الطريقة والمراعاة الاجتماعية
الاجتماعية يجاوز في القرن التاسع عشر
الشيخ أحمد الرفاعي مخلّص سلاك نموذجًا
محمد أديب مصباح الإسلام

تأبّد الوقفة واقفته
في ولايات متناورة في ماليزيا
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Governmentality and Discourses of Islam
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Post-Islamism and the Remaking of
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Muhammad Anwar

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Exclusivism and Radicalism in Schools: State Policy and Educational Politics Revisited
Exclusivism and Radicalism in Schools: State Policy and Educational Politics Revisited

Abdallah

Religious Education is an important part of a nation’s political culture, and Indonesia is no exception. Since independence, Sukarno, Indonesia’s first president, insisted that the role of Islamic education was not only character-building but also nation-building. Islamic religious education is expected to have a stake in building the character of the nation and to participate in actualizing the promises of independence. The objective of Islamic education in Indonesia is not only to create a religious person, but also making a good citizen.

The values of piety assume that a person will be a good citizen: tolerant, democratic and respectful of others. However, practically, piety does not guarantee that a person is able to uphold such values of citizenship. Today, religious radicalism which leads to violent behavior and labelling the other as unbeliever (takfiriyyah) is booming in the community. Ironically, the radical ideology infiltrates education sector. In Jombang, in March 2015, the Ansor Youth Movement (Gerakan Pemuda Ansor) associated with Nahdlatul Ulama found radical ideology on senior high school worksheets which called for killing people deemed idolatrous; the
worksheet reads: “only Allah can and should be worshipped, and those who worship anything besides Allah have become idolatrous and should be killed.” As it turned out, this was not only in Jombang; the same materials can be found in Jakarta, Depok and Bandung.

In this context, the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, in collaboration with the Knowledge Sector Initiative Indonesia, conducted a research project entitled “The Dissemination of Exclusivist Understandings in Islamic Education” in early 2016. This research used case studies in several areas: Jombang, Depok, Jakarta and Bandung. In order to obtain information about the controversy of Islamic education teaching materials containing exclusivist ideas in some schools and some areas, this research worked on a case-by-case basis, visiting the various places with the aim of finding documents and conducting focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with authors, reviewers, principals, Teacher Networks (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran, MGMP) and officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture in locations where controversial teaching materials were quite problematic. This research also used content analysis. This study not only examined cases in every area but also conducted in-depth analysis on the Islamic education textbooks used for elementary schools until senior high school.

This study focused on several things: (1) controversial cases surrounding textbooks in each of the areas, (2) the response of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) textbooks to questions of disagreements within Islam, intolerance, and nuances of violence, and (3) policies and politics of the production of IRE textbooks. First, this research sees how Muslim communities, such as NU and Muhammadiyah, respond to the understandings of violence in the textbooks whose violent content is allegedly just copied and pasted from textbooks issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) with no in-depth analysis. Then, second, it is necessary to conduct in-depth analysis on how disagreements are presented in IRE textbooks. And, third, how are such IRE textbooks approved and distributed?

Departing from the Jombang cases, IRE textbooks are crucial for the continuity of education in Indonesia. It would be very dangerous if religious textbooks were to contain violent contents. Indonesia is a country based on Pancasila, and the 1945 Constitution has always respected the freedom of thought, freedom of belief, and tolerance.
towards differences. Thus, the national curriculum should respect differences and emphasize unity in diversity. However, the interpretation and implementation at a certain level have usually deviated from this ideal. The national education curriculum was particularly vulnerable to misuse when being translated into teaching materials (textbooks, worksheets, or modules) due to the lack of control by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Then there is the possibility that this situation has been exploited by an exclusivist group which could have been active in promoting and spreading its religious understanding in schools.

Fundamentally, education, curriculum and textbooks are a field of struggle where different groups vie for influence, not least Muslim groups in society. Each group affects the orientation and content of education in accordance with their own ideology and interests (Apple, 1990, 2000). In the Indonesian context, Muslims, secularists, Christians, and Hindus struggle to design a national education system which is appropriate to their aspirations. This is because the future of Indonesia will depend, among other things, on the existence of education. This situation often creates tension and conflict. However, in a democratic and multicultural country, the process of determining the national curriculum and teaching materials is usually (and should be) implemented in an inclusive, deliberative, dialogical, and fair process that includes various societal groups, with the process continuing over time (Gutmann, 1987; Strike, 1994; Jackson, 2004).

Previous studies have found that the growing exclusiveness in educational institutions is associated with the influence of an intolerant curriculum (Freedom House, 2006), exclusivist teachers (PPIM 2008, LAKIP, 2011), the Islamist movement in schools (Ciciek 2008; Maarif Institute, 2011), and Islamic school environments penetrated by radical movements from the outside (Rahima, 2011). However, there is no study which has comprehensively and deeply discussed the understanding of teaching materials that include exclusivist thoughts, even though textbooks are the main reference for students and help to shape their understanding of Islam.

