

Democratization in Indonesia: Appearance Pattern of “Modern Kiai (Islamic Leaders)” in Moslem Community

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Abstract

In Moslem community, a “*Kiai (Islamic Leader)*” serves as a religious- and community-leader as well. This research presents the shift in the appearance of “*Modern Kiai*” with consistent / stable, and opened values to guarantee the circulation. The questioned consistent and opened values are based on one’s competencies of the following factors:

- a) Morality and norm based on local religion / believe, and culture
- b) Higher general education from the surrounding community
- c) Technology and information competencies
- d) Economic competencies that is not always sourcing from traditionally agricultural cultivated land, but also from other non-agricultural jobs

The consistency of those values, though runs slowly, are socially exist and valid, and also opened for everybody to guarantee the circulation, and are very conducive in the democration process.

Keywords: “*Modern Kiai*”, consistent values, democracy

1. *Kiai* as a Public Leader

Pamekasan is one of cities in Indonesia. As in Indonesian general knowledge, Pamekasan people considers that the “*Kiai*” or “*Ulama*” is a prominent figure. In this case, *Kiai* is the community central living figure. Meaning that, a *Kiai* or *Ulama* is the leader in social living.

Kiai involvement in daily social living establishes significant closed-, and warm-relations and communications between dwellers. *Kiai* usually serves as the educator, guide, and organiser of religious rites. Even, some of them have very closed relation with each dweller birth to death phases. These kinds of relations are full of meanings. The research result from Pamekasan people presents that there is different pont of view in comprehending the essence and meaning of the *Kiai* or *Ulama* as the prominent figure. People acknowledgement on prominent figure of each village is approximately 1-3 figures, while the data formal of district presented 5-10 figures¹. These findings describe the questioned different comprehension. Disclosing the concept difference of *Kiai* or *Ulama* as the public leader requires the more accurate terminologies than those are already applied.

The term *Kiai* or *Ulama* as the prominent figure is effective for some matters, namely how they relate 1) to the groups, 2) to each other, 3) with other community members, and 4). with the authorities.

Kiai or *Ulama* as the public leader serves as the commander of the main top social regulations. Such standing makes *Kiai* decisions to affect all people classes. Decision making power sources from social regulations, as it is the legal channel to perform any decisions. The questioned power is also supported by the competent authorities enabling the *Kiai* or *Ulama* to strongly endure their capacities, and to legitimate that the existing powers are appropriate and worthed to be respected. This appropriateness is based on the perception that the implementation of the questioned power complies with widely accepted principles and procedures.

Pamekasan people believe that social economic status differences among them are actually set by God. Social justice is interpreted as the performance of responsibility of those differentiated set of roles. Since *Kiai* or *Ulama*, as the prominent figure, has obtained higher status and wealth, they have to lead, educate, and manage all outer and inner world needs of community members.

Social living is marked with various differences between members, each having their own standing. Those differences include vertical line, such as the social status, wealth, occupation, and educational level, and also horizontal line, such as the house shape, style, perception, selective tendency, etc. Though each people is different, they are the same community members, as they will socially interact. The said differences will potentially cause conflict, but in other dimension, they also have several similarities to enabling them to integrate and cooperate. Two different groups with different social roles are marked by the imbalance condition as the consequences of different resources possession of each party. In general, common people are those having less resources, to cause the unavoidable dependency to accept subordinate position, and they shall adjust themselves

NOTES :

¹ See Research result on *DEMOKRATISASI MASYARAKAT DESA DI JAWA TIMUR (Studi Perbandingan : Pergeseran Peranan Tokoh Masyarakat Desa Di Wilayah Ngawi dan Pamekasan = EAST JAVA VILLAGERS DEMOCRATIZATION (Comparative Study: Role Shifting of villagers Public Leaders in Ngawi and Pamekasan)*, Disertation of Untag Surabaya of 2006 and 2003, by Arif Darmawan,

with the willingness, demand, and influence of those prominent figures. In this case, the role of *Kiais* or *Ulamas* as prominent figures significantly determine the social change, while for deeper comprehension, it is necessary to clarify their social and political context, including their capacities, and roles in traditional, modern community, or those whom are in their transitional to modern phase.

