

Redefining Islamic Authority in Indonesia: The Dialectics of Pesantren and Tajdid in Contemporary Muslim Society

Redefinisi Otoritas Keislaman di Indonesia: Dialektika Pesantren
dan Tajdid dalam Masyarakat Muslim Kontemporer

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Abstract: Existing studies on pesantren and Islamic reform movements have generally examined these traditions separately, while limited attention has been given to their dialogical role in shaping contemporary Islamic authority in Indonesia. This study examines the process of redefining Islamic authority through the interaction between the pesantren tradition and the tajdid movement. Employing qualitative library research with a socio-historical approach, the study analyzes classical and contemporary scholarly works representing both intellectual traditions. The article contributes to the discourse on Islamic authority by positioning pesantren and tajdid as complementary rather than competing traditions. The findings reveal that Islamic authority in Indonesia has evolved through a continuous process of negotiation between tradition and reform. Pesantren preserve scholarly continuity through sanad-based learning, collective deliberation, and contextual adaptation, while the tajdid movement promotes rationalization, purification, and responsiveness to social transformation. Rather than existing in opposition, both traditions contribute to the formation of a dynamic, moderate, and adaptive model of Islamic authority. This study argues that the redefinition of Islamic authority in Indonesia is the result of an ongoing dialogue between traditionalism and reformism, enabling Islamic institutions to respond effectively to contemporary religious, social, and intellectual challenges.

Keywords: Islamic Authority; Pesantren; Ishlah; Tajdid; Islamic Reform; Contemporary Islam.



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Abstrak: *Kajian-kajian tentang pesantren dan gerakan pembaruan Islam selama ini cenderung menempatkan keduanya sebagai tradisi yang berdiri sendiri, sementara perhatian terhadap peran dialogis keduanya dalam membentuk otoritas keislaman kontemporer di Indonesia masih relatif terbatas. Penelitian ini mengkaji proses redefinisi otoritas keislaman melalui interaksi antara tradisi pesantren dan gerakan tajdid. Penelitian menggunakan metode studi pustaka kualitatif dengan pendekatan sosio-historis terhadap karya-karya tokoh klasik dan kontemporer yang merepresentasikan kedua tradisi tersebut. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada diskursus otoritas Islam dengan memosisikan pesantren dan tajdid sebagai dua tradisi intelektual yang saling melengkapi, bukan saling berhadapan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa otoritas keislaman di Indonesia berkembang melalui proses negosiasi yang berkelanjutan antara tradisi dan pembaruan. Pesantren mempertahankan kesinambungan keilmuan melalui sanad, musyawarah kolektif, dan adaptasi kontekstual, sedangkan gerakan tajdid mendorong rasionalisasi, pemurnian ajaran, dan respons yang lebih terbuka terhadap perubahan sosial. Keduanya tidak berada dalam hubungan oposisi, melainkan bersama-sama membentuk model otoritas keagamaan yang dinamis, moderat, dan adaptif. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa redefinisi otoritas keislaman di Indonesia merupakan hasil dialog berkelanjutan antara tradisionalisme dan reformisme yang memungkinkan institusi-institusi Islam merespons tantangan keagamaan, sosial, dan intelektual kontemporer secara lebih efektif.*

Kata Kunci: Otoritas Keislaman; Pesantren; Ishlah; Tajdid; Pembaruan Islam; Islam Kontemporer.

Introduction

The conceptual redefinition of religious authority is a process of changing the meaning, source of legitimacy, and form of exercise of authority in response to social, intellectual, and institutional dynamics. Redefinition does not mean replacing religious teachings, but rather reconstructing the way authority is formed, produced, and run. In the context of Islam, authority does not originate from a single hierarchy, scattered among scholars, institutions, scientific networks and religious organizations. Within the framework of social theory, Max Weber explained that authority can be traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal, which suggests that the legitimacy of authority is not static, but can change according to the historical context.¹ In the context of Islam, authority is not centralized in one institution, but is spread across a network of scholars and religious institutions. Eickelman and Piscatori affirm that Islamic authority is diffused and contested, so it is always open to reinterpretation and negotiation.² In line with that, Azyumardi Azra shows that the network of scholars plays an important role in forming and transmitting religious authority dynamically in the Islamic world, including Indonesia.³

