

THE DISCOURSE OF MUSLIM INTELLECTUALS AND `ULAMA` IN INDONESIA A Historical Overview

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Abstract: Muslim intellectuals and `ulama` are two notions necessary for attempts to get deep understanding of particularly Indonesian Muslim scholars. This paper analyses the discourse of Muslim intellectuals and `ulama` in Indonesia before the independence period. The focus is on the practices and vectors which paved the way for the Muslim intellectuals and `ulama` to come to the forefront in socio-political and cultural arena of Indonesia. The paper argues that the emergence of Indonesian intellectuals was not only influenced by Muslim organisations but also by Study Clubs. It further argues that irrespective of the diverse identification of Muslims intellectuals, those with secular educational background dominated the public sphere of Indonesia in the pre-independence period than those trained in *pesantren* or traditional Islamic education. This condition was a result of the nexus of the colonial contribution through so-called ethical policy, the rise of socio-political and cultural association, and the emergence of study club, which gave rise to Muslim intellectuals with secular educational background.

Keywords: Muslim intellectuals, `ulama`, Study Club, Ethical Policy.

Introduction

Research on *'ulamā'* and Muslim intellectuals dates back to colonial times and is still of interest to scholars taking different approaches and extents. At the end of the nineteenth century, Christian Snouck

Hurgronje¹ did research on Indonesian pilgrims in Mecca, whom he referred to as *jawab* 'ulamā'. Hurgronje stayed there for only six months (from 1885 to 1886). By formally adopting Islam, he was able to live among Muslim and collect data concerning the *jawab* (Indonesian pilgrims) community and activity. In his research he describes the intellectual interaction between *jawab* 'ulamā' and the Indonesian Muslims who had made pilgrimages. Usually Indonesian Muslims went to Mecca not only for the sake of the pilgrimage but also to study Islamic doctrine under the guidance of an Indonesian 'ulamā' who had become a teacher there, or under the guidance of Arab 'ulamā'. Such Indonesian 'ulamā' were Abdul Gani Bima, Khatib Sambas, Imam Nawawi al-Bantani, Ahmad Khatib Minangkabau, Mahfud at-Tirmasi, Khalil al-Bangkalani, Abdul Karim and others.² The most prominent 'ulamā' among them was Imam Nawawi al-Bantani. Besides instructing numerous students, he wrote many works in various disciplines, such as the Arabic language, sha'ā, tasawwuf, fiqh, and tafsīr. His works were published in Cairo and Mecca.³

One of Hurgronje's main goals was to study Islam and put colonial policy on a more scientific basis.⁴ He was sent to Mecca because of Dutch fears about the impact the pilgrimage would have on many Indonesian Muslims. His research was published in 1888 in the Netherlands under the title: "Mecca in the latter part of 19th century".

¹ Cristiaan Snouck Hurgronje was an outstanding Dutch Arabicist and Islamologist who was appointed as advisor of Arabian and native affairs to the Dutch colonial administrator. He was employed in Indonesia from 1889 until 1906. After his return to the Netherlands until his death he continued to exercise influence on colonial politics as an advisor to the Minister for Colonies, especially in the field of education and religion.

² See Zamakhsyari Dofier, *Tradisi Pesantren; Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1994), pp. 85 - 96.

³ Examples of Nawawi's works published in Cairo include works on grammar, *Sharh Ajrumiyya*, 1881; *Lubāb al-Bayā*, 1884; the field of Islamic doctrine *Dhahyat al-Yaqin*, the title of commentary on the well known work of Sanusi 1886, a commentary entitled *Fath al-Mujib*, 1881; *Commentary on the Koran*, 1887; and others. Dofier, as cited in Dictionary of Arabic Printed Books, Cairo, says there are 38 important works by Nawawi.

⁴ Karel A. Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam* (Amsterdam: n.p., 1993), p. 88.

He suggested Dutch colonial administrators not fear Muslim pilgrimages as long as they abstained from political propaganda.⁵

After Indonesian independence, B.J. Boland⁶ investigated the Islamic struggle in modern Indonesia. His work bore the title: *"The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia"* and was published in 1971. Although this book focuses more on the political involvement of Islamic organisations from 1946 to 1960, his explanation of the activities of *'ulamā'* and intellectuals in various Islamic organisations makes this work also important to the discourse of Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia.⁷

This paper is an attempt to analyse the discourse of Muslim intellectuals and *'ulamā'* in Indonesia before the independence period. The focus is on the practices and vectors which paved the way for the Muslim intellectuals and *'ulamā'* to come to the forefront in socio-political and cultural arena of Indonesia. To begin with, the paper discusses the notion of intellectual, Muslim intellectual, *'ulamā'*. In what follows, it examines the factors of the rising public profiles of Muslim intellectuals in pre-independence Indonesia.

Defining Intellectuals, Muslim Intellectuals, and *'Ulamā'*

The word "intellectual" can be discerned as "having or showing good reasoning power".⁸ In his book, *Men of Ideas*, Lewis Coser defines

⁵ Harry J. Benda, "Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and The Foundation of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia," *Journal of Modern History*, 30 (1958) as quoted in Reading material for Haupt Seminar: "Islam und Moderne in Südost-Asien," Fachbereich Politische Wissenschaft, Freie universität Berlin, p. 64.

⁶ B.J. Boland lived and worked in Indonesia from 1946 to the end of 1960. In 1966 and 1969 he visited Indonesia with the grants from the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO), the material of his study was collected, supplemented and checked.

⁷ Anthony H. Johns has criticised that the "struggle" that Boland describes is a political one at the national level; it is not spiritual, moral or intellectual; it does not concern proselytisation or the formulation of legal judgements. It is a struggle on the part of Muslim groups acting politically to manipulate the constitution of the state to incorporate the legal requirement for Muslim communities of the state to live according to Muslim Law. ... it is concerned more with an aspect of political history of Indonesia than with Islam as a socio-religious force, or theological reality. It is Islam with a "political force". See Anthony H. Johns, "Islam in Southeast Asia: Reflection and New Direction," *Indonesia*, No. 19 (April 1975), pp. 54 - 55.

⁸ AS. Hornby et al., *The Advance Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 513.

intellectuals as “men who never seem satisfied with things as they are”.⁹ This quiet broad definition is used by Coser in order to present sets of biographical case studies of “Intellectuals”, so that it possible for him to include individuals from all social classes in discussing intellectuals.¹⁰

In other scholarly works, the intellectual is defined as an individual, or occasionally a small group of people, who formulates generalisations or concepts about the underlying values, direction or effort of an association, society, nation or humanity in general.¹¹ They are people who employ in their communication and expression symbols of general scope and abstract reference concerning man, society, nature and cosmos.¹²

Federspiel argues that the distinction between “intellectual” and “policy maker” or the “leader” is sometimes confusing, while the intellectual’s function may sometimes be included in the role and work of these other personalities. “Policy makers” or “leaders” have other ingredients, notably political mobilisation. The intellectual may want a certain outcome, but it is usually not concerned with political mobilisation and he/she speaks personally or on behalf of a small group of intellectuals.¹³ Federspiel identified intellectuals in his essay with the production of materials that serve to prompt society in certain directions and provide a rationale for that undertaking.

