DUDUNG ABDURAHMAN

Islamic Historiography in Indonesia in Multicultural Perspective

ABSTRACT: *The writing of Islamic history in Indonesia can be developed in a wide range, so that the SII (Sejarah Islam Indonesia or History of Indonesia Muslim) is also useful to complement the history of Indonesia in general, whether it is developed functionally as a matter of knowledge or developed as a methodological reference to enrich the social sciences. This article is to propose alternative rewriting of Islamic history with a multicultural perspective. By using the historical method, qualitative approach, and literature review, the study showed that writing of Islamic history of multiculturalism can be used as a complement to the historiography of Islam, which has so far been socio-political only. The SII reconstruction can be done in multicultural way on actual themes, and also always pay attention to the integration of temporal factors, socio-cultural situation, and the background of Islamic values and ideology. The important meaning of writing of the Muslims in cultural dimension is that to meet the knowledge for the character building of Muslims facing the challenge of pluralism in the national and global scope today. Therefore, multicultural analysis is expected to be an alternative methodology for historians in conducting comprehensive Islamic history writing; even, it is done as a new effort to replace or complement the historiography of Indonesia today.*
KEY WORD: *Islamic History; Indonesian Historiography; Multicultural Perspective.*

INTISARI: *"Historiografi Islam di Indonesia dalam Perspektif Multikultural". Penulisan sejarah Islam di Indonesia dapat dikembangkan dalam cakupan yang luas, sehingga SII (Sejarah Islam Indonesia) juga bermanfaat untuk melengkapi sejarah Indonesia secara umum, baik dikembangkan secara fungsional sebagai pengetahuan atau dikembangkan sebagai referensi metodologis untuk memperkaya ilmu-ilmu sosial. Artikel ini akan mengusulkan penulisan ulang sejarah Islam alternatif dengan perspektif multikultural. Dengan menggunakan metode historis, pendekatan kualitatif, dan tinjauan pustaka, studi ini menunjukan bahwa penulisan sejarah Islam multikulturalisme dapat digunakan sebagai pelengkap historiografi Islam, yang sejauh ini telah disosialisasikan hanya bersifat sosial-politis. Rekonstruksi SII dapat dilakukan dengan cara multikultural pada tema aktual, dan juga selalu memperhatikan integrasi faktor-faktor temporal, situasi sosial-budaya, dan latar belakang nilai-nilai dan ideologi Islam. Arti penting dari penulisan umat Islam dalam dimensi budaya adalah untuk memenuhi pengetahuan bagi pembangunan karakter umat Islam menghadapi tantangan pluralisme dalam lingkup nasional dan global saat ini. Oleh karena itu, analisis multikultural diharapkan menjadi metodologi alternatif bagi para sejarawan dalam melakukan penulisan sejarah Islam yang komprehensif; bahkan, ini dilakukan sebagai upaya baru untuk menggantikan atau melengkapi historiografi Indonesia saat ini.*
KATA KUNCI: *Sejarah Islam; Historiografi Indonesia; Perspektif Multikultural.*

About the Author: **Prof. Dr. Dudung Abdurahman** is a Full Professor of Islamic Studies at the Faculty of *Adab* and Humanities UIN (*Universitas Islam Negeri* or State Islamic University) Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. For academic interests, the author is able to be contacted via e–mail at: durahman.uin@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The history of Islam in Indonesia lies in a very long time, at least since the 13th century until now. During that time, the spread of Islam took place in the Indonesian archipelago regions with diverse geographical backgrounds, so that Islam which is reflected in the various dimensions of its adherents life also encounters various local cultures. Thus, tracing the history of Islam with a multicultural perspective is an important historiography attempt, to gain and develop knowledge about the characteristics of Islam in Indonesia (Abdullah *et al.*, 2002; Burhanudin & Dijk, 2013; and Wasino, 2013).

The need for historiography like this can be done, because the historical sources in every wave of Islamic development in the Indonesian archipelago are available. The historical trajectory at the beginning of Islamization and the sultanate period has many local and traditional sources; while in colonial times, it was possible to find sources originating from local communities and colonial governments. Meanwhile, in modern or contemporary times, in addition to the primary sources of Muslims themselves, there are also secondary sources, both historiographical works of Indonesian scholars and foreign scholars (Abdullah & Surjomihardjo, eds., 1982; Burhanudin & Dijk, 2013; and Fatiyah & Hariyanto, 2016).

The writing of Islamic history in Indonesia, which has been done over time, tends to be monodisciplinary, like writing that produces narrative or descriptive works about Muslim figures, certain aspects of Islam, or images of Islam as part of Indonesian history; while the multidisciplinary writing, which produces a critical historiography of the development of Islam, is still limited to the scientific works on the social and political history of Muslims. Therefore, the writing of Islamic history with an interdisciplinary approach is important, especially regarding the cultural dimension, which is very influential on other dimensions of the development of Muslims (Kartodirdjo, 1982; Suryo, 2009; and Kaptein, 2017).

The important meaning of the writing of the Muslims in the cultural dimension is that to meet the knowledge for the character building of Muslims facing the challenge of pluralism in the national and global scope today. The growing history of Islam in local wisdoms in the Indonesian archipelago is seen as potentially a model of "multicultural Islam", which is useful for fostering democratic nationhood in the country (Abdullah *et al.*, 2002; Wasino, 2013; and Miftah, 2016).

Therefore, this paper would like to propose alternative rewriting of Islamic history with a multicultural perspective. By using the historical method, qualitative approach, and literature review (Kartodirdjo, 1992; Abdullah *et al.*, 2002; Kuntowijoyo, 2003; Zed, 2004; and Abdurahman, 2011), in addition to the reasons for meeting those needs, the writing of Islamic history of multiculturalism can also be used as a complement to the historiography of Islam, which has so far been socio–political only.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Flashback of Islamic History in Indonesia. Historical records generally mention that the early entry of Islam into the Indonesian archipