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia were among the top five positions. The success of these organizations cannot be separated from their educational institutions, which were established since the pre-independence period.

IAIN (Institut Agama Islam Negeri, State Institute of Islamic Studies) experienced significant growth during the New Order Period, particularly in the higher education level.²⁸ Its main objective was to cultivate educated Muslims who could contribute to post-independence Indonesia. The discourse of Islam in IAIN can be classified into two categories: Islam as a doctrinal study and Islam as a subject for social studies. Consequently, a wide range of discussions about Islam in the Indonesian or even global context can be found in this institution.

What were the factors that led to the transformation of Islamic educational movements in Indonesia from traditional to more modern? These factors varied between the pre- and post-

²⁶ Ricklefs, 199.

²⁷ Ricklefs, 322.

²⁸ Ricklefs, 379.

independence periods. During the pre-independence period, Islamic schools were established as a form of protest against the colonial regime and were therefore not cooperative with the colonial authorities.²⁹ Gradually, Islamic schools affiliated with Islamic organizations began to incorporate Western subjects into their curriculum in order to provide added value for their students. One example of this contribution was in 1970 when Pesantren emerged as a model for community development that involved not only academic activities but also social and business activities. To this day, there are modifications being made to Islamic schools in Indonesia. There is a wide range of Islamic schools, from the very traditional to the very modern with international standards. Some Islamic leaders prefer to maintain the schools in their original form, while others provide more facilities and a more advanced curriculum, resulting in higher expenses. This indicates that while Islamic schools were originally established to serve low-income families, they have gradually evolved to compete with regular schools. Today, the selection of Islamic schools is based on social clusters and affiliations, reflecting the diversity of economic classes in Indonesia.

How did the emergence of IAIN affect higher education in Indonesia and what is its role today? I would argue that IAIN is a unique institution that straddles both religious and secular education. This is because its curriculum includes not only the study of Islamic doctrine, but also the social and cultural aspects of Islam. According to Professor Pohl, IAIN is a “bastion of tolerant, liberal, pluralistic Islam”.³⁰ The fact that people from different political and religious backgrounds are able to enroll in IAIN reflects its role as a coordinating institution that bridges the diversity of Islam in Indonesia. Additionally, IAIN produces Indonesian Islamic educational literature, which contributes to the development of Islamic thought as a cultural capital of Indonesian Islam.³¹

E. Conclusions

The establishment of Islamic schools in Morocco and Indonesia was influenced by the political situation where Muslims were marginalized under colonial rule or faced competition. As a result, the legitimacy of Islamic schools as a choice for education faced many challenges from modern schools. To gain power and legitimacy, these schools have had to modify or adjust to the social conditions of their respective countries. The Islamization of modern schools is a political struggle to establish a new controlling group and can be seen as a form of protest against colonial regimes, but it can also be seen as the establishment of new regimes.

²⁹ Florian Pohl, "Islamic Education and Civil Society: Reflections on the Pesantren Tradition in Contemporary Indonesia," *Comparative Education Review* 50, no. 3 (2006): 399, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1086/503882>. Auliya Ridwan, "Colonial Politics of Power and Cultural Identity Development of Islamic Education Vis-À-Vis European Education in the Netherlands East Indies Periods," *Marâji` : Jurnal Ilmu Keislaman* 2, no. 2 (2016). Auliya Ridwan, "The Dynamics of Pesantren Leadership from the Dutch Ethical Policy to the Reformation Periods," *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 15, no. 02 (2020), <https://dx.doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2020.15.02.365-400>.

³⁰ Pohl 398.

³¹ Pohl 398.

However, the problem that arises after the colonial regime is how the new regime will distribute power through education so that minority groups are also facilitated towards equality. The issues surrounding Ulamas and their challenge towards education and modernity should be seen as part of the process of restructuring the visible aspects of Islamic education itself. Ulamas who accepted modernization and those who rejected it had the same mission of providing education for the people. However, they faced different social circumstances that forced them to make different choices.

Islam is seen as a universal value and should be at the heart of every visible form of Islamic education. Ulamas must be able to bring the same nuanced approach to different local context where Islamic education exists. Therefore, the challenge for Ulamas from time to time is to guide their followers to be "traditional" but also "modern" at the same time. This process is crucial to ensure that Islamic education remains relevant and inclusive in modern society.

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