The redefinition of religious authority takes place through a dialectical process that involves the interaction between tradition and change. In the Indonesian

context, this process can be passed through stage (1) contestation as a civil Islam;⁴ (2) selective negotiation;⁵ (3) institutionalization and adaptation of change;⁶ and (4) integration.⁷

Religious authority in Islam in Indonesia is a dynamic phenomenon, constantly changing along with the social and intellectual development of the people. In practice, religious authority is not singular, but is formed through the interaction of various traditions of thought, especially between pesantren and Islamic reform movements.⁸

Religious authorities in Indonesia began to be formed through a long process of broadcasting of the two major religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. The broadcasting of these two religions lasted quite a long time. Groups of Muslim missionaries who also acted as traders began to spread Islam, although its origins are still debated. The process of Islamization was then continued by the Sunans, especially in Java, who continued their role as Islamic broadcasters in the region.⁹ The teachings of Islam that are conveyed are based on the principles of faith, worship and morals. The occurrence of the process of interaction both among leaders and religious teachings themselves cannot be avoided, the selection process to sort between the old and new teachings is quite strict.

Among Muslims, there are two main groups: the pesantren community that maintains local traditions by utilizing elements of Hindu, Buddhist, and local beliefs as a *wasilah*, and the modernist community that emphasizes the purification of Islamic teachings by removing elements of syncretism. The modernist community believes that Islam must bring about a change in people's beliefs and worship. This purification and renewal movement was pioneered by KH Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta in 1869. He began the reform by straightening the direction of the mosque's qibla and establishing the Muhammadiyah Organization, which then spread outside Java.¹⁰

A lot of research has been done on pesantren and *tajdid*, but it tends to examine pesantren as a representation of traditionalism and the *tajdid* movement as a representation of modernism separately. Deliar Noer's research,¹¹ Wahbah Az Zuhaili¹² explained the dichotomy between the two currents, so it is not able to explain the dynamics of the relationship between the two in the formation of religious authority. However, studies that place pesantren and the *tajdid* movement in a dialogical relationship are still relatively limited. Existing studies on pesantren, Muhammadiyah, and Islamic reform have generally examined these traditions separately. Limited attention has been devoted to understanding how the interaction between traditionalist and reformist currents contributes to the reconfiguration of Islamic authority in contemporary Indonesia. This article analyzes how the two traditions interact in the process of redefining Islamic religious authority in

Indonesia. This article seeks to position Islamic boarding schools and the *tajdid* movement as complementary traditions in building religious authority, not as conflicting entities. The article aims to analyze the concept of religious authority of *pesantren* and the *tajdid* movement in forming religious authority in Indonesia.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative method based on library research (*library research*) with a socio-historical approach. The primary source of data is drawn from a rigorous literature study encompassing both classical and contemporary texts, particularly focusing on traditional Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) literatures and modernist *tajdid* thought. The socio-historical approach is utilized to analyze the evolution, negotiation, and redefinition of Islamic religious authority in Indonesia across different timelines and social contexts. The collected qualitative data are then analyzed using content analysis and critical interpretation to understand the dynamic dialectics between the *ishlah* and *tajdid* movements.

Basic Framework of Islamic Teachings

Islam spreads goodness (*al-khair*) and guidance (*al-huda*) to all mankind which begins with the mission of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH to be sent to the world to bring a message of love from Allah to the universe. The basis for the realization of goodness and guidance departs from the philosophical values of justice (*al-'adalah*), equality (*al-musawah*) and brotherhood (*al-ukhuwwah*). Through these three values, Islam has two goals in broadcasting da'wah, namely welfare (*al-shalah*) and then the main welfare (*al-ashlah*).

The truth of Islam is absolute, permanent, and flexible to various situations without being affected by changes in place or time. However, social changes called *'illat* can affect the interpretation and implementation of Islamic teachings temporally. When *'illat* is lost, interpretation and implementation return to their original form, keeping the teachings of Islam relevant and flexible.