Robert Michels defines intellectuals as people possessing knowledge, or in a narrow sense, those whose judgement, based on reflection and knowledge, derives less directly and exclusively from sensory perception than in the case of non-intellectuals.¹⁴ But

⁹ Lewis A. Coser, *Men of Ideas* (New York: n.p., 1965), p. viii, quoted in Ron Eyerman et. al., *Intellectuals Universities and the State in Western Modern Societies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 3.

¹⁰ See Eyerman, *Intellectuals Universities*, p. 2.

¹¹ Howard M. Federspiel, “Muslim Intellectual in Southeast Asia,” *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 6, No.1 (1999), p. 46.

¹² Edward Shils, “Intellectuals” in David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 7 (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1982), p. 399.

¹³ Federspiel, “Muslim Intellectual in Southeast Asia,” p. 46.

¹⁴ Robert Michels, “Intellectual,” in *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), quoted in Syed Hussein Alatas, *Intellectuals in Developing Societies* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), p. 8.

knowledge of a certain subject or the possession of a degree does not make a person an intellectual, although these often coincide.¹⁵ In society there are many degree holders who do not engage in developing their field or in trying to find the solution to specific problems within it. On the other hand, a person with no academic qualifications can be an intellectual if he or she utilises his or her thinking capacity and possesses a sufficient knowledge of his or her subject of interest.¹⁶

Moreover Alatas argues that intellectuals manifest social characteristics, namely: (1) they are recruited from all classes though in differing proportions; (2) they are to be found supporting or opposing various cultural or political movements; (3) their occupation on the whole is as non-manual beings for the most part writers, lecturers, poets, journalists, etc.; (4) to a certain extent they remain at a distance from the rest of society, mixing in a group of their own; (5) they are not merely interested in the purely technical and mechanistic side of knowledge: ideas about religion, the good life, art, nationalism, planned economy, culture and the like belong to their world of thought. Furthermore, intellectuals, in contrast with the specialist, try to see things in a broad perspective in term of their inter-relation and totality; (6) the intellectual group has always been a small proportion of society.¹⁷

There are certain characteristics of the Muslim intellectual. As Masykuri Abdillah writes in his study, they are often those who express systematic ideas in responding to social and societal problems, while being committed to Islamic values in the life of society and nation.¹⁸ The important characteristic in his identification is that someone will be identified as an intellectual if he expresses systematic ideas in responding to social problems. At the same time to be identified as a Muslim intellectual, he must be committed to Islamic values.

¹⁵ Alatas, *Intellectuals in Developing Societies*, p. 8.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Masykuri Abdillah, *Responses of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals to the Concept of Democracy (1966-1993)* (Hamburg: Abera Network, 1997), p. 18. He has noted that the word “Muslim” as an adjective or “Muslim – Muslims” as a noun in Indonesian has two meanings. Statistically it means a person who states himself as Muslim, and politically it mean a person who is committed to Islamic aspirations. Muslim meant in the context of “Muslim intellectual” in Abdillah’s study refers to the second meaning.

Another characterisation is formulated by Mohammad Natsir in his book *Peranan Cendekiawan Muslim*. He says that Muslim intellectuals are intellectuals who are really committed to Islam.¹⁹ A similar characterisation is made by Ahmad W. Prateknya, who says that the Muslim intellectual can be simply illustrated as a Muslim who possesses not only a high quality of intellectual behaviour but also always shows his devotion and commitment to Islam as his central belief.²⁰

Ziauddin Sardar identifies the Muslim intellectual as the segment of educated Muslims who have special access to cultural values, and who, therefore, can take positions in leadership.²¹ Simply being educated does not mean being an intellectual. For him, the mode of thought that characterizes intellectuals is neither science nor theology, but rather the ideology that expresses both their world-view and cultural values.²²

The Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) has made another formulation of what Muslim intellectuals are. It characterises Muslim intellectuals as people or a group of Muslims who pay attention to their environment, continuously improve their quality of belief and devotion, improve their thinking ability, deepen science and technology and try to understand and put science, technology, and religious life into practice in their society in the interest of human prosperity.²³ From that definition, it seems to me that the criteria are very broad. This formulation has certain intentions. This characterisation is intended to include all elements of society who have enthusiasm for playing their role in society based on their religious or non-religious knowledge and their status as Muslims. The characterisation does not mention how obedient they are to Islam. It also does not specify their profession.

Abdurrahman Wahid writes that Muslim intellectuals are not limited to people such as Abdurrahman Wahid himself, Nurcholish

¹⁹ Muhammad Nasir, *Peranan Cendekiawan Muslim* (Jakarta: DDII, 1978), p. 2, quoted in Azyumardi Azra, *Esei-esei Intelektual Muslim dan Pendidikan* (Ciputat: Logos, 1999), p. 34.

²⁰ See Ahmad W. Prateknya, "Anatomi Cendekiawan Muslim. Potret Indonesia," in M. Amin Rais (ed.), *Islam Indonesia. Suatu Iktibar Mengaca Diri* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986), p. 4.

²¹ Ziauddin Sardar, *The Future of Muslim Civilisation* (London: n.p., 1979), p. 67.

²² Ibid.

²³ See ICMI, *Buku Saku ICMI* (Jakarta: ICMI, 1996), p.17.

Madjid, Amin Rais and others, but include also intellectuals who have declared themselves Muslim, although they may not go to the mosque and pray five times a day. According to Wahid, Muslim intellectuals have the rights to express their ideas on behalf of Islam as long as they are believing Muslims. As mentioned by Wahid, Soedjatmoko is an example of this type.²⁴ He never read a piece of Quranic verse except during his speech in the Indonesian presidential palace. After the speech he was publicly acknowledged as a Muslim intellectual.²⁵

Someone could be called a Muslim intellectual if he or she has following characteristics: First of all, he or she believes in Islam. However, there is no difference as to whether he or she is a devout Muslim or not. Second, he or she has an intellectual and thinking capacity that is oriented toward social need. This capacity motivates him or her to continuously try to criticize surrounding conditions. Third, he or she has made contribution to society either in the form of an individual contribution—such as scientific writing—or a collective contribution—as manifested in his or her involvement in a social or professional association.