2. Traditional *Kiai* is no longer “Effective”

Pamekasan people have strong culture with *santri* (*Islamic students*) world in which notabene are majority Moslems. Islam in this culture has more emotional orientation of lower class people, compared to the rational one. In other words, people tendency in believing Islam mostly subject to traditional patterns that give more comprehension to Islamic cultural issues at the *pesantren* (*Islamic Boarding School*) world. This tendency is identifiable with the many existing *pondok pesantren* (*Islamic Boarding Schools*) in Pamekasan. Procedures and factors of figures in *Pesantren* culture are more cristalized based on seniority patterns among the *Kiais* at the *pondok pesantren*. Meaning that the daily living, and political activities will always set the *Kiai* in patron-client, or *Kiai* and *santri* (*student*) standings. This is tolerable when a *Kiai* launch a *fatwa* (*Islamic Orders*), the *santris* will always adhere, and be consequent to perform the said order, irrespective of one’s rational thinking. In other words, the *santris* will always emotionally be bound to all *Kiai* words, in the sense that all *Kiai* words are *fatwa* that are mandatory performed as the order, while fail to do so, it shall bear consequences to the *santris*, whom they will be considered as arrogant. These events mostly coloring the NU tradition, whom notabene are the *nahdhiyin* members in Madura.

Madura NU members, when they are paralelized with Indonesian political concept, for example during the engagement process of president and vice president candidates, where they were mainly “splitted” in the Horse Shoe region, have more focus on the fighting of both inter structural and cultural *Kiais*. For example, when Hasyim Muzadi accompanied Megawati without permit of the cultural *Kiais*, he was then considered as opposed and arrogant by the cultural NU *Kiais*. This issue would be different in Gus Dur context, though his political manouver frequently in the context of “net spreading”, but he finally still complied with, and adhered to the outlined words of senior *Kiais*.

NU *Kiai* prominent figure context will be different with those of the *Muhammadiyah*. If NU still keeps the patron-client concept, *Muhammadiyah* members has less strong relations between *santris* and their *Kiais* or leaders compared with the NU tradition. As, the *Kiai* in NU organization, once again, shall always be the reference for religious and political attitude.

This research has evidently found the shift process of *Kiai* validity in which it is considered as the emotional bonding, since the current and next generation hold more rational standing. Senior *Kiai* figure (traditional) is no longer effective, due to the prominent figure succession or shift in Pamekasan, where the successor or next *Kiais* tend to be more rational. This matter is caused by many young *Kiais* interact with the outer world, including those religious generations having activities, or schooling outside their domicile. Meaning that there are many alternative options to establish the more rational younger *Kiais*.

Therefore, many patron-client tradition of *Kiai* to its *santri* currently shift with the appearance of democratization process alternative. People frequently indicate that many cultural *Kiais* will be shifted with those of structural ones. This standing obviously observed with the appearance of some NU figures in the Horse Shoe area who are tend to act as the cultural-, and also the structural *Kiai* in the same time. This case could be understood since many NU traditions use symbolic languages, that will be different from those of *Muhamadiyah* members, who are more rational, strict, and clear in character.

These unclear factors of many symbols appearance implicate the no longer effective *Kiais* in patron-client domination, where they may notabene control their *santri* to keep with their *fatwa* tracks. Rebellion and arrogance appeared in NU members upon the existence of those structural *Kiais*. This was justified with *Hasyim Muzadi* who kept “supporting” *Megawati* as a leader, without the *Kiais* permit. This factor considers that the NU *Kiais*, in this case, the Maduranese *Kiais* are also considered as having less effective ‘power’.

3. Traditional *Kiai* role shifting in Pamekasan

Tracing the traditional *Kiai* role shifting in the community will be comprehended by applying the social structural development. According to Paloma,¹ the complex social structure applies macro exchange theory by resuming, and observing the main ideas of the said exchange. One is attracted to one another through various reciprocal needs and satisfaction in elementary exchange. Thus there is an assumption that one who gives reward will deliver the payment for the values received.

In its development this exchange creates imbalance due to different resources possession of each party.

¹ See also M.M., Paloma, “*Sosiologi Kontemporer (Contemporer Sociology)*”, (translation) CV Rajawali Press, Jakarta, 1984, Pages : 94-94

People who always partially take generosity, may not avoid the subordinated standing, and shall adapt themselves with the willingness, demand, and influence of such generous aider, to cause status different among them.