The principles of Islamic teachings have not changed, but Islam remains flexible in the face of social changes. The certainty of no change in Islamic teachings is based on the teachings of monotheism. In the Islamic community, especially Islamic boarding schools and renewal, there are two logics of thought: *islah* and *ijtihad*. *Islah* focuses on the maintenance of traditions, while *ijtihad* leads to renewal and purification. The renewal community opens the door to *ijtihad* for those who have credibility and meet certain conditions, such as a deep understanding of verses, hadiths, Arabic, *ushul fiqh*, and *maqāshid al-sharī'at*.¹³ Although they differ in intensity, *islah* and *ijtihad* both emphasize the importance of reinterpretation and development of legal thought.¹⁴

Islamic boarding schools and *Islah* traditions

Muslims in Indonesia are divided into two major groups: *pesantren* and renewal, due to differences in perspective. Islamic boarding school groups tend to maintain an identity with past traditions, while renewal groups see identity as having to keep up with the changing times. Islamic boarding school groups reject the designation of “tradition” because they do not reject change, but with a careful and measured approach, consider renewal as a process of “*islah*,” which refers to efforts to improve religious activities.

Islamic boarding schools in rural communities are influenced by agrarian culture. Rural communities are often trapped in poverty and inertia, which shapes the way they understand religion. Poverty, both material and non-material, is caused by economic domination by overland, such as the Chinese or the indigenous *haji*.¹⁵ Sartono Kartodirdjo stated that this condition gives birth to poverty and inertia syndrome, which results in low productivity and fatalistic religious thinking.¹⁶

Pesantren acts as a liberating force from this syndrome, designing religious thinking that is in accordance with the knowledge and critical power of society. Religious teachings are arranged in a framework that is practical and easy to practice, meeting the criteria of *mu'tamad* and *ihthiyat*.

On the other hand, the construction of urban society due to their interaction with various professions, they have high critical power so that every statement, including religious affairs, requires explanation through critical reasoning and also a valid source of thought. On the basis of religious thought, the pattern of thinking that tends to be dogmatic, conservative and the alleged influence of syncretism with previous religions is avoided.

The framework of thinking patterns of rural and urban communities is not uniform. Therefore, there are two sociological processes that affect social groups: *first*, social integration, which includes the tendency to attract and adapt to each other; *Second*, social differentiation, which includes differentiation based on biological characteristics, religion, gender, and profession. Islamic boarding schools, which emerged around the 16th century, sought to build social relations through social integration by seeking cultural meeting points with local communities. On the other hand, if egoism predominates, social relations tend to be differentiator, with the search for differentiating factors between groups. However, Islamic teachings lead to an integrative pattern of social relations, and despite hundreds of years of social strife, there have always been attempts to unite society.

The pattern of Muslims' relationship with Hindu and Buddhist influences was adopted by Islam through a moral approach. As a consequence, the Muslims formulated various integrative approaches between Muslims to bridge minority Islam with Hindus and Buddhists who were the majority.¹⁷ The approach of the

missionaries, which was then continued by the pesantren community, was to provide opportunities for local communities to translate Islamic teachings according to their cultural constructs. Likewise, the concept of local culture is tried as much as possible to help translate the teachings of Islam. Thus, Islam and Hinduism and Buddhism which originally had social distance then changed by getting closer to each other which was marked by the process of taking each other's cultural traditions.

Islam, although its teachings are absolute and eternal, have always evolved along with human reasoning towards it. The Islamic boarding school group maintains a classical scientific tradition that prioritizes the principles of grip (*mu'tamad*) and certainty (*ihthiyath*), in response to the historical dynamics of Islamic thought that include creativity and innovation. Despite attempts to draw a line between tradition and modernity, these dynamics of thought resulted in the diversity of the orientation of Islamic thought, which was marked by the birth of various sects. Among Islamic boarding schools, madhhab is considered a must, considering the increasing number of individuals who are able to explore Islamic teachings independently. All of these schools include three main agendas: the science of faith, sharia, and morals.

The certainty of the immutability of Islamic teachings is based on the doctrine of *tawhid* (oneness of God). Allah is the One, indivisible, the Ruler of the universe. Everything that occurs in the universe never escapes the scope of His knowledge, power, and will. Because everything depends on Allah, Allah is the Necessary Being (*wajib al-wujūd*), while His creations are possible beings (*mumkin al-wujūd*). In this regard, there is an improvisation in human understanding of their relationship with Allah. Because Allah is the Necessary Being (*Zat Wajib al-Wujūd*), everything that happens or does not happen is by Allah's will. Even the existence of sinful acts committed by humans is essentially based on Allah's knowledge, power, and will.

Likewise, every good deed performed by humans is caused by human submission to Allah's knowledge, power, and will, and because it is willed and approved by Him (*yuridu wa yardla*). However, in the case of sinful acts, even though they are willed by Allah, they are not approved by Him (*yuridu wa la yardla*). The evidence according to Imam Al Ghazali is: everything that is new must have a cause, and this universe is new, so it must have a cause. The so-called universe is everything other than Allah, and what is meant by all that exists (*maujud*) is everything that has substance (*jisim*) and attributes (*'aradl*).¹⁸

The discussion of *aqidah* (faith) initially focuses on the oneness of Allah, then develops into the status of human actions (*af'al al-'ibad*). Some view humans as the true agents, such as the Qadariyah and Mu'tazilah, arguing that responsibility (*taklif*) implies that humans have full control over their actions. Conversely, the Jabariyah and Ahlus Sunnah see human actions as related to divine guidance (*hidayah*). Ahlus Sunnah revises the Jabariyah view, stating that humans are given the potential of *al-*

kasb and *al-ikhtiyar* (effort and choice), but the final reward in the hereafter is still determined by Allah.

The next discussion is about human freedom. The Qadariyah and Mu'tazilah view humans as having full freedom over their actions, while Ahlus Sunnah argues that human freedom is limited to effort and choice regarding actions. The value of human deeds does not determine their fate in the hereafter, because that is entirely up to Allah. Someone with few good deeds can still enter paradise if they perform good deeds at the end of their life, while an infidel can also repent and be saved. Therefore, human deeds do not guarantee freedom from responsibility, and Allah provides the virtue of deeds (*fadilah amal*) to cover the shortcomings of human deeds.

In *sharia* law, there are several clauses, including *muhkamat* and *mutasyabihat*. *Muhkamat* verses are verses whose meanings are already firm without requiring interpretation (*ta'wil*) or shifting from the apparent meaning (*zahir*) to the inner meaning (*batin*). Meanwhile, *mutasyabihat* verses are verses that contain double meanings and, if understood in their apparent sense, cause problems regarding faith (*aqidah*). The existence of these verses demonstrates the breadth of meaning in the verses of the Al-Quran, which cannot be fully understood by humans, so there always remain hidden meanings that demonstrate Allah's omnipotence.

Such debates of thought continue into the present and beyond, in accordance with the demands of time's development. This topic will continue to drive ongoing discussions regarding the redefinition of religious intellectual authority due to the constant nature of social change.

***Tajdid* Movement and Islamic Reform**

Broadly speaking, the pattern of Islamic thought in Indonesia follows two lines of thought, namely tradition and modern. Traditional thinking is a continuation of the thinking that develops in the pesantren environment. Thinking in pesantren is generally an elaboration of various studies of scholars in the Middle East which is generally a codification of the thought of the four schools. The thinking of the pesantren has a characteristic that is labeled with *the yellow book*. The use of the *literature of the yellow book* is the result of the thought of classical scholars studied by scholars in Indonesia when they studied in the Middle East, especially in Saudi Arabia.

Islamic boarding schools say that their frame of mind belongs to *the ahl sunnah wal jamaah* which seeks to integrate the basis of Islamic teachings that are universally associated with local conditions.

According to Al-Mausuah Al-Arabiyah Al Muyassarah, Ahlu Sunnah, which became the forerunner of NU, is a group that consistently follows in the footsteps of the Prophet

Muhammad PBUH and defends him. They have views on religious issues, both fundamental (ushul) and branch (furu'), as a Shia comparator. Among them, there are the so-called salaf, which is the early generation such as companions, tabiin, and tabi' tabiin, as well as khalaf, the generation that came later. Some of them are broad in tolerance for the role of reason, while others strictly limit the role of reason. There are also those who are reformative (mujaddidun) and those who are conservative (muhafidhun). This group is the majority of Muslims.¹⁹

Although pesantren have existed since the spread of Islam in the archipelago in the 16th century, this school of thought was later institutionalized in an organization called Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). NU can be considered as a “big pesantren” that gathers pesantrens with similar thoughts, while pesantren are small embryos with their own *manhaj*. Cholil Nafis stated that there are sixteen main issues held by NU, including the concept of ahl sunnah waljamaah, *taḥlīl*, *istighatsah*, *tawassul*, grave pilgrimage, and the celebration of the Prophet's Birthday.²⁰

The pesantren community institutionalized the process of seeking legal formulation through bahtsul masail activities, using three lines of thought: *bayani*, *qiyasi*, and *maqāshidī*. The *bayani* method involves taking the law from the Quran and Hadith,²¹ also known as *manhaj al-istinbath al-aḥkām min al-nushush*, including *tafsilī*, *ijmālī naṣ*, and general methods. In the process of reviewing legal thoughts, the following steps are taken:

- 1) Studying *the causes of nuzul* or *wurud* both macro and micro. The meaning of *the cause of nuzul mikro* is a special cause that is the background of the descent of the verse or the arrival of the Hadith. Meanwhile, macro causes are the background of socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts which are understood as the causes of *tanzīl al-āyāt* or *wurūd al-ḥadīth*.
- 2) Studying the text of verses/hadiths from the perspective of linguistic methods (*al-qawa'id al-ushulu al-lughāwiyah*) The study of this linguistic method includes three simultaneous methods (*al-taḥlīl al-lafẓh*), the study of meaning (*al-taḥlīl al-ma'na*) and the study of connotations (*al-dalalah*).
- 3) Relating the text studied to other related texts (*rabth al-nushush ba'dluha bi ba'dlin*).
- 4) Relating the text under study to *maqāshid al-sharī'ah* (*rabth al-nushush bi al-maqāshid al-sharī'ah*).²²

Meanwhile, *qiyas* is a method of determining law by equating laws that do not have *naṣ* with laws that are determined based on *naṣ*. The pillars of Qiyas consist of First, *al-ashlu*, which is a case that has legal provisions so that it is used as a guideline in carrying out qiyas with consideration of the similarities with those to be qiyas. Second, *al-far'u* is a case that does not have legal provisions based on *naṣ*, so it is

called *al-musyabbih* with the sense that it is seen as having similarities with legal cases that have a *naş* basis. Third, there is an *al-ashl* law that is determined based on the *naş*. Fourth, the existence of *'illat*, which is a trait that is a point of similarity with *al-ashl*.²³

Developments in formulating Islamic law have given birth to a new method of *ijtihad* known as *the istishlahi* method or *ijtihad maqāshidī*. Islamic boarding school leaders and modern thinkers in Islam formulate *tajdid* with the above method adjusted to the needs of the times. This method is based on the purpose of Islamic sharia to bring benefits to humans, both physically and mentally, in this world and the hereafter. Islam encourages a new response in understanding change, with the principle of ignoring damage (*al-fasad*) and choosing the good (*al-shalah*). If we are faced with the good and the better (*al-ashlah*), then the better one should be chosen. This ethical principle encourages reasoning towards a better one, triggering a redefinition of legal thought in the study of Islamic law.

The development of reasoning among scholars encourages a new interpretation of the study of the Qur'an and Hadith to answer legal problems that arise due to social changes. *Maqāshid al-syarī'ah* is important for exploring the laws of *sharī'a* and providing solutions to developing legal problems. *Maslahat mursalah* and *'urf* are used to support the interpretation, so that the resulting law has a concrete *naş* reference. The postulates in *istihsan* include, among others, *the maslahat mursalah*, *'urf* are as follows: *Istihsan* is a policy of *mujtahid legal thought* that deviates from the provisions of *al qiyas* that are clear or that there are already general provisions. In principle, a *mujtahid* who digs up legal thought should be faced with two postulates of *qiyas*, namely *jali* and *khafi*, then *the mujtahid* must adhere to the correct postulate, namely *qiyas jali*. However, on the consideration of certain evidence, a *mujtahid* can ignore the *evidence that is diligent* and turn to the evidence that *is khafi* on the basis of consideration of necessity (*dlarurah*). In accordance with the principles of *mu'tamad* and *ihtiyath*, it tends to avoid mentioning *pesantren* as a tradition group. In matters of religion there is no past and present but Islam is a truth all the time. And there is nothing behind the truth except what is called error.

Al-Maslahat al-Mursalah can be interpreted as an action that brings benefits. Meanwhile, in the terminology of *ushul fiqh*, *mashlahah* is interpreted as everything that guarantees the realization and maintenance of *maqāshid al-sharī'at*, namely *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, *ḥifẓ al-'aql*, *ḥifẓ al-nasl* and *ḥifẓ al-māl*.²⁴ Because the method of studying the law of *Maslahat Al-Mursalah* has developed in accordance with social changes, the scholars divide it into *maslahat mu'tabarrah* which is the *maslahat* that is appreciated by *the shari'* through the Quran and Hadith, *the problem of mulgha* which is *the maslahat* that does not get the attitude of the *shari'* both through the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith, because there is no reference to *naş*, both the *naş*

that acknowledges and (*i'tibar*) and the denies (*ilgha*) such as celebrating the Prophet's birthday, the writing and unification of the Qur'an.²⁵ *'Urf* is something that is known and lived by the community, both in the form of deeds (*'amali*) and words (*qauli*). *'Urf* and *'adah* are two different *things* but the purpose is the same.²⁶

In the process of implementation, the understanding of *fiqh* for Islamic boarding schools is divided into three, namely *fiqh ibadah*, *fiqh da'wah* and *fiqh siyasah*. The occurrence of the classification of these three *fiqh* is a line of thought used when formulating thoughts on various social cases, namely the case of worship then becomes the realm of *fiqh worship*, the case of the implementation of *da'wah* becomes the realm of *fiqh da'wah* and the case of the development of socio-political relations becomes the realm of *fiqh siyasah*.²⁷

Among Muhammadiyah, the idea of establishing this organization emerged in 1896, driven by the desire to straighten out religious practices that were considered incompatible with Islam.²⁸ The objectives of the establishment of Muhammadiyah include: (1) realizing a true Islamic society, (2) creating a beautiful, clean, and prosperous country under the protection of God, and (3) achieving the Paradise of Jannatun Na'im with the pleasure of Allah. The famous founder was known as KH Ahmad Dahlan in 1912 in Yogyakarta. Muhammadiyah carries the slogan "Islam is progressing" and is known for its focus on *da'wah* and *tajdid* (renewal).²⁹

Muhammadiyah's activities include *da'wah*, education, and social charity. *Manhaj Tarjih* is used to respond to sharia law issues, reflecting the characteristics of Islamic thought in Muhammadiyah. The organization focuses on renewal in religious understanding and practice. This is because Muslims are considered to no longer adhere to the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah, so that various deviations such as *shirk*, *bid'ah*, and superstition appear. As a result, Muslims lose social honor and the purity of religious teachings is no longer visible. In addition, the weak unity in Islamic educational institutions—triggered by the lack of *ukhuwah* and the absence of a strong organization—has an impact on the failure of some institutions to produce cadres in accordance with the demands of the times. This condition is exacerbated by a fanatical mindset, blind *taqlid*, and conservative and traditional tendencies in the lives of the people.

On the other hand, there is an awareness of the threat to the existence of Islam, especially from the activities of Christian missions and zealms that are increasingly widespread in society. Challenges also come from intellectuals who are indifferent or even view Islam as an outdated teaching. Therefore, there is a strong push to rebuild a society that truly practices the teachings and laws of Islam thoroughly in daily life.³⁰ Therefore, the renewal of the ummah needs to be handled immediately for the common good.