'*Ulamā*' is a plural form of '*ālim*', participle used as a noun. It is derived from the root of '*ilm*', knowledge; it is anglicized as *ulema*. W. Montgomery Watt rendered this word in his book, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of Al-Ghazali*, as "scholar-jurist".²⁶ Sharaby defines this word as "learned in the religious science".²⁷ Akhavi gives a more literal meaning of this word with the phrase "man of knowledge". It is a plural form of its Arabic word '*ālim*' (knowledge), the opposite of *jahl* (ignorance). In the Qur'ān both terms are frequently used in connection with knowledge of that which was revealed to the prophet, or knowledge of God.²⁸ In modern Arabic the word "scientist" is translated as '*ālim*'.²⁹

²⁴ Nevertheless, he was categorized as a socialist intellectual by Syafii Maarif. For a further description of Soedjatmoko's position as an intellectual, see Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam dan Masalah Kenegaraan* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996), pp. 192 - 195.

²⁵ Abrurrahman Wahid, "Intelektual di Tengah Eksklusivisme," *Prisma*, No. 3 (March 1991), p. 72.

²⁶ W. Montgomery Watt, *Muslim Intellectual; A Study of Al-Ghazali* (Edinburg: n.p., 1963), p. 160.

²⁷ See Hisham Sharaby, *Arab Intellectuals and the West. The Formative Years, 1875 - 1914* (London: n.p., 1970), p. 3.

²⁸ Shahrough Akhavi, "Ulama," in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 4 (1995), p. 258.

The implication of this translation is that it is possible to apply the word *'alim* to someone who does not even know of the religion of Islam.³⁰ But this translation is rarely used.

In the Middle East, as Lapidus saw it, the *'ulamā'* were the religious elite of the community, the undisputed interpreters of the divine law, and the administrators of the community's familial, commercial, educational and legal affairs. They were not a separate class, but a body of people belonging to every social level. Whatever their position, the *'ulama* were all those people recognized for their competence in learning.³¹

In the context of Indonesian Islam, the *'ulamā'* can be discerned as those who have an intellectual work and engage themselves in giving direction and guidance to their society while being affiliated with or having relations with certain institutions. This recognition draws on diverse concepts laid by scholars such as Lewis. A. Coser, Edward Shils, Masykuri Abdillah, and Syed Hussein Alatas. The phrase "Muslim intellectuals" in this study means Muslims who have an intellectual character. One of intellectual character is what Lewis A. Coser has described in his book, *Men of Ideas* as "men who never seem satisfied with things as they are".³² Moreover, Muslim intellectuals, borrowing the notion of of Edward Shils, are people (in this study Muslim people) who employ in their communication and expression symbols of general scope and abstract reference concerning man, society, nature and cosmos.³³

In addition to such an identification of Muslims intellectuals, Masykuri Abdillah acknowledges that Muslim intellectuals are those who express systematic ideas in responding to social and societal problems, while being committed to Islamic values in the life of society and nation.³⁴ The standard of Muslim intellectuals, then, can be seen in

²⁹ Ibid., p. 259.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ira Marvin Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 130.

³² Lewis A. Coser, *Men of Ideas* (New York: n.p., 1965), p. viii, quoted in Eyerman, *Intellectuals Universities*, p. 3.

³³ Shils, "Intellectuals," in Sills, *International Encyclopedia*, p. 399.

³⁴ Abdillah, *Responses of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals*, p. 18.

their "intellectual works"³⁵ and reflected in the form of a book or article and not in the form of a scholarship degree, because "the possession of a degree does not make a person an intellectual".³⁶ Furthermore, referring to Alatas's formulation that "intellectuals are recruited from all classes though in differing proportions," the study of intellectuals should include all levels and classes of intellectuals.

The word '*ulama*' is quite popular in Indonesia. In Indonesian tradition, '*ulama*' was also called *kiai*. It is often used in Java. In other tribes there are certain terms to indicate '*ulama*'. *Ajengan* is another word for '*ulama*' used by Sundanese people. *Tengku* is used to indicate '*ulama*' in Aceh along with *shayekh* in north Sumatra/Tapanuli. *Buya* is used to indicate '*ulama*' in Minangkabau, *tuan guru* in Nusa Tenggara, South Kalimantan and Middle Kalimantan.

Zamakhsyari Dhofier has described how someone becomes a *kiai*:

To become a *kiai*, a novice must proceed through various stages. Initially, he must usually be a close relative of a *kiai*. After receiving an elementary Islamic education from local Muslim scholars (sometimes his own father) for about seven to ten years, he will continue for many years to pursue advanced Islamic studies in various pesantren. Besides being trained as a Muslim scholar, he will also assist in training and teaching junior santri and take part in leading the community. Careful personal attention and blessing from his own *kiai* are important in determining whether a novice will eventually be able to head his own pesantren. The *kiai* will pay special personal attention to a santri not only if he is intelligent and industrious in pesantren affairs, but also if he is a son or relative of another *kiai*; or, even more important, the *kiai* may be interested in taking the novice as his son-in-law. Thus, most *kiai* in Java are interrelated. In other words, running pesantren has become the interest of particular kin groups. These groups are Muslim scholars, imbued with a strong sense of duty to urge people to follow Islamic principles

³⁵ Compare with Edward Shils formulation: "Intellectual works are coherent complexes of symbolic configurations that deal with the serious or ultimately significant feature of the cosmos, the earth, and human beings" in Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Vol. 7, 1987), p. 259.

³⁶ Alatas, *Intellectuals in Developing Societies*, p. 8.

seriously and perform religious rituals intensively, and they have an interest in maintaining their pesantren leadership, preserving their position as part of the elite sector of the Javanese community, and in keeping their abundant wealth.³⁷

Kiai or '*ulamā*' in Indonesia has the dominant status in Indonesia. It can be traced from their role in society as follows:

Ever since Islam first came to Java, the kiai have enjoyed a high social status. Under Dutch colonial rule, the Javanese sultans concerned themselves principally with the political aspects of their office, leaving Islam in the stricter sense to the dogmatists and traditionalists (the Javanese kiai), and thus fostering an unintended separation of religious and political authority. In the unofficial separation of powers which thus evolved, the kiai were recognized as having exclusive competence in the sphere of religious law. Islamic religious law regulates most social and personal relations, thus giving the Javanese kiai a pervasive role in the community. The mass of Javanese were dependent on the kiai for guidance and even for decisions on such matters as property, marriage, divorce, inheritance, and the like; and their influence in consequence was very strong. This, coupled with their aloofness from the state, gave them immense moral authority, and marked them off--in effect though not in theory--as a separate learned class.³⁸

Zamakhsyari has also pointed out that the status of '*ulamā*' was remarked on by the well-known court poet, Raden Ngabehi Yasedipura I, in the *Serat Cabolek*, as follows: "A man has more respect as an ulama than if he were a *bupati* (regent), [because] he is a minister of God... Even were there ten [ministers of a king], one ulama... would be superior to them. In their heart, ...the ulama are the best people of the world."³⁹

The word '*ulamā*' became more popular after the establishment of *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI, the Council of Indonesian '*Ulamā*') on 26 July 1975. The government was behind the establishment of this

³⁷ Quoted from Zamakhsyari Dhofier, "Kinship and Marriage Among the Javanese Kiai," *Indonesia*, No. 29 (April 1980), p. 50.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³⁹ Soebardi, *The Book of Cabolek* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), p. 42, in Dhofier, *Kinship and Marriage*, p. 49.

institution. The principal aim of the government was to unite 'ulamā' in one institution. Another aim was to maximise the role of 'ulamā' in society, especially to mediate and translate government policy to common people in rural society.

From this governmental institution, the term 'ālim-'ulamā' appeared. The right terminology to call *kiai* is with the word 'ālim. It means one who possesses knowledge. Indonesian society, the word 'ulamā' can be used either as the plural or singular form.

In fact, the word 'ulamā' existed and became familiar in Indonesia long before the establishment of MUI. There was a socio-religious organisation that used this term as its name. Its full name is *Nahdatul Ulama* (NU, the Renaissance of 'Ulamā'). This organisation was founded in 1926 by several *kiais* in Java who did not accept the idea of a modernist Muslim movement. Contrary to *kiai's* attitude, modernist Muslim movement did not agree to a compromise with *kiai's* understanding of Islamic doctrine, which uses four schools of Islamic law (*madhhab*).

MUI and NU are solid and charismatic organisations. The reason is that these institutions are supported by religious elite people who have charisma and an influential role in society. From my observations on the role of 'ulamā' in society, I believe the charisma of 'ulamā' is caused by many factors. First, they possess a deep knowledge of Islam. Second, they have many students (*santri*) who will always stand behind 'ulamā'. Third, 'ulamā' are not only the elite of knowledge but also prominent figures and leaders of society, who will always be followed by their supporters.

The perception of 'ulamā' in Indonesia is different from that in other Islamic countries. In Indonesia, the basic activity of 'ulamā' is in *pesantren*. *Pesantren* is boarding schools for the study of Islamic science. Traditional techniques of learning such as repetition and memorization are usually used in *pesantren* in mastering standard religious sources. *Pesantren* have a high reputation in the Indonesian Muslim community for producing able graduates with a good grounding in moral values. *Kiai* or 'ulamā' is a person who leads a *pesantren*. The traditional process to become *kiai* or 'ulamā' is in *pesantren*. Nevertheless a person who graduated from *pesantren* is not automatically called 'ulamā' or *kiai*. This title was given by society in the sense that the society recognises his capability in religious aspect.

In fact, if we study some texts about '*ulamā*', we find it explained that the word '*ulamā*' is intended for people with religious knowledge as well as those without. Zubair Utsman assumes that '*ulamā*' is an intellectual category although it is in fact a traditional one.⁴⁰ Over time, the definition has become narrower, and now it is understood as a person who has deep knowledge in religious field. A professor in non-religious knowledge is usually not given the title '*ulamā*'.

The understanding of the word '*ulamā*' in Indonesia has become institutionalised and traditionally understood. A person who has a deep understanding of religious science, and possibly more comprehensive religious science in comparison to common rural '*ulamā*', is not automatically called '*ulamā*'. It is difficult to discover the reason why they were not called '*ulamā*' or *kiai*, for they are not only professors in Islamic science but also worship and have good characters. They also used to give religious sermons and teach in universities. They are called Muslim intellectuals. In contrast, a village *kiai*, whose position is only as an *imam* in mosque, as a *kebatib* and *da'i*, whose Islamic knowledge is limited, is usually called *kiai* and even '*ulamā*'. In reality he does not possess the essential character of '*ulamā*', which is one who has a comprehensive knowledge of Islam and thinks continuously. This is a contradiction in Indonesia.

'Ulamā' and Muslim Intellectuals in Pre-Independence Indonesia

Before the independence, in particular, the role of so-called Muslim intellectuals superseded that of '*ulamā*'. Three main aspects seemed to be the factors of this condition, including the rise of ethical policy imposed by the colonial government, the emergence of socio-political and cultural association, and the growth of study club. The discussion of the following subheadings is so illustrative.

The Factor of Ethical Policy

The emergence of Intellectuals and Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia in the 1900s began with the realisation of the Ethical Policy of the colonial government. The government introduced various programs. One of them was reorganising and extending Western secondary education and educating to the broad masses of

⁴⁰ Dawam Rahardjo, *Intelektual, Intelektualitas dan Prilaku Politik Bangsa* (Bandung: Mizan, 1993), pp. 174-175.

Indonesians. As described by K. Neijs, the goal of this program was to strengthen the economy within the scope of a Western inspired civilization.⁴¹ The Dutch policy since then concentrated on the eradication of illiteracy and the raising of prosperity.

As described by Furnivall, the type of school system in Indonesia at the beginning of 1900s was:

“There were four types of schools at that time: European School, Western school, Vernacular School and Native School. The aim of *the European school* was to give an education similar to the corresponding course in Europe. The schools were provided by missionaries and developed along two lines. In some, the instruction was based on the appropriate European language, and in others on the vernacular. Both kinds of school were western in type, because directed by Europeans in accordance with western ideas, but it is convenient to distinguish those based on European language as *Western schools*, and those of the other class as *Vernacular schools*. This classification applies equally to schools maintained wholly or in part from private sources and those managed by the Government. The *Western schools* were intended for westernized natives; sometimes policy inclined towards making them different from European schools, but the general tendency was to make the course and conditions in western schools as much like those in European schools as circumstances allowed, but with an adaptation to local culture. The *Vernacular schools* were intended for children who ordinarily remained within the native sphere of life, but with some degree of contact to the western world. The *Native schools*, mostly religious and often confining formal instruction to little more than the elements of religion, were survivals from an older world, and provided for that section of the people which still looks backward to the past.”⁴²

In realising the ethical policy program, J. E. Jasper investigated the status and prospects of mass education in Java and Madura. Jasper

⁴¹ K. Neijs, *Westerse Acculturisatie en Oosters Volkonderwijs* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1945), p. 221, in Robert van Niel, *The Emergence of the Indonesian Modern Elite* (The Hague and Bandung: n.p., 1960), p. 66.

⁴² See J.S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* (New York: New York University Press, 1956), pp. 373-374.

accurately noted that the Second Class Native School met the needs for a basic general education, but he felt that the numbers of these schools should be increased in order to extend the Westernized educational system. Building his thinking about the Jasper's report, D. Fock, who became Minister of Colonies in 1905, proposed in the budget for 1907 to more than double the 675 existing government schools by adding 700 Second Class Native Schools.⁴³ Another effort was made by Van Heutsz, who in May 1906 started experimenting with the basic village school. In 1907, he instituted the village school in Java which had the purpose to bring the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic to the villagers.⁴⁴

For the elite group of native people, especially the *priyayi* class, they were fond of sending their sons to European schools in "the East Indies" (Indonesia) because of their wealth and status. Priyayi were "an elite class who provided cohesion to Javanese society above the local level and provided the intellectual, cultural and cosmological basis of Indonesian society. They were the people who running the country under the Dutch civil administration. In 1900, the *priyayi* were a changing group, for within its ranks were increasing numbers of civil servants and individuals who might best be classed as intellectuals and professional men."⁴⁵ By sending to the European schools, they had intention to make their children able to learn Dutch for a better position in the government service.⁴⁶ Such tendencies were responded to by the Dutch by opening the European Primary Schools to Indonesians and by efforts of some Europeans such as Snouck Hurgronje to get the sons of leading families into the European educational system.⁴⁷

During the early years of the century, some sons of nobles were able to study in the Netherlands. Birth was a leading factor in making study in the Netherlands possible, as well as the assistance of the Paku

⁴³ J.E. Jasper, "Het Inlandsch Volkonderwijs op Java, Indisch Genootschap," (1 November 1910), pp. 2-3, in Robert van Niel, *The Emergence*, p. 67.

⁴⁴ van Niel, *The Emergence*, p. 68.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

⁴⁶ The European schools provided the subordinates required for clerical employment, but there were only a few members of the upper classes who were admitted to European schools. See Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, p. 377.

⁴⁷ van Niel, *The Emergence*, p. 47.

Alam Study Fund. Koesoemo Joedo was among those who pursued study for the higher civil service in Leiden (1900-1904). Abdul Rivai was in the Netherlands at the same time. After he found that Dutch universities had no provision for accepting credit on his work in Indonesia and was unable to continue his study, he turned to other pursuits. Together with Lieutenant Colonel Klockner Brousson, they started the weekly magazine "Bintang Hindia".⁴⁸

Gradually more Indonesians came to the Netherlands to study. Moreover, educational facilities for Indonesians on Java grew rapidly and came to affect far more people than the educational possibilities for Indonesians in Europe. One of the leading schools was the School for Training Native Doctors (STOVIA, *Stichting tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen*). In 1902, the school could accommodate two hundred students. After 1904, there was a kind of recognition that the degree from STOVIA could gain the holder entry to a medical school in Netherlands.⁴⁹

The STOVIA was only one of the institutions which provided advanced education along Western lines for younger sons of the priyayi who could not find a place in the administration. In addition, there was the Veterinary School started in 1907, the Law School founded in 1908, the Agriculture Secondary School started in 1903 and the Teachers' Training School which after 1906, with the advent of village education and the use of the Dutch in the First Class Native School, provided higher quality teachers. All of these schools provided Indonesians with advanced westernized education; all graduated a semi-professional Indonesian, who in the early years of the century came to form the intellectual component of Indonesian elite.⁵⁰

There was another account of the background of the establishment of European schools, in this case Dutch schools, by the Dutch administration. It was not only the realization of an Ethical policy program but also a response to Horgronje's idea of emancipating Indonesians from Islam. Hurgronje believed that the rigidity of the Islamic system was no longer capable of adapting to the modern era. Hence, the large-scale of organization of education on the basis of

⁴⁸ Parada Harapan, *Rivayat Dr. A. Rivai* (Medan: n.p., 1939), pp. 91-10, in van Niel, *The Emergence*, p. 49.

⁴⁹ van Niel, *The Emergence*, pp. 50-52.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

universalism and religious neutrality was the only medium by which the Dutch administration could liberate Muslims from their religious convictions and shackles.⁵¹ These Dutch secular schools produced western-educated Indonesians who regarded religion as a personal matter pertaining solely to the spiritual aspect of one's life. Consequently, the idea of separating religion from politics was agreeable to the Indonesians who had graduated from these western schools.⁵²

Not surprisingly, the secular educational system set up by the colonial government was considered by Muslims to hamper the development of Islam. The Muslim leaders who realized this danger tried to overcome it by combating the secularization process of the Dutch educational system in two ways. Firstly the Muslim leaders demanded religious lessons to be introduced at these schools. This demand was finally granted towards the end of the 1930's. In the meantime, religious lessons were given once a week after school hours by instructors who usually belonged to the modernist faction of Indonesian Islam. Secondly, Muslim leaders set up new schools with a system that incorporated both religious subjects and secular ones.⁵³

The Factor of Socio-Political and Cultural Association

Another consequence of the secular education was the awareness of Indonesian western educated people of innovations in social and institutional life. Budi Utomo established in 1908 was recognized as the first organization that was built western lines, and therefore 1908 was regarded as the year of Indonesian awakening. What makes Budi Utomo an innovation is that it was the first Indonesian organization on Western lines. The organization developed a program with a purpose that lay outside anything found in the Javanese cosmos.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism*, pp. 77 and 87-91. See also Erni Haryanti Kahfi, "Islam and Indonesian Nationalism," *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1997), p. 12.

⁵² Noer, Deliar, *The Administration of Islam in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1978), p. 26. Quoted also in Kahfi, "Islam and Indonesian Nationalism," p. 12.

⁵³ Noer, *The Administration of Islam*, p. 26.

⁵⁴ It was reported that the life of Java at that time was organized about the village or desa and, in the case of the priyayi class, about the court or town of the higher authority. This life was based on traditional ties or adat; horizontally egalitarian, vertically authoritarian with a great respect for higher authority backed by religious, mystical and mythical sanctions. With this organizational pattern all life was contained—Javanese life knew no other organizational pattern; there was no life outside the

Membership was selective and had little bearing to indigenous relationship but in its early years the organization was dominated by intellectuals. Among the active members were Wahidin Soediraoesada, Sutomo, Goenawan Mangoenkoesoemo, Tjipto, Radjiman, and Dwidjo Sewojo.⁵⁵

Budi Utomo’s experiment in promoting modern organization in the first decade of the twentieth century was followed by Muslim experiments. In the second decade it was reported that two organizations were established. The first experiment was a mainly commercial organization (Sarekat Islam, 1911). It happened to develop gradually into a political organization (Partai Serikat Islam Indonesia). The second experiment was a primarily religious organization that from the outset adopted aims in the field of cultural as well as social welfare. Following the example set by Muhammad Abduh’s group in Egypt, Kiai Haji Ahmad Dahlan of Yogyakarta founded his Muhammadiyah movement (established in 1912). Setting out from what Nieuwenhuijze refers to somewhat apologetically as a rationalist interpretation of orthodox Islamic doctrine, this movement put ‘modern’ Islam into practice by building up a network of schools, polyclinics, a boy-scout organization and a women’s organization.⁵⁶ This is not the place to go into a detailed description of these organizations. For present purposes, attention needs be given to the role of these organizations in shaping Intellectuals and Muslim Intellectuals. Let us return to Budi Utomo.

In 1915, Budi Utomo sponsored the first Indonesian youth organization, Trikoro Dharmo (Three Noble Goals). The ostensible purpose of this youth organization was to promote social activities among Javanese students enrolled in secondary schools away from their home environment. The organization sought to stimulate a Great Java culture concept among the student youth—a concept that would encompass the culture of Madurese and Sundanese as well as the

pattern. See J.P. Duyvendak, *Inleiding tot de Ethnologie van de Indonesische Archipel* (Jakarta/Groningen: n.p., 1946), p. 173, in van Niel, *The Emergence*, p. 56.

⁵⁵ See van Niel, *The Emergence*, pp. 58-62.

⁵⁶ C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *Aspects of Islam in Post-Colonial Indonesia* (The Hague and Bandung: n.p., 1958), p. 45.

Javanese people. In the interest of this cause, the name of the youth organization was changed to Jong Java (Young Java) in 1918.⁵⁷

This youth organization caused the establishment of Jong Islamieten Bond (JIB—Young Muslim Society). The background of this establishment began with a difference in opinions between the members of Jong Java in promoting the activities within its organization, especially in responding to the activity of Hendrik Kraemer,⁵⁸ a Dutchman who became an adviser to the Jong Java and gave a series of lectures on Christianity to this organization, as well as on theosophy and Catholicism. In response to this activity, many Muslim students requested that the organization sponsor a series of lectures on Islam. Samsurrijal then put forward a proposal to this effect at the organization's seventh annual meeting, held in Yogyakarta toward the end of 1924. When the proposal was rejected, Samsurrijal and a number of sympathizers left to found a new organization, Jong Islamieten Bond. In the fierce controversy that surrounded this split in the youth movement, the Muslim leader Haji Agus Salim was said to have promoted the lectures on Islam and the split. Kraemer, on the other hand, was said to have infiltrated the Jong Java society with the purpose of excluding the Islamic element at any price. The price was high indeed: between 1925 and 1942, the JIB developed into a self-confident organization of young Muslim intellectuals.⁵⁹ One of its most famous members was Muhammad Natsir, who was a member of Persatuan Islam (Persis) at the same time. After Indonesian independence, on September 6, 1950, he was appointed formateur of the second cabinet.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ van Niel, *The Emergence*, p. 169.

⁵⁸ Hendrik Kraemer (1888-1965) studied Indology at Leiden and received his doctorate in 1921 on the basis of a through study on a Javanese Islamic text. In that same year he was sent to the East Indies by the Dutch Bible Society (*Netherland Bijbelgenootschap*). He was not only assigned the task of assisting with the revision of the Javanese translation of the Bible because of his linguistic background, but he was also required to study more recent trend in Indonesian society and development within Islam.

⁵⁹ Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism*, p.111. To the background of Jong Islamieten Bond establishment see also Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 248.

⁶⁰ For a detailed biography of Muhammad Natsir see George McT. Kahin "In Memoriam: Muhammad Natsir (1907-1993)," *Indonesia*, Number 56 (October 1993): pp. 159-165.

Moreover, van Neil notes that through the work of JIB and Muhammadiyah a group of young leaders emerged, who through a deep religious conviction stood in close contact with a large number of Indonesian people and who wielded great influence over broad segments of the Indonesian population.⁶¹ JIB recruited its members from students of secondary schools and advanced vocational schools. Later on, members were also recruited from institutions of higher education such as the College of Law in Batavia and the technical college in Bandung.⁶² Steenbrink reports that members of JIB generally did not know any Arabic, frequently showed contempt for the traditional Islamic education of *pesantren* and read orientalist literature, while also often referring to English publications circulated by the Ahmadiyah association. Their writings therefore sometimes contain quotations and excerpts from western sources in which Muhammed is indiscriminately mentioned as the “author” of the Koran. The Jewish and Christian ‘sources’ of Islam are greatly emphasized, in which miracles are explained in very rationalistic, liberal ways.⁶³

As mentioned above, the Muhammadiyah movement was oriented toward the cultural rather than the political field. One of its efforts was building a network of schools: schools which would uphold the teaching of Islam while meeting the requirements and standards of a Westernized education. D. Rinkes, as was mentioned by van Neil, reported that this was the basis of the Jogjakarta experiment and that it was eminently successful. The government stood prepared to subsidize all schools that met its requirements, and just as Christian schools had received subsidies, so now too (1915) the Muhammadiyah School was subsidized.⁶⁴

The success of the Muhammadiyah School drew the attention of those Indonesians who desired a good education for their children because of the better chances for higher status it offered, but who were reluctant to send them to a Christian or even to a religiously neutral

⁶¹ van Niel, *The Emergence*, p. 168.

⁶² Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism*, p. 136.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁶⁴ D. Rinkes, “Bescheiden betreffende de Vereeniging Sarekat Islam, Zeer Geheime Missive van den Adviseur voof Inlandsche Zaken aan den Gouverneur-General,” in van Niel, *The Emergence*, p. 166.

school. This group included the local religious leaders who were above the generally low economic level of Indonesian life. With this education, the children of native Indonesian Muslim people could occupy important posts such as teacher, doctor, or civil servant.⁶⁵

After 1920, Muhammadiyah spread from its local base to various cities in Java and Sumatra. The organization remained devoted to educational, charitable and religious work and was not interested in political movements. Up until the 1960s⁶⁶ Muhammadiyah produced many Muslim intellectuals, who not only became the leaders of Muhammadiyah but were also active in another organizations such as Kiai Haji Ahmad Dahlan, Kiai Haji Ibrahim, Kiai Haji Fakhruddin, Kiai Haji Hisyam, Kiai Haji Mas Mansur, Ki Bagus Hadikusuma, Haji Ahmad Rasyid Sutan Mansur, Kiai Haji Yunus Anis, and Kiai Haji Badawi.⁶⁷

Naturally, this led to a reaction from the side of the “anti-modern”, borrowing from Nieuwenhuijze phrase, those mainly represented by scribes and those directly influenced by them. One of the outcomes was Nahdlatul Ulama (NU, The Awakening of the Scribes or the Renaissance of Ulama, established 1926).⁶⁸ The NU may be considered a movement of ‘ulama for maintaining the traditional (Javanese) way of life and defending the authority of the four *madhabib* or schools of law.⁶⁹ It may also be considered the successor to the Nahdatul Wathan (The Awakening of the Fatherland), founded in 1916 in Surabaya by Abdul Wahab and K.H.M. Mansur. According to Article 2 of the NU Status of 1926, the aim of this association was “To uphold one of the schools of law of the four Imams—Imām Muhammad Idris ash-Shāfi‘ī, Imam Mālik bin Anas, Imām Abū Hanīfah al-Nu‘maā or Imām

⁶⁵ See the role and historical background of Muhammadiyah especially in education in PP Muhammadiyah, *Profil Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: PP Muhammadiyah, 2000), p. 3.

⁶⁶ It is not meant that after the 1960s Muhammadiyah did not produce Muslim intellectuals. It is intended to specify the discussion until the 1960s.

⁶⁷ See further explanation in PP Muhammadiyah, *Profil Muhammadiyah*, pp. 9-23.

⁶⁸ van Nieuwenhuijze, *Aspects of Islam*, p. 45.

⁶⁹ B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 11.

Ahmad bin Hanbal—and to do everything which would be beneficial to Islam”.⁷⁰

In contrast to the Muhammadiyah schools, NU did not at first adopt the western education system. *Pesantren*, the religious boarding-school where most of the NU members studied, implemented a traditional system. The pupil or *santri* was not required to follow a strict curriculum; the Qur'an and other religious books were read out by the teacher and memorized by the pupils, and there was no “secular subjects” or, in the Indonesian phrase no “general subjects”. Only after the involvement of K.H. Moh Ilyas in pesantren “Tebu Ireng” at Jombang, the adoption of general subjects in pesantren was allowed by K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari (NU leader and the owner of Pesantren Tebu Ireng). But many of the santri's parents did not agree with the adoption of general subjects and responded to this policy by transferring their children from Tebu Ireng to other pesantrens that taught consistently religious knowledge. Tebu Ireng was too modern in their opinion.⁷¹

During the colonial time, the function of *pesantren* was not only an institution of Islamic learning, but also as an institution for the education of cadres in the struggle against the colonial Dutch government. They adopted the principle of non-cooperation with the Dutch government with the aim of keeping their cadres immune to the penetration of the cultural, educational and other influences of Dutch colonial authority. This meant that almost everything emanating from outside *pesantren* was inevitably suspected of being an attempt by the Dutch to penetrate the *pesantren*.⁷² That is why the location of most pesantren is in a rural area or in a remote village and that is why their curriculum, method of teaching, ethics and culture are oriented on Islamic and native Indonesian values. To this extent, a significant difference between Muhammadiyah schools and pesantren could easily be seen before Indonesian Independence. *Kiais*, who usually taught in

⁷⁰ Boland, *The Struggle of Islam*, pp. 49-50. Compare with Steenbrink's description about the background of Nahdlatul Ulama, Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1994), pp. 65 - 68.

⁷¹ Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah*, pp. 70 - 71.

⁷² M. Dawam Rahardjo, “Kyai, Pesantren dan Desa: Sebuah Gambaran Awal,” *Prisma*, 4, II (1973). For further explanation about pesantren and colonial policy in education see Steenbrink, *Pesantren Madrasah*, pp. 1 - 7.

pesantren or had pesantren, were the important part of NU. The pesantren were then used as a tool for furthering the aim of NU and the implementing the ideals of NU's culture.

However, Muhammadiyah and NU are similar in that both of them influenced the emergence of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, in the sense that they were people who employ in their communication and expression symbols of general scope and reference concerning man and Indonesian society. Included among the prominent NU intellectuals were K.H. Wachid Hasyim, K.H. Muhammad Ilyas, K.H. Ahmad Syaikh and K.H. Syaifudin Zuhri as well as others.⁷³

The Factor of Study Club

The emergence of Indonesian intellectuals was not only influenced by Budi Utomo, Jong Islamieten Bond, Muhammadiyah and NU, but also by Study Clubs. There were two important Study Clubs at that time: *Indonesische Studieclub* (the Indonesian Study Club) in Surabaya and *Algemeene Studieclub* (General Study Club) in Bandung. The Study Club in Surabaya was founded by Soetomo in July 1924 in order to stimulate a sense of social responsibility and political awareness among the better educated Indonesians. Discussions were directed to questions of national and local concern, and in an attempt to stimulate constructive work the Study Club stood prepared to give advice to other organizations. The Study Club did not limit its activities to discussion and advice. It actively participated in seeking solutions to pressing problems, and in so doing founded schools, banks, health clinics, founding homes, and took measures to limit child marriage and prostitution.⁷⁴ Van Neil reported that the Study Club stood closest to Budi Utomo, drawing its members from the young intellectuals who would normally have leaned toward the Budi Utomo, and having many joint members with Budi Utomo, including Soetomo himself.⁷⁵

As a matter of fact, the concept of a Study Club not only grew in Surabaya but also spread to other cities and soon, as was mentioned by van Neil, there were similar organizations in Surakarta, Jogjakarta, Batavia (Jakarta), Semarang, and Bogor. The best known of the

⁷³ For further explanation about those people see Dawam Rahardjo, *Intelektual, Intelegensia, dan Prilaku Politik Bangsa* (Bandung: Mizan, 1993), p. 33.

⁷⁴ J.T. Petrus Blumberger, "De Nationalistische beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie" (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1931), pp. 198-200 in van Niel, *The Emergence*, p. 228.

⁷⁵ van Niel, *The Emergence*, p. 228.

remaining study clubs, however, came to be the *Algemeene Studieclub* (General Study Club) founded in Bandung in 1926 by a young graduate of the Engineering College by the name of Soekarno.

Van Neil described Soekarno's life as follows:

“Starting his education in the desa schools, Soekarno was able, through the help of private teacher, to make the transition into the European educational system. He attended secondary school in Surabaya, living in the home of Tjokroaminoto, where he met many leading Sarekat Islam figures and eventually married Tjokroaminoto's daughter. As Soekarno was an apt student, he was able to enter the newly created Engineering College in Bandung in 1920, and he received his degree in civil engineering in 1925. He was interested in political affairs and had written some articles before his graduation, but he had not actively joined any of the political groups seeking his membership. A handsome man with a popular and winning personality, he soon discovered that he had the talent for moving and inspiring men with his words. He established a private engineering office in Bandung and began feeling his way into political life, for which he felt himself destined.”

According to van Neil, the General Study club which Soekarno founded in 1926 was his first important step into politics.

It was said that the General Study Club of Soekarno was a political organisation. It was only in outwardly modelled after Soetomo's club in Surabaya. It made no pretence of concerning itself with social and economic problems and had even less interest in seeking positive solutions to these. Its program and plan of action were defined as: non-cooperation with the colonial government and complete and immediate independence for Indonesia. Non-cooperation was the key to the entire organization and self-help was the dynamic force which was to give it strength. In February 1927 all non-Indonesians were excluded and the movement became exclusively Indonesian.

Here, and in the other study clubs too, were young men who had partaken of the best Western education. They were not men who had to fear for their personal economic or social security under the Dutch colonial government, for they could have held government posts if

they had wished; Nor were they men who had failed in their career, as many earlier leaders had.⁷⁶

The above description shows that the emergence of Indonesian intellectuals in the beginning of 1930s was marked by two things: First, a scholarship degree that they have received from leading Indonesian higher schools or Dutch universities; second, their appearance as a leading group in Study Clubs, especially under the leadership of Soetomo in Surabaya and Soekarno in Bandung, or in organizations like Budi Utomo. The people in these groups were those who realize their status and position as scholars and intellectuals and therefore intended to contribute their thought and energy to the Indonesian movement. Their emergence was closely related to the influence of modern science and cultural values to their methods of thought in analysing social problems.

Aside from Soetomo and Soekarno, other intellectuals mentioned here such as Wahidin Sudirohusodo and Satiman Wirjosandjojo, both of whom devoted themselves entirely to improving society. There were also other intellectuals who actively engaged in reasoning activity, such as Tirtoadisoerjo, Ki Hajar Dewantoro, Tjokroaminoto, Haji Agus Salim, Mas Marco and Haji Misbach. Although they did not possess a degree they were thought of as the leading intellectuals of their time.⁷⁷

Indonesian intellectuals at that time could be classified into three groups. First, they were those who engaged themselves in political activities, for example Soekarno. Second, they were intellectuals characterized by their profession and activity in the social sectors. Soetomo was an example of this group. Third, they were those who actively engaged in reasoning and cultural activity. Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana was the leading intellectual of this group. Of course there were intellectuals who had more than one character. On one side they were classified as intellectual-political and on another side they were classified as intellectual-reasoning. Muhammad Hatta represented this crossover.

The emergence of Muslim Intellectuals in the middle 1930s was not only influenced by Jong Islamieten Bond but also influenced by *Islamistische Studenten Studieclub* (ISC) in Bandung. This institution was founded by Yusuf Wibisono, who intended to inculcate Islamic values

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 229.

⁷⁷ Rahardjo, *Intelektual, Intelegensia*, p. 15.

and educate its members in religious science, especially for those who were enrolled in western schools and stood in close contact to western thought. At first, they were a group of intellectuals who were only active in thinking and cultural activities, then, after Indonesian independence, they became national leaders in the Islamic movement. Examples of such people are Mohammad Rum, Abu Hanifah and Kasman Singodimejo.⁷⁸

There were two models of the Muslim intellectual at that time. First, they were those who had a western education background but who made an effort to enlarge their religious science through their association with organizations that offered its members an Islamic education. Haji Agus Salim and Muhammad Natsir are among those who represent this model. Second, there were those who had a pesantren education background but whose general knowledge was slight in comparison to their counterparts with a western education. This was a result of their association with the existing modern organization. Kiai Wachid Hasyim is as an example of this model.

What is interesting to note here is that although Indonesian intellectuals were educated in western schools and stood in close contact to western thought and culture, they were nonetheless interested in their own culture and realized the necessity of its implementation in society. We can learn from the “Cultural Polemic” in the 1930s between St. Takdir Alisyahbana, Sanusi Pane, Purbatjaraka, Sutomo, Tjindarbumi, Adinegoro, M. Amir and Ki Hajar Dewantoro.⁷⁹ Dawam Rahardjo argued that in the “Cultural Polemic” Indonesian intellectuals who had received their education from western schools still gave attention to what they called their glorious eastern culture, a culture that could be used as a foundation for an advanced Indonesian society.⁸⁰

Muslim intellectuals with a western education background also tried to discuss cultural issues while trying to seek its roots in Islam. In other words they tried to combine western culture and the heritage of Islamic culture. Natsir, for example, responding to St. Takdir Ali Syahbana's idea about the importance of “rationalism”, argued that in

⁷⁸ See Ibid., pp. 15-17 and 29-32.

⁷⁹ For a further explanation see Achdiat K. Mihardja (ed.), *Polemik Kebudayaan* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1998).

⁸⁰ Rahardjo, *Intelektual, Intelegensia*, pp. 16-17.

Islam there is a similar doctrine which he called "independence of reason".

Conclusion

Scholars have different opinion about Muslim intellectuals and their expressions in Indonesia. Howard Federspiel classifies Indonesian Muslim intellectuals into Religious Scholar, Revivalist, Academician and Societal thinker. Religious Scholars are often located in traditional Muslim schools (*pesantren*), reformed Muslim schools (*madrasah*) or councils, and Muslim associations. Religious scholars are products of the traditional Muslim schools, and have usually completed a study period abroad in the Middle East, at Mecca, Cairo, Baghdad, or elsewhere. They often used a title *kiai*, *syekh* and *ustadz*. Revivalist Muslim intellectuals are the intellectual backbone of the modern revivalist (*da'mah*) movement which has affected the life styles and believe patterns of large numbers of Muslim throughout Indonesia. Important numbers of this group are associated with educational institutions, publishing endeavours, and revivalist propagation centres. Some are associated with traditional boarding schools (*pesantren*), some with Islamic universities and others with reformed Muslim schools (*madrasah*) and secondary teaching institutions.⁸¹

Academics are associated with institutions of higher education, usually in an Islamic studies program, although some are found in the humanities and, occasionally, in the social sciences and technical disciplines. Some have come through the reformed religious school (*madrasah*) system, while a few others have Islamic boarding school education as part of their backgrounds. Societal thinkers are found in major cities and special religious centres and are part of national intellectual groups. Muslim societal intellectuals concentrate on problems of Muslim identity and national policies as they affect the Indonesian Muslim. Most come from families with strong Islamic identification, and an early training in Islamic values was a part of their background. They are usually products of the national school system with an emphasis on "modern education" and have degree work in the

⁸¹ Detail explanation of this classification see, Howard M. Federspiel, "Muslim Intellectuals in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (1999): pp. 48-62.

leading national universities, usually in the Humanities or social sciences.⁸²

Irrespective of the diverse identification of Muslims intellectuals above, this paper confirms that those with secular educational background dominated the public sphere of Indonesia in the pre-independence period than those trained in *pesantren* or traditional Islamic education. This condition was a result of the nexus of the colonial contribution through so-called ethical policy, the rise of socio-political and cultural association, and the emergence of study club, which gave rise to Muslim intellectuals with secular educational background. []

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⁸² See Ibid., pp. 48-62.

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