Superior status is manifested in such superordinate roles in socialisation. Status structure is similar to the pyramid, where it contains social standing of its members cut by the horizontal line in accordance with the leveled nominal category. Wright Mills¹ said that *Kiais* are considered as the prominent figures who stand for commander in social main regulations. Because of such main standings, *Kiais* will take decisions having consequences to affect all social strata. Their power sourcing from the social regulations, as these regulations are the valid channel to implement the decision. In other words, those commander or top person in social regulations also have authority, wealth, social pride, etc.

Thus in this case, Rogers² said that prominent figures have the most responsibility to make decision influencing all systems, as they are the authority holder. Therefore, they may become the door keepers determining the entering innovation in their community from outer resources. They tend to filter any innovations that could threaten their status quo. Such “dangerous” innovations usually in term of basic natural restructuring, and new ideas that may influence those existing stable system operation.

The said development causes the shift of role. It happened also in Pamekasan, where the *Kiai* roles as traditional public leader are shifted by both of the new-, and former-prominent figures. This shift runs slow in Pamekasan. The *Kiais* standing as village founders are shifted by those younger *Ulamas* whom graduated from higher and more modern public school.

The above illustration presents that the role of Traditional *Kiai* as the public leader in Pamekasan has shifted, though it runs very slowly, and each has different intensity.

The shifted role is presentable with the existing *Kiais* as the modern, new prominent figures, and independent to village resources (for example land for traditional cultivation). They earn their income from those of non-agricultural sectors. As it consequences, Pamekasan people, has currently had two types of *Kiais* as the prominent figures, namely

- a. Traditional *Kiais* as the public leaders, who are more based on land resources of traditional cultivation, and values, as village founders, and the owner of widely spread village resources.
- b. The modern *Kiais* or *Ulamas* as the new prominent figures, who are based on modern resources possession and values, such as education, technology, and independent economy of non village resources.

The appearance of *Kiais* or *Ulamas* as the modern prominent figures are comprehended as essentially determined by upward mobility basic principles of community members. Upward mobility to become a prominent figure is less possible, while downward mobility risks of a prominent figure is significantly large. Only those prominent figure members themselves who could take personal care to fight those risks by establishing their immovable status. They usually will use their extensive resources for that purpose.

In Pamekasan, the Traditional *Kiai* status is more emphasized to family bonding (mainly the *Kiais* will solemnize their children marriage with other *Kiais* children). Such marriage are expected to maintain the prominent figure status of those Traditional *Kiais*.

Traditional *Kiai* shifted by modern *Kiai* or *Ulama* is in line with people need and vision shifting that tend to be more modern.

In line with community development, the number and quality of Modern *Kiais* are increased. Such increase are adjusted with the more plural and modern community needs. The new value currents absorbed from those reformative centers are brought and socially distributed by Modern *Kiais*. Their standing as the connecting chain between urban community, who are relative more modern, and rural community, who are relative more traditional in character, are significantly enabling them as the agents of change.

The social standings of *Kiais* or *Ulamas* as prominent figures have symbolic values, however, they are leaders of community functional sectors. There are three significant functions of *Kiais* or *Ulamas* as follows:

- a. To arrange small groups relation in order to achieve collective targets,
- b. To unite those ideal norms capable of uniting each living collectivity and dependency, and
- c. to organize solidarity as collectivity through meeting procedures.³

¹ See Soelaiman Soemardi, “Cara-Cara Pendekatan terhadap Kekuasaan, Sebagai suatu Gejala Sosial = Approaching Methods to Authority, as a Social Symptom”, in Miriam Budiardjo (eds.), *Aneka Pemikiran tentang Kuasa dan Wibawa (Various Thought on Power and Dignity)*, Sinar Harapan, Jakarta, 1986, Page : 36 See more detail in C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1956, Pages : 269-297

² Rogers, Everett M. dan Shoemaker, F. Flyod, “*Diffusion in Inovations*”, The Free Press, New York, 1971, Page : 340

³ see Suzanne Keller, *op cit*, Pages : 123-150

Reference

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Developmental and shifting thinking and action process of a community may not close to the possibility of delivering numbers of new prominent figures, whom notabene will weakening some Traditional *Kiais*. This social thinking shifting will give people alternative for the appearance of the Modern *Kiais* as the new prominent figures.

Villagers growth are not followed by industrial development to accommodate the questioned population enlargement. This condition has caused majority people remain to stay in rural sectors. The villagers, who increase in numbers, strongly struggle to make use those limited land resources. Population pressure has made the land splitting to small lots, or the control of large land (upon the possibility of land sharecropping system), the widely falling of people into debt, the establishment of worker class without land ownership, the decrease of income, poverty, poor nutrition, and lack of food supplies.

The appearance of *Kiai* as the community prominent figure is interpreted as the procedure set in (community) organization, where the whole or part of community members select numbers of person to be leaders. People serve to give legitimation or ratification on one's assignment for certain social capacity. In other words, the *Kiai* selection as the public leader is the individual participation having legitimated authority.

The appearance processes of *Kiais* as prominent figures, in Pamekasan demand energy, and time sacrifice. Moreover, people are demanded to be able to make the decision. People in making decision may expres its relation with the surrounding people demand and awaranses. The Modern *Kiai* as the community new prominent figure , significantly relate to the increase of people educational, technology, communication standards, and also the extension of those non-agricultural job opportunities.

Modern *Kiai* Status as the new prominent figure also appear from land owners generation. But the questioned status is not only achieved due to their parents inheritance, but also due to a quite long process, especially through education and technology mastery.

These modern *Kiais* or *Ulamas* as the new prominent figures have higher mobility and relation with those outside world of the village. They are closer to authority centers, and agents of change, so as they also stand in the front line to take new information and values from the outside world. Some of them are teachers, civil servants, National Army members, private citizens, and entrepreneurs.

Modern *Kiais* or *Ulamas* of other new prominent figures are the new entrepreneurs, both engaging in

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agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. This happened to people in Pamekasan with the appearance of tobacco farmers who cooperate with the *Kiais*.

Members bonding in the neighborhood group mainly established in *dusun* comunal organization also fades away. The former neighborhood bonding is quite strong, especially due to their interest similarity in rice field cultivation. Land owners generally will request manpower to their neighbour to help them in cultivating their rice field. However, the more villagers work outside the agricultural sector, the more fade away the neighborhood bonding, since part of villagers are no longer functionally and personally depend on others assistance. Moreover, the social bonding of inter-villagers is still important, as mostly people still work in agricultural sector. In addition, the comunal living based on traditional values still mark the inter-villagers social bondings. Dusun level neighborhood is also important as it involves all dusun people (villagers).

Modern *Kiais* as new prominent figures are noticeable from their roles in the neighborhood and social groups. The neighborhood group figures are reflected in the structure of dusun/kampong officials, while of religious social groups are noticeable from NU, and Muhammadiyah groups. The “National” groups, comprised of *abangan* (Muslims who practice a much more syncretic version of Islam than the more orthodox santri) people, in which un-organized as other social religious groups.

Social religious groups in which actually established in the NU, Muhammadiyah, and “National” groups, are important social activity organizations. The NU and Muhammadiyah groups seem to be the alternative to fill the group vacancy capable of coloring the ideology, and mobilizing people. Religious activities still the dominant element, and social religious groups are the important elements in social structure.

This grouping is also capable of mobilizing community members in accordance with each of their group world vision. This matter creates different vision between neighborhood and family group members, even to groups based on status or class differences.

4. Conclusion

There is a role shift on the Traditional *Kiai* as the former prominent figure with the Modern *Kiai* as the new prominent figure, though it runs slowly. The pattern of Modern *Kiai* appearance as the new prominent figure has found the consistent / stable, and opened values to guarantee the circulation. The questioned consistent and opened values are based on one’s competencies of the following factors:

- a) Morality and norm based on local religion / believe, and culture
- b) Higher general education from the surrounding community
- c) technology and information competencies
- d) Economic competencies that is not always sourcing from traditionally agricultural cultivated land, but also from other non-agricultural jobs

Those value consistencies are socially exist and valid, and also opened for everybody to guarantee the circulation. Though the pattern of the questioned prominent figure appearances runs slowly, but it is conducive in the democraton process.