The research of PPIM produced three major findings: 

First, Islamic Religious Education in schools still contains many exclusivist ideas, including in textbooks produced by the government (Ministry of Education and Culture).
Second, the value of tolerance in IRE textbooks for elementary through high school is still ambiguous and contradictory. Although there are parts of the textbook of IRE teaching tolerance and presenting disagreement between Islamic understandings, the content of school textbooks in general turns out to be problematic. Teaching materials that should present and respect differences in understanding Islam instead hold an attitude that only promotes one understanding of Islam. There are certain texts that in fact deviate and mislead regarding differences of theology and worship practices. Textbooks that are supposed to clarify such sensitive concepts like disbelievers, polytheists, and the caliphate with enriching perspectives instead lay out an exclusivist perspective without criticism. Even in certain parts there are prejudices against non-Muslims, specifically Jews and Christians.

Some things that are contradictory include: Emphasis on congregational prayers in the mosque as mandatory (junior grade 7, p. 51), skin contact between men and women as able to invalidated ablutions (junior grade 7, p. 34), the image of non-Muslims (e.g., Umar before converting to Islam) as unclean (high school grade 10, p. 56 and junior grade 7, p. 69), the image of the Jews as “crafty” (Junior grade 7, p 197 and junior grade 8, p. 8-9), hostility towards infidels and polytheists (high school grade 12, p. 129), the concept of covering the *aurat* (the whole female body except the face and hands) when praying or when in a public space (high school grade 10, p. 22), the requirement of Islamic law to establish a caliphate (high school grade 10, p. 181) and democracy as a form of polytheism, referring to the opinion of Abul A’la Al-Mawdudi (high school grade 12, p. 68).

If the textbooks only present one particular view without presenting the views and attitudes of others, students would not become familiar with the differences. Students will tend to be intolerant of differences, and they will easily be misled and condemn different understandings and practices of the religions. Students will lose the skills of dialogue and the ability to be critical, making vulnerable to provocation by an exclusivist viewpoint. Conversely, if the textbooks present Islam’s rich diversity, students will address differences in a more relaxed atmosphere, perhaps as the laws or parts of laws of nature, and they would be tolerant of differences on their own, though perhaps they might reject or disagree with certain differing views.

Therefore, IRE textbooks must accommodate differences, at least the differences involving large groups of people, for example, the differences...
between the NU and Muhammadiyah. IRE textbooks also must be based on the concepts of Islam as a blessing for the world and Islam for strengthening national values that respect diversity, freedom, unity, and also strengthen justice. The aim is to ensure that the instructional materials contribute not only to the moral formation of the people but also to their development as good citizens.

Third, the government ignored the cultural politics of how these controversial IRE textbooks could be in print. Responding to the question, the Ministry of Education and Culture confirmed that such controversial books were published not because the teams or members drafting the books held intolerant or radical beliefs. The Ministry of Education and Culture recognized the main reason that IRE textbooks with intolerance and violence nuances could be published is because the drafting process is less than ideal. The work is generally “racing to deadline” and setting and lay-out stages of the production process are careless. The lack of support facilities in the production process of the book becomes the main reason.

Another factor is the authors, reviewers (editor), and the examiners (reviewer) who are not pulled from among the leading thinkers or scholars (ulama) who represent different understandings of Islam in society. As noted above, the Ministry of Education and Culture does make some effort to involve figures from NU, Muhammadiyah, and other civic organizations. But these figures are not brought in as authors, reviewers, or inspectors of different Islamic understandings who oversee the production of contents of the book from start to finish to produce a book that could be well-received by Muslims from various backgrounds.

The research was presented at a seminar in the Auditorium of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of UIN Jakarta, on Thursday, September 29, 2016. The seminar was attended by around 300 participants, and was led by Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra, CBE (Professor of History of UIN Jakarta, Executive Board of PPIM UIN Jakarta), with Dr. H. Amin Haedari, M.Pd (Former Director of Islamic Education, Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs), and Dr. Mohammad Abduhzen (Executive Director of the Institute for Education Reform, Paramadina University; Chairman of Research and Development, Indonesian Teachers Union) as discussants. The presentation was delivered by PPIM senior researchers and led by the head of the team, Dr. Didin Syafruddin. The seminar was also attended by Minister
of Education and Culture, Prof. Dr. Muhadjir Effendy as a keynote speaker at the event.

The Minister of Education and Culture, Muhadjir Effendy, appreciated the research that has been done by PPIM, and he also agreed that there is a problem in the IRE school textbooks that need to be withdrawn from circulation for revision. He acknowledged that it is not easy to disentangle the problems of the publication of such textbooks, since there are major publishers that are involved in the production process. Nevertheless, the book is just one of the problems of education in Indonesia. There are still many other bigger problems, such as teachers and curriculum. “The Ministry of Education and Culture was concentrating on developing models of Strengthening Character Education to give greater weight to the process of habituation and the establishment of the values of tolerance, patriotism, integrity, hard work, and cooperation in the school environment,” he said. In this context, religious education is one of the main sources in the strengthening of civic and democratic values at school. “I agree with the view presented by PPIM UIN’s research that the government must ensure a tolerant religious outlook that is in line with the values of citizenship which should provide the perspective and content of religious education.”