Basically, Islamic teachings can be divided into two groups, namely absolute, universal and permanent teachings that are unchanging and unchangeable. Included in this group are the teachings of Islam listed in the Quran and the Hadith of Mutawatir whose designation has been clear (*qat'i al-dalalah*).³¹ Islamic teachings, which are relative truth, are not universal and permanent so that they can be changed and changed. Included in this second part are the teachings of Islam produced through *ijtihad*. This frame of thought is commonly used by scholars of *ushul fiqh* and the renewal of Islamic thought.³² Etymologically, the word *ijtihad* means to exert all capacities or to bear a burden. Terminologically, *ijtihad* is defined as dedicating all available capabilities to discover legal rulings (*ahkām syar'iyah*) that are conjectural (*zanni*), up to a limit where the individual feels unable to exceed their effort.³³ Meanwhile, Imam Al-Ghazali asserts that *ijtihad* is the total exhaustion of a *mujtahid*'s ability to pursue knowledge regarding Islamic law (*hukum syara'*).³⁴ In the view that has developed within the internal Muhammadiyah, the meaning of *tajdid* is understood to encompass two dimensions: (1) in the fields of *aqidah* (creed) and *ibadah* (worship), it signifies purification (*pemurnian*) in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH; (2) in the field of worldly affairs (*mu'amalat duniyawiyyah*), it means dynamizing social life through a creative and innovative spirit that aligns with the demands of the times.

The Tarjih Council was established in 1927 based on the decision of the 16th Muhammadiyah Congress held in Pekalongan. In that period, the leadership of Hoofdbestuur Muhammadiyah was under KH. Ibrahim as the successor of KH. Ahmad Dahlan. The establishment of this institution is part of the organization's efforts to respond to the need for systematic religious authority within Muhammadiyah. According to Pradana Boy, a lecturer at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, the idea of institutionalizing fatwa or religious *ijtihad* in Muhammadiyah is rooted in the thought of KH. More Mansur. He emphasized that the idea of establishing the Tarjih Council could not be separated from the contribution of KH. Mas Mansur as the main initiator in formulating the concept of the institution, as conveyed in the Santri Scholar Forum organized by the Muhammadiyah Tarjih Center of Ahmad Dahlan University on January 11, 1927.

The legal thought developed in Majelis Tarjih is sourced from the Quran and Sunnah then developed through reasoning based on thinking based on *maqāshid al-shari'ah*, then the frame of thought is formulated by referring to the consideration of thought to produce the formulation of legal thought, namely *Qiyas*, *Istihsan*, *Maslahat Al-Mursalah*, *Saddud al-zari'ah*.³⁵

From the description above, the way of thinking that Muhammadiyah goes through is not much different from the way of thinking and literature that is used as a reference among Islamic boarding schools. The main problem lies in the focal

point that is the symbol of the institution's activities. If the pesantren uses the name *ishlah*, then Muhammadiyah uses the name *tajdid*.

Islamic authorities in Indonesia have shifted from a traditional form based on Islamic boarding school scholars to a more institutionalized and rational-organizational form. At first, religious authority was in the kiai and the network of Islamic boarding schools that referred to the yellow book and the classical school of jurisprudence (*ahlussunnah wal jamaah*). This authority is personal, based on scientific *sanad*, and is tied to the scientific tradition of the Middle East. With the emergence of modern movements such as Muhammadiyah, the authority was rationalized through the establishment of official institutions such as the Tarjih Council. Authority no longer rests solely on the figure of the ulama, but also on the collective *ijtihad* system that uses the *bayani*, *qiyasi*, and *maqāshidī* methods. Thus, there is a transformation from traditional-charismatic authority to institutional authority that is more systematic, open, and responsive to social change.

