

PESANTREN, PEACE BUILDING, AND EMPOWERMENT: A Study of Community Based Peace Building Initiatives

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المخلص

أصبحت المعاهد الإسلامية التقليدية (pesantren) جزءاً من الثقافة الإسلامية الإندونيسية، الذي جمع البحوث الإسلامية والثقافة الإسلامية في الشرق الأوسط مع الثقافة المحلية. وهذه الضمة الثقافية تجعل الثقافة الإسلامية الإندونيسية لها خصائصها مختلفة عن الثقافة الإسلامية في الشرق الأوسط. وهذا البحث ينظر دور المعاهد عن قرب متمثلاً بالمعهد السلفي الشافعي في سيتوبونديو (Situbondo)، جاوي الشرقية. وهذا المعهد هو أحد من المعاهد القديمة في إندونيسيا، مع دوره الاستراتيجي في تنمية السلام وتأثير مسيرة الحضارة حوله. وهناك ثلاثة أدوار لعب بها المعهد وركز اهتمامه بها هذا المعهد اهتماماً، الأولى: وهو وساطة العلاقة بين الأديان بعد الشغب في سيتوبونديو (Situbondo) 1997، والثاني إصلاح العلاقة بين الفلاح والشركة الزراعية البلدانية في استصلاح الأرض في بوننجان (Bunengan) والنزاع الأرض في ميراك (Merak). فقد أصبح شيخ المعهد (كياهي) والمدرسون والتلاميذ وحدة لا تتجزأ مع الديناميك المحلي.

Abstrak

Pesantren telah menjadi bagian tradisi keislaman di Indonesia, yang menggabungkan kajian dan budaya Islam Timur Tengah dengan tradisi lokal. Penggabungan tradisi ini menciptakan Islam Indonesia memiliki karakter berbeda dengan Islam di Timur Tengah. Tulisan ini melihat peran pesantren lebih dekat dengan studi kasus pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Situbondo, Jawa Timur. Pesantren ini telah menjadi salah satu pesantren tertua di Indonesia, dengan peran strategis mengembangkan perdamaian dan mewarnai perjalanan peradaban di sekitarnya. Tiga

kiprah pesantren menjadi perhatian utama: memediasi hubungan antar agama pasca kerusuban Situbondo 1996, mendamaikan hubungan antara petani dan perusahaan perkebunan negara dalam pendayagunaan tanah di Bunengan dan konflik tanah di Merak. Kyai, ustadz dan santri menjadi bagian yang menyatu dengan dinamika lokal.

Keywords: *pesantren*, conflict, advocacy, peace building.

A. Introduction

Before describing the contemporary drift of post crisis-Indonesia and communal conflicts after the collapse of the New Order, I will define the acceptance of community based in this sense and where peace initiative site is. What I mean by community based is *pesantren* community and people in the region of *pesantren*. They usually have their own system of life. Wahid compares *pesantren* to hippies' world, which has its own life pattern and internal authority.¹ In Situbondo, it means Madurese community within *pesantren* and in conflicting regions in the rural. They preserve the unity tradition and are under the authority of charismatic community leaders, whereas peace initiatives are attempts of a community to make a peace and harmony in active perspective through the wisdom of local custom.

Clifford Geertz states that *kyais* (traditional Islamic boarding school leaders) are significant cultural brokers in Indonesian rural Muslims. They have transformed modern values into their religious community.² Therefore, for Muslims, *kyais* and their *pesantrens* are important factor in response to modern ideologies, cultures and politics. The *pesantrens* have a great role in assimilation of European modernity, Middle Eastern Islam and local cultures. It forms peaceful, plural and inclusive Indonesian Muslims for about a half century.

¹ Abdurrahman Wahid, "Pesantren Sebagai Subkultur", in M. Dawam Rahardjo, *Pesantren dan Pembaharuan* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1995), p. 43; Abdurrahman Wahid, *Mengerakkan Tradisi, Esai Pesantren* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 1995), p. 2-4.

² Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese Kijai: The Changing Role of A Cultural Broker", in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 2, p. 228-249, Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1960); Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

In the 1950s, Geertz found the role of *kyai* and *pesantren* society as cultural broker. Although Geertz acquired a lot of critique on his interpretation of *kyai*, *abangan* and *santri*, but his cultural interpretation stirred further research on *pesantren*.³ Horikoshi, based on his finding in *pesantren* of Garut, West Java in 1970s, asserted that *kyai* and *pesantren* community are more than just a broker but an agent of transformation.⁴ Horikoshi's insight was enlightening New Order development in association with *pesantren*. Both Geertz and Horikoshi's argument cannot understand how *pesantren* have changed after the collapse of the New Order. *Pesantren* community has involved actively in peace building initiatives, and promotes inter-religious reconciliation and harmony. It appears in some communal riots of Situbondo (October 1996), Tasikmalaya (December 1996), Mataram (January 2000), bloody conflicts of Maluku and Poso (1999-2002), and Aceh earthquake and tsunami (26 December 2004). It is similar to Appleby's (2000) interpretation of Buddhism role of Cambodia liberation against the hegemony of Khmer Rough. However, most Indonesian Muslims respond negatively to such groups. They argue that the existing Islamic tradition, principles and life under the nation-state of Indonesia are suitable to the roads of Prophet Muhammad. In the fieldwork in five provinces on Indonesia, many Muslims have their system against the radical-militant groups' violent orientation. They keep on preserving peaceful, harmony, inclusive and tolerant inter-religious and multicultural Indonesia.

³Two Indonesian scholars Muchtarom and Dhofier criticise the variants of Geertz. Zaini Muchtarom, *Santri dan Abangan di Jawa* (Jakarta: INIS, 1988). About the inconsistency of the variants, Dhofier describes: 'Lucunya identifikasi tentang Islam kolot ini sama dengan apa yang Geertz simpulkan tentang ciri-ciri abangan yang merupakan campuran dari pada kehidupan keagamaan yang bersifat animistik, Hindu-Budistis dan Islam'. Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1994), p. 6.

⁴H. Horikoshi, *Kiai dan Perubahan Sosial*(Jakarta: P3M, 1987). About further role of Kyai in political development. See: E. Turmudi, *Struggling for the Umma: Changing Leadership Roles of Kijai in Jombang, East Java*, PhD thesis. Canberra: ANU, 1996; My previous analysis of this changing role of Kyai in peace building from the last decade of the New Order, see: Badrus Sholeh, "Pesantren, Konflik dan Peace Building", *Republika*, February 23rd 2005.

The *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah of Sukorejo, Asembagus, Situbondo takes place in a growing peasant Muslim communities, which mostly are farmers and fishermen. Three sugar companies around *pesantren* belong to local government. Situbondo is a *kabupaten* in *Tapal Kuda* (lit. Horse-Shoe) regions, where *kyais* have primary position within the community. Generally *kyais* have *pesantren* and are community leaders. Therefore, people will ask a *kyai* to solve their private and public problems. Most Situbondo people are ethnically Madurese. The rests are Javanese and few Chinese. Ninety percent Situbondo communities are Muslim, and the rests are Christians, Hindu and Buddhist. However, there are quite a lot of churches, especially on the edge of main roads, which have been responded by local Muslims before the riot of 1996.

The *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah was founded by K.H. Syamsul Arifin, and continued by K. H. R. As'ad Syamsul Arifin for a long time with a very significant growth. After Kyai As'ad passed away, K. H. R. Fawa'id As'ad, his oldest son, continued his father's policy. One of the role of the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah is as the agent of enhancing peace building and reconciliation after the Situbondo riots in 1996, when a number of churches and Christian schools were burnt and destroyed. K. H. R. Fawai'd As'ad successfully stopped the riots by persuading and facilitated dialogues between Muslims and Christians, which are going on up to now for longer and more substantial peace building. In addition, the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah also have played a significant role as a mediator among farmers whose lands have been taken over by a state agro industry in the New Order era. The farmers attempted to fight against the company, but security forces supported the 'New Order' company and forced the farmers to move away from their homes and lands. The peasant farmers asked the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah to help them from state repression. The *pesantren* saw it as a challenging duty and an implementation of Islamic teaching in community. The *pesantren* mediated between the farmers and the agro industry company. The result was that the farmers could get back their *HGU* (*Hak Guna Usaba*, property rights) of their previous lands. In this context, the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah is a model of Indonesian *pesantren*, which played a great role in community

development and empowerment. This article will be divided into some parts. Firstly, it will discuss the theoretical framework. Furthermore, it describes the setting of regions and the demography of the *pesantren*. Lastly, it analyses how the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah has taken its role.

B. Theoretical Frameworks

This framework will describe the means of peace culture, non-violence and social transformations, which grow within *pesantrens*. These phenomenon changes both pluralistic-peaceful and radical-fundamentalist characters of *pesantrens* and their communities. There are two questions coming up: whether *pesantrens* have roles of peace building initiatives and non-violent movements or *pesantrens* have also transformed Muslims into radical-fundamentalist?

Appleby argues that the manifestation of religious based violence is inspired from the discrimination of global politic and economy against minority powers. Appleby critically states:

It tells of believers inspired by 'sacred rage' against racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination; unjust economic policies; unnecessary shortages of food, clean water, and basic education for the poor; corruption and hypocrisy in government; state or corporate policies that cause environmental pollution and deforestation; and the presence of millions of land mines in the soil of developing nations; and the systematic or collateral violations of human rights, whether by state security forces or by religious or secular combatants.⁵

Peace building and social works among *pesantren* community are diverse from *pesantren* to *pesantren*. Some *pesantren* communities interpret peace building from direct involvement in interfaith dialogues and communications. They even actively protect religious minority groups from any threats. Among them are *pesantren* communities of Situbondo, Tasikmalaya and Bagu, Mataram. In different works, some *pesantren* graduates formed reconciliation among Muslims and Communist people in East Java. Some traditionalist *pesantren* graduates have attempted to

⁵R Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2000), p. 6-7.

reconcile their parents' violent experience against so-called communist people.⁶ In some conflicting regions, like Maluku and Poso, they also involves in constructing and strengthening traditional mediation and reconciliation institutions. Enceng Shobirin states this group is beyond 'liberal Islam'. They construct positive values of liberalism, traditional Islamic norms and local culture.⁷

On the other hand, some other *pesantren* communities make their own interpretation of peace building. They said that Muslim and Christian relationship could be preserved by keeping peaceful and understanding between them. They should not make a dialogue in theological perspectives, but keep their own community in peaceful and tolerance. Peace culture means non-violent culture, which is conceptually and traditionally owned by a *pesantren*. What is, then, non-violent culture? Simon Fisher describes that violence will get nothing but impact to sufferings. Therefore, it needs non-violent culture, which will reach consciousness and actively avoid destructive behaviors.⁸ In cultural context, Galtung interestingly illustrates:

Why do people kill? Partly because they are brought way—not directly to kill, but to see killing as legitimate under some conditions. That brings us to culture, that great legitimize of violence, but also of peace. Where do we find the key carriers of violence? The easy answer would be 'religion and ideology', since people are known to kill in the name of either.⁹

⁶ A.S. Burhan, H.A. Taufiqurrahman and S. F. Huda, *Mengubur Dendam Menuai Demokrasi Panduan Resolusi Konflik dan Mediasi* (Yogyakarta: Syarikat Indonesia, 2003). Syarikat Indonesian is a Yogyakarta based NGO founded by young scholars of Nahdlatul Ulama, or so-called 'Cultural NU'. They graduated from traditional *pesantrens*, write a lot of books, advocacy for grassroots. Now they write a methodology book based on oral history of communist (PKI) victims from Banten to Banyuwangi. See: *Konsep Dasar Kerja Syarikat Indonesia Untuk Rehabilitasi dan Rekonsiliasi Korban Kemanusiaan 1965-1966*, (Yogyakarta: Syarikat Indonesia, 2005).

⁷ Enceng Shobirin Naj., interviews in Jakarta, 21 March 2005.

⁸ Simon Fisher et al. *Mengelola Konflik Ketrampilan dan Strategi Untuk Bertindak*, trans.S.N. Karikasari et al. (Jakarta: British Council, 2000), p. 97.

⁹ Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (Oslo dan London: PRIO dan SAGE Publications, 1996), p. 6.

Galtung made two sides of peace from cultural dimension: negative and positive peace. In the negative peace, there are challenges of universalism, violence, war, and chosen idea. To overcome it, Galtung looks ideological and religious dialogues turns into negative. On the other hand, there are also positive peace dimension: “a center everywhere, relaxed time, holistic, global, nature partnership, equality, justice, life enhancement.”¹⁰ Therefore, do differences of traditions in *pesantrens* make fundamentalism of doctrines or inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogues?