In the view of the Education Minister, the textbook is not the only source that fosters radicalism that could trigger terrorism. There are also many outside factors such as their recruitment through networks outside the school. This recruitment may occur through the network of the alma mater, through religious study groups, or even from the university campus. He cited former students from Klaten, Central Java: Roki Aprisdianto alias Atok, a skillful recruiter of members to his radicalist community. Alternatively, in the case of the second J.W. Marriot bombing, in 2009, the recruitment occurred in a mosque.

Azyumardi Azra was of the opinion that the books found by PPIM UIN Jakarta are a problem. Sentences and vocabulary used in IRE teaching materials are still based on classical fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) that is not relevant to the present context or reality of Indonesia and not in accordance with the understanding of the scholars of the 20th—much less 21st—century. “Raising differences of opinion among clerics or the question of the caliphate will only strengthen fanaticism between different schools of belief, as has happened in the Arab world, South
Asia and Africa,” he said. Azra encouraged the Ministry of Education and Culture to be more selective in choosing textbooks and authors. The contents of the textbook should emphasize moderate Islam. The authors of the text should prioritize Islam of the middle way (Islām Wasaṭiyah) by providing awareness of Islam and the Indonesianness to learners and developing an understanding of the dangers of radicalism and terrorism.

At the end of his presentation, Azra proposed the creating of textbook revision committees as copy editors before the textbooks are published. The committee would function like the committee within the Ministry of Religious Affairs for correcting the Qur’an. This is important since he suggests the existence of infiltrators who seek to spread religious ideas different from the what the majority of the Indonesian people have long believed. Taking advantage of democracy and freedom, they deploy cadres to transform moderate religious ideology and the middle way to become exclusivist and radical.

In line with Prof. Azra, Dr. Muhammad Abduhzen, executive director of the Institute for Education Reform at Paramadina University, also saw the need for a special agency in charge for assessing the IRE textbook manuscripts before they are circulated widely in the community. Meanwhile Dr. Amin Haedari, former director of the Islamic Education in Schools, Ministry of Religious Affairs, said the government must take the coaching of teachers of Islamic religion seriously. According to him, the teachers are the main actors in the education process. If the textbook is not precisely suitable yet teachers are highly qualified, then what is taught will still be good.

As team leader in this research, Dr. Didin Syafruddin in his presentation on the research results noted that IRE textbooks are still ambiguous on the issue of tolerance. There is a section that teaches about tolerant lifestyles, yet there are other parts that do not appreciate difference; there is even blasphemy against other groups. It is no surprise, then, if there is resistance from the public towards these textbooks, as happened in Jombang, East Java, in 2015. Therefore, one of the recommendations of this study is that the government needs to create guidelines that define the vision, mission, principles, values, and methods of discussion of IRE textbooks in response to differences in understanding Islam and sensitive concepts in the context of internal Muslims disagreements, differences between religious communities, as well as in the context of nation and state. The government needs to
make IRE textbooks part of the national cultural policy in maintaining and improving social cohesion, in which the IRE textbooks portray Islam as loving peace and justice even while living in difference.

Didin presented the findings of this study using the example of the IRE book for grade 10, page 22 on the concept of covering the *aurat* (private areas of the body), presented as everything except the face and hands, when praying or being in a public space. In contrast to the image in this textbook, normally the concept of covering everything except the face and palms is only limited to the time of prayer, and not applied in the public space more broadly. What even is more extreme is the radicalism found in the IRE book for grade 10, page 181, which promotes the implementation of Islamic law through the establishment of a caliphate, with an ideologically Islamic system with stronger leadership and in which legislation must refer to the Koran. What should be put forward is that the experience of Pancasila at its best is also in line with Islamic practices. Moreover, according to Didin, in the textbook for grade 12, page 68, is presented the opinion of Sheikh Sayyid Abul A’la Al-Mawdudi that democracy is a form of polytheism. In contrast, what should be explained is that democracy is in line with Islam. To conclude his presentation, Didin urged that Indonesia’s Islamic education should not only establish devout believers, but also good citizens. Therefore, teaching materials that are presented to learners should be modeled on Indonesian Islam and mold a political culture that is typically Indonesian.

Lastly, Islamic religious education is an issue that cannot be ignored. IRE textbooks in schools should promote Islamic and national values which hopefully could to counter the increasingly prevalent understanding of transnational Wahhabism which leads to labeling the other as unbeliever (*takfīriyah*). PPIM’s study can be a starting point for depicting religious education in Indonesia and for prompting the government to make the production of textbooks on Islamic Religious Education (IRE) as part of the national cultural policy as well as part of character and nation-building.

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1. Asfa Widiyanto, *The Reception of Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s Ideas within the Indonesian Intellectual Landscape.*


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Submission of Articles

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Articles should be written in American English between approximately 10,000-15,000 words including text, all tables and figures, notes, references, and appendices intended for publication. All submission must include 150 words abstract and 5 keywords. Quotations, passages, and words in local or foreign languages should
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