The main actors in the redefinition of Islamic authority are two large groups: Islamic boarding school clerics and modernist reformist figures. From traditional circles, the actor was manifested in a network of Islamic boarding schools which were later institutionalized in Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), with practices such as bahtsul masail as a collective *ijtihad* space. Through Bahtsul Masail, religious authority in pesantren is institutionalized collectively rather than centered solely on individual charisma. This mechanism demonstrates how traditional Islamic authority adapts to contemporary challenges without abandoning its epistemological foundations. Meanwhile, from the modernist circle, figures such as KH. Ahmad Dahlan and KH. Mas Mansur played an important role in formulating a new approach through Muhammadiyah. The institutionalization of *ijtihad* is realized through the Tarjih Council which is the formal authority in religious decision-making. In addition, other actors who played a role were Muslim intellectuals who pushed for methodological reform and responded to the challenges of modernity. Unlike pesantren-based authority that relies on *sanad* and scholarly transmission, Muhammadiyah institutionalizes authority through collective deliberation and methodological reasoning. This difference reflects not a contradiction but a distinct epistemological orientation in producing religious legitimacy.

The negotiation between the tradition of the pesantren and the *tajdid* movement does not occur in the form of absolute contradiction, but in a methodological dialectic. Islamic boarding schools maintain the framework of madhhab with *bayani* and *qiyasi* approaches, but also begin to adopt the *maqāshidī* approach in responding to contemporary problems. On the other hand, Muhammadiyah which carries *tajdid* still uses the same sources (the Qur'an and Sunnah),³⁶ but with an emphasis on purification and rationalization of religious practices. The common point of

negotiation lies in the use of *maqāshid al-sharia*, *maslahat mursalah*, and '*urf*' as the basis for legal considerations. Both of these traditions move towards the contextualization of Islamic teachings, albeit with different symbols and emphasises: pesantren with the term *ishlah* (gradual improvement), and Muhammadiyah with *tajdid* (renewal). Thus, negotiations take place in the form of methodological adaptation, not elimination of one of the parties.

The impact of this process of change and negotiation is the formation of a plural, moderate, and dynamic Indonesian Islamic style. Islam did not develop monolithically, but through two major currents—traditional and modern—that complemented each other. This results in flexibility in responding to social change without losing its normative roots. In addition, the emergence of institutions such as NU and Muhammadiyah strengthens the institutionalization of Islamic authority, so that it is able to face the challenges of modernity, external religious missions, and criticism from intellectuals.³⁷ Another impact is the development of a more open and contextual *ijtihad* tradition, as well as the increasing role of Islam in the educational, social, and political spheres. Overall, this process has shaped Indonesian Islam as a model of religion that is inclusive, adaptive, and still based on sharia principles.

Conclusion

Islamic boarding schools and reform movements in Islam have many similarities, especially in referring to the main sources of Islamic teachings, namely the Quran and Hadith, as well as the thoughts of madhhab scholars. Both aims to elevate the teachings of Islam so that they become a guide for the progress of mankind, in accordance with the mission of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as a blessing for the universe.

The main difference lies in the approach and slogan used. Pesantren emphasizes the principles of *mu'tamad* and *ihthiyath*, avoiding the motto of *ijtihad* because of the burden of responsibility to maintain the authenticity of sharia'. Instead, the update criticizes pesantren as too slow and based on past thinking, while the world is constantly changing.

These two schools strive to maintain religious authority so that Islam remains relevant at all times and places (*al-islam shalihun li kulli zaman wa makan*). Therefore, Muslims should see pesantren and renewal as part of the treasure of Islamic thought that together embody Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. This principle of brotherhood strengthens the bond of *ukhuwah islamiyah*, *ukhuwah wathaniyah*, and *ukhuwah basyariyah* among Muslims.

The transformation of Islamic thought in Indonesia shows a shift in authority from the traditional pattern of pesantren based on the Islamic boarding school to a

more institutionalized authority through NU and Muhammadiyah. This process involves a redefinition by traditional and modernist scholars negotiating through the *ishlah* and *tajdid* approaches, with a common point on the use of *maqāshid al-sharia* and the principle of benefit. As a result, Indonesian Islam has developed into a moderate, adaptive, and contextual pattern.

Theoretically, this study emphasizes that the change in Islamic authority is not dichotomous, but dialogical and integrative. His contribution to Indonesian Islamic studies lies in the affirmation of the role of the institutionalization of *ijtihad* as the key to religious adaptation to modernity. However, this study is still limited to conceptual and historical analysis, so further research is needed to examine concrete practices in the field, including the dynamics of religious authority in the digital era and globalization.

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