Pesantrens look peace culture variedly with various manifestations. Based on the theoretical framework, this research looks peace culture from *pesantrens*' theology and teaching and their graduates experiences and networks. To understand such groups, I will utilize Moussalli's term of Islamist group of Muslim Brotherhood that is “a militant group which believed in the sufficiency and supremacy of Islam and in literal interpretation of the *Qur'an* and *Ṣunna*”.¹¹ Moussali describes the group as “Islamic Fundamentalism, [which] strives to erect societies whose basic components are justice, virtues, and equality. It is a movement that aims at making the two fundamentals, the *Qur'an* and the *shari'ah*, the bases of Muslim life and society and of the Islamic state.”¹²

C. Regional Settings

Situbondo has been a strategic region in northeast part of East Java since colonial period, when sugar industries grew in this region. This phenomenon attracted Javanese and Chinese Christian migrants to live in this region under the sponsorship of colonial government. Most Situbondo people speak Madurese, whether they are Situbondo in origin, Javanese, Chinese, Bugis, Makassarese migrants, or others. A lot of Situbondonese origins work in lower class as small traders, labors, *madrassa* teachers, farmers and fishermen, compared to Chinese and other migrants who dominate economic sector. The difficulties of getting a job make people become more sensitive and easy to provoke.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹ Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: the Ideological of Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut: American University, 1995), p. 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

The Situbondo riot in October 1996 was a clear example. The riot was originally a product of a provocation from outside Situbondo and brought into the region under a message to trigger people with issues that discredited Muslim leaders, especially the highest figure of Kyai As'ad. Based on 1996 census, from the total population of Situbondo, 98.37% of them are Muslims, 1.22% are Protestants, 0.31% are Catholics, 0.3% are Hinduism and 0.06% are Buddhism.

Situbondo has varieties of Muslim organizations: NU, Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad. Islamic educational foundations both *pesantren* and *madrassa* have also grown in this region. Today there are about thirty *pesantrens* in Situbondo. Two of them run by Kyai As'ad's sons, and some others by his *santris* (*pesantren* graduates). K. H. R. Kholil As'ad, younger brother of K. H. R. Fawa'id, chairs *Pesantren* Walisongo in Situbondo. In Situbondo and surroundings, K. H. R. Fawa'id and previously K. H. R. As'ad Syamsul Arifin supported by hundreds of the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah graduates have influenced local politics. Local government needs to consult with *pesantren* in order to launch government programs in Situbondo community. This context will be easily to understand if we look at historical background of *pesantren* and how community around *pesantren* grows.

D. *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah: A Short Demography

This research concentrates on the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Situbondo, East Java. I examine the role of the *pesantren* in peace building initiatives. I interview the elites of the *pesantren* and the people around them, and make use of focus group discussion (FGD) with *pesantren* network, intellectual and CSO activists in the regions.

The *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah was founded in 1914 in Sukorejo, Situbondo, about 180 km to east from Surabaya, the capital of the Province of East Java, by K. H. R. Ibrahim bin Kyai Ruham, popularly called K. H. R. Syamsul Arifin,¹³ a pious scholar from

¹³K H R. Syamsul Arifin was born in Kembang Kuning, Pamekasan, Madura, in 1841 and had studied in Mekkah for about forty years. During his study, his son As'ad was born in Mekkah in 1897. Raden As'ad changed his name into KHR. As'ad Syamsul Arifin after his father died in March 5th 1951. *Profil Pondok Pesantren 'Salafiyah Syafi'iyah' Sukorejo Situbondo, Jawa Timur* (no publisher, no date), p. 1.

Kembang Kuning, Pamekasan, Madura. It was after Kyai Arifin had gone to Mecca and found a message from his teachers to set up a *pesantren* for Islamic growth. The *pesantren* is unique, because it was founded before the existence of Sukorejo, Situbondo population. It is unlike most *pesantrens* founded after the interface of local community and *kyai(s)*.

Arifin has an immense authority of teaching of Islamic studies tradition with some hundreds of students from Situbondo and Madura, learning medieval century Arabic books, called *Kitab Kuning* (literally, “yellow book”).¹⁴ Now the *pesantren* has two kindergartens, two religious elementary schools, two junior high schools, three high schools, three universities: the Institute for Islamic Studies of Ibrahimy (IAII), founded in 1968; the Academy for Fishery of Ibrahimy (*Akademi Perikanan Ibrahimy*, API); and the Academy of Informatics Management and Computer of Ibrahimy (*Akademi Manajemen Informatika & Komputer Ibrahimy*, AMIKI), a Qur’anic school (*Madrasah Al-Qur’an*), and an academy for Islamic Jurisprudence (*Al-Ma’hadul ‘Ali Qism Fiqh*), which is registered in the Ministry of Religious Affairs as Postgraduate Studies of Islamic Jurisprudence. It has also an FM radio station, a transportation business center (UD. Syarif) and a property small-industry (PT. Hafas).

E. Conflict Resolution: the Experience of *Pesantren*

Some arguments and theories of peace buildings are important to note before understanding the practical experience of *pesantren* in peace building process. The process will also take account of the reasons of conflict involvement for some religious groups. Appleby argues that the role of religious groups in conflict is merely because of economic and political reasons against global pressures. He said ‘It tells of believers inspired by “sacred rage” against racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination; unjust economic policies; unnecessary shortages of food, clean water, and basic education for the poor; corruption and

¹⁴ About the tradition of this book, read: Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995).

hypocrisy in government.¹⁵ Appleby, therefore, puts religious leaders and their middle class communities as a potential peacemaker like Buddhist leaders' role in liberation against Khmer Rouge and colonial government.¹⁶ It is also beneficial to see Wallenstein note of conflict resolution. He continues to say, "The parties are agreeing to respect each other and prepare for living together with one another, [including] understanding of what peace is, such as the presence of cooperation, justice and integration ... Conflict resolution finds itself at a bridge between a very narrow concept of peace (no war) and a very broad one (justice)".¹⁷

In the context of peace building initiatives in *pesantren*, the purpose of equal justice, integration and eternal harmony are implicitly included within *pesantren* doctrines. It is interesting to understand the Peaceful Jihad definition in the classical text of *Sharḥ I'ānat al-Ṭālibīn*, that: "Jihad is a collective duty for all years like devotion to religion and Shari'a sciences, the driving of any harm, and the instruction of conducting good things."¹⁸ It is contrary to radical Muslims' quote to the Jihad concept by Sayyid Quṭb against the infidels and traitors.¹⁹ *Pesantrens* and their community have developed ideas and movements of peace building, religious (and cultural) communication and gender equality. These trends grow significantly within *pesantrens* and especially among their graduates, who involve in some civil society organizations.

In contemporary Indonesia, there are a lot of IDPs because of the conflicts. Therefore, this needs conflict healing, which involves religious and traditional institution leaders, and local government. Historically *pesantren* communities have successfully reduced the impact of violence in each conflict. There are at least three riots in 1996

¹⁵ R Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*, p. 6-7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Peter Wallenstein, *Understanding Conflict Resolution War Peace and the Global System* (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), p. 10.

¹⁸ Quoted from Sayyid Abu Bakar, *Sharḥ I'ānat al-Ṭālibīn*, IV (Bandung, no date), p. 180-182, also quoted by Abdurrahman Mas'ud, *The Religion of Pesantren: Peace or Terror?*, paper presented in Jakarta, February 2005.

¹⁹ In chapter of *al-Jihād fi Sabīlillāh*, Sayyid Quṭb, *Ma'ālim fi al-Ṭāriq* (Al-Ittihad al-Islami al-Alami, 1985), p. 55.

involving *pesantren* as reconciliatory and mediator of riot resolution: Situbondo riots (October 10, 1996) and Tasikmalaya (December 26, 1996).²⁰ I agree with Bertrand's arguments that there are at least three reasons of 1996-1997 riots: socio-economic inequalities, provocation and absence of political communication.²¹ It opposes the speculation of conflict analysis that the contemporary riots and conflicts in Indonesia are inspired of ethno-religious sentiments. In fact, such ideological means is effective trigger of riots and violence, which have been preserved by the New Order in the long term. Further, Situbondo riot would be deeply analyzed in this article.

Some Indonesians see Situbondo riots from varied perspectives: conspiracy and social economy. Youth Movement of Ansor, young group of Nahdatul Ulama, argues that the riots are conspiracies. They said that Situbondo community is *santri*, pious Muslims, and have not serious ethno-religious relationship and communication problems. The experts of Gajah Mada University and Research Institute of the Ministry of Religious Affairs refuse Ansor's argument. They argue that the riots are merely socio-economic impacts of Situbondo community, who express of economic justice.²² This case was originally from Muhammad Soleh verdict, accused of humiliating KH As'ad Syamsul Arifin (d. 2001). It was stated at court on October 10, 1996. Therefore, it was popular that the conflict began on 10th of October 1996 due to Muslim dissatisfaction concerning judgment of Soleh whose 'strange' ideas of Islam had given rise to anger among Muslims. Soleh was a cousin of a religious leader in Situbondo who had stated that Muhammad was not a prophet, the holy Qur'an was made by a human,

²⁰ Other communal riots are anti-Chinese riots in Purwakarta, West Java, 1-2 November 1995, riots of Christianization response and anti-Chinese in Rengasdengklok, Karawang, West Java, 30 January 1997, and related-election riots in Pekalongan, Central Java, March 1997, and election related riots in Madura, June 1997. Almost such riots resolution involves *Ulama* and *pesantren* communities. Imam Tholikhah et.al. (eds.), *Socio-Religious Conflict in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2002).

²¹ Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 110-112.

²² M. Zainuddin Daulay, "Konflik Kekerasan di Situbondo, Jawa Timur", in Imam Tholikhah et.al. (eds.), *Socio-Religious Conflict*. p. 125-126.

prayers are not obligations, and As'ad Syamsul Arifin, a national, Muslim leading figure died unnaturally. Soleh had entered into debate with a number of religious leaders, including a local leading religious figure, named Zaini. Zaini reported to the local court that Soleh was a Muslim that has insulted Islam. In the district court the prosecutor demanded a sentence of eight years but the judge's was five.²³

This verdict impacted on hard protests of about four thousand people around the court, who then burnt and destroyed buildings. The people consist of paddies traders, farmers, labors, public transportation drivers and some santri. They were disappointed of court verdict of Soleh. It was at 8.30 a.m. they burnt cars and motorcycles in front of Public Court of Situbondo and attempted to see the judge and the accused person. Only two hundred polices manage to control them. Within seven hours, they destroyed buildings in about a hundred kilometer square. Five persons were died and other twenty-two churches, some supermarkets, Chinese-owned shops, restaurant, and government buildings were burnt. It went on until afternoon. The riots and destruction were not only in Situbondo but also in Asembagus, thirty kilometers east of Situbondo, Panarukan six kilometers west of Situbondo and Besuki, twenty kilometers from Situbondo. According to Thomas Santoso, on "Black Thursday," the Situbondo riots, about 3000 people destroyed and burnt²⁴ churches and five Christians died.24 In a day after, some religious leaders had a meeting to solve the riots. Among them was K.H. Ahmad Fawa'id, the son of K.H.As'ad Syamsul Arifin, who became a host of regular meeting among religious leaders in his *pesantren* of Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, Situbondo, East Java.

K.H. Mudzakkir Abdul Fattah, secretary of chairman of the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, Situbondo states: "What *pesantren* [read: K.H. Fawa'id] has accomplished after the conflict is building cooperation with other *kyais*. It is an endeavor to slow down people fury by making them conscious not to burn church any more ...

²³ Badrus Sholeh, 'The Ambon and Situbondo Conflicts: An Analysis of the Muslim and Christian Relations in Contemporary Indonesia', a working paper for Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Australian National University, 2002.

²⁴ W. Chang, "Mengenang 40 Hari Tragedi Situbondo Persaudaraan Universal, Jembatan Kerusuhan" *Kompas*, 18 November 1996.

Kyai Fawa'id facilitates meetings among Muslim-Christian leaders and the riots' victims."²⁵

Reconciliation process has worked profitably. Now inter-faith communities have more harmonious and closer bond in Situbondo regencies. This attempt of reconciliation after the communal conflicts also was applied by *Pesantren* Cipasung Tasikmalaya, West Java in December 1996 and *Pesantren* Qomarul Huda, Bagu, West Nusa Tenggara, in January 2000.

F. *Pesantren's* Role in the Advocacy and Mediation of Conflict

The communal conflict is a horizontal, latent conflict. The solution of the conflict is therefore short-term and easily targeted. However, in the permanent conflict, which happens regularly, long term, is in Situbondo case difficult to solve. It is a conflict, dispute and negotiation between local rural community and local-central government.

1. Land (Property) Conflict in Bunengan Village

It was a dispute between Bunengan peasantries who claimed to have the land of farming taken over by local government and state industry. It has been unsolved since the New Order, and has just been solved in 2000, two years after Soeharto collapse. It is questionable why charismatic religious leader, K.H. As'ad Syamsul Arifin failed to act as peace worker in Soeharto's period. Whether *pesantren* community was under pressure like other civil society in 1980s and 1990s. Bunengan rural society argued that they have just had an independence 'not in 17 August 1945', but in August 2000, after the return of the agricultural land from local government's industry to Bunengan community. It is

²⁵ "Yang dilakukan oleh *pesantren*, dalam hal ini oleh Kyai Fawa'id, setelah konflik tersebut adalah bekerja sama dengan beberapa kyai yang lain berusaha menenangkan masyarakat yang emosinya pada saat itu sedang memuncak dengan menyadarkan mereka untuk tidak melampiaskan emosinya lagi dan tidak membakar gereja lagi...Hal lain yang dilakukan oleh Kyai Fawa'id adalah memfasilitasi pertemuan para tokoh Islam dengan para pemimpin gereja serta menjadi fasilitator adanya bantuan-bantuan kepada gereja-gereja atau korban pembakaran tersebut." K.H. Mudzakkir Abdul Fattah, an interview in Sukorejo, Situbondo, 4 Oktober 2004.

the role of young *pesantren* community leader under the control of the chair of *pesantren*.

It was during the New Order military's pressure to the peasants, who asked a great support from *kyais* in the *pesantren* during the leadership of K.H. Fawaid As'ad, a son of *pesantren's* founder, and then succeeded him. Kyai Fawa'id then organized his human rights staffs helping the Bunengan community from the threat of military forces. He founded the Institute for *Pesantren* and Community Development (*Badan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat*, BP2M) organized by Zaini Ahsin, who had negotiated and communicated to the state agro-industry bureaucracy in Situbondo. The industry is PTPN XII (Pengembangan Terpadu Perkebunan Negara, the center for state agro-industry development), which produces sugarcane. The state company has taken over about 115 acre of Bunengan peasants' farming since 1970s for the interest of central government policy of sugar companies. Under national laws (UUD 1945), 33 (1,2 & 3) that water, land, air and other public needs are acceptably under Indonesian government authority. In this case, young religious leaders in the BP2M are like what Galtung argument as 'peace worker', who dedicate for the return of Bunengan community property right. After 'the victory' of Bunengan farmers, they set up KSM Mantap [*Kelompok Kerja Masyarakat Nelayan dan Petani Bunengan*], a community based organization for organizing how to utilize the rights of land. It is a community model to share ideas and land utility. Bunengan people in this land have only rights of use and production, but they do not have the rights of ownership. Local government period have changed their policy into more decentralized. This makes the position of the local community getting stronger.

2. Land Dispute in Merak

Community of Merak used to have an equal partnership with state agro industry of PT Gunung Kemitir. An equality and possibly justice changed into a lost of land property from 1985, after the Ministry of Internal Affairs took over the ownership of their land. In the last decade of the New Order, the state industry returned the land rights to Merak farmers by a requirement of 20% sharing their land production

to the company. Government pressured and terrorized Merak people through military forces. Merak community took a refuge to the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah asking for a support and help. In this position, *pesantren* is having a traditional authority to solve local problem beyond religious matters and *da'wa*. Although it is a passive role, but the authority of peace builder has put *pesantren* in a front line of vertical conflict resolution. It is in line with Appleby's argument that religious leader is an effective peacemaker, like Buddhist priest liberation to Cambodians from the colonial government and Khmer Rough. However, *pesantrens* have stronger capacity in greater demand of complexities of conflicts, both vertical and horizontal. The following is the role *pesantren* community and leaders (*kyai*, *ustādh*, *ajengan*) in conflict resolution.

Pesantrens have a great role in both raising the conflict and its resolution. However, most traditionalist *pesantrens* like the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Situbondo takes a strong role in social development and peace building in broader sense. LP3ES research on ten *pesantrens* in five provinces of Indonesia concludes that traditional and modern-radical *pesantren* have different proportion of roles in their community.²⁶ However, each *pesantren* gets influenced by their original teaching and ideology for social development with different approach. *Pesantren* Al Mukmin Ngruki, for example, will control how they communicate and cooperate with Christians under strict interpretation of Islamic teaching, while the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah under heir traditional teachings and ideology of Islam have invited Christian leaders to cooperate for resolution of the riots of 10th October 1996 in long term.

G. Inter-Religious and Cultural Dialogues: Challenge of Plurality in *Pesantrens*

The term of pluralism in this context is the advocates of inter religious and cultural relationship and dialogues. Both aspects have become main reasons of riots and conflicts. The qualification of *pesantren's* role in harmony is their contribution in peace building and

²⁶ LP3ES, Mapping of the Role of *Pesantren* in Developing Network and Supporting Peaceful Co-Existence in Indonesia, in cooperation with Forum Sebangsa, supported by AusAID Jakarta, January 2005.

ethno-religious communication. I argue that wahabis and modernist *pesantren* have wider misunderstanding of the role of Islam in peaceful co-existence. On the other hand, traditional – Nahdatul Ulama affiliation *pesantren* have more harmony and tolerant culture of *pesantren*. Therefore, their graduates contribute to both harmonious and peaceful community.

Most *pesantrens*, however, argue that they have implemented a pluralistic policy and approach in relation among community networks of *pesantren*, non-Muslim communities and minority groups. However, the interpretation of Pluralism is deferent between one *pesantren* and the others. Marzuki Abdul Fatah (48) states that K.H. Ahmad Fawa'id (50), the chairman of the the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo, Situbondo, has introduced pluralism in the *pesantren* because Fawai'd actively invited Christian priests to have a dialogue in Fawa'id's *pesantren*. Marzuki is the secretary of Fawa'id and conducts internal regular policies of the *pesantren*. *Kya'*'s role in mediation and conflict resolution also happened in other Indonesian provinces, like *kyais* of the *Pesantren* Cipasung, Tasikmalaya after the communal riots of Tasikmalaya in December 1996. However, inter-religious dialogues find greater challenge from Muslim militant groups in West Java, especially after the return of Afghan veterans in Indonesia.

The traditional authority and charisma of *pesantren* leaders make it in the front line of advocacy for peasantries in Situbondo *vis-à-vis* the hegemony of state. It is more than so called Geertz's 'cultural broker', Horikoshi's 'agent of change', Turmudzi's 'political broker', and Appleby's 'liberator'. It is a peacemaker, peace worker, and an agent for justice. However, the lack of *pesantren* capacity and unstable regeneration of leadership make it powerless in long term. It is fortunate the patron-client relationship in traditional community within and around *pesantren* preserves the strong role of *pesantren* in the moment. The challenging of regional autonomy and the messy-fractured political position within *pesantren* leaders needs re-evaluation of *pesantren* position whether they could continue their role in peace building initiatives or it will change under modern mechanism of peace building.

H. Epilogue

The leaders and community of the *Pesantren* Salafiyah Syafi'iyah have a significant role in peace building initiatives in latent and permanent conflicts under principles of equality and justice. It does not only cover Situbondo communities but also in othe communities. The high profile of traditional Muslim leader, K. H. R. As'ad Syamsul Arifin (d. 2001) and then succeeded by his son, K. H. R. Fawa'id As'ad, set them in everlasting role of conflict resolution. They made advocacy, mediation, and communication among horizontal conflicting communities of Muslims and Christians in Situbondo, and more significantly civil society-state. In post horizontal conflict of October 10, 1996 riot, they have successfully made a revolutionary agreement of peace keeping between Muslims and Christians through inter-religious dialogues within *pesantren* and supporting *santris* (*pesantren* students and graduates) to involve in the broader sense of interfaith harmony. In varieties of vertical conflict, they become very effective mediator between Situbondo peasantries and state (modern industries and local bureaucracy). However, they find some challenges from the changing politics, from centralized (one-king) to decentralization (many local kings). Politically and socially divisions and fractures after the current trends put them into a questionable role in the future. There are some recommendations for strengthening their role:

- 1) It is necessary to enhance the principles of pluralism within *pesantrens*. It means that they should be united in the curriculum, teachings and social system of *pesantrens* and their network.
- 2) In the sense of advocacy, mediation and possibly arbitrary, *pesantren* leaders are expected to have good skills as a qualified advocate, mediator and arbiter. It also should preserve the strength of traditional leadership.
- 3) Local and national Indonesian governments have to involve in strengthening *pesantren* roles in peace building by making clean governance and democracy.

The challenging role of a *pesantren* after the New Order is how to alter the illustration of international community on *pesantren* as the foundation of terrorist breeding. This misunderstanding grows after the finding that some *pesantren* graduates have involved in Bali

Bombing I (October 12, 2002) and Bali Bombing II (early October 2005). This is just current episode of Islam in Indonesia, but most *pesantrens* oppose the politically and religiously inspired violence. The traditions of peace from Indonesian *pesantrens* have taken their strong responsibility in regional development and peaceful co-existence for centuries, which is contrary to the current violence by some radical movement in the name of Jihad. However, everlasting economic crisis and the pressure of globalization will invite *pesantrens* in how they deal with their subsistence in social development and regional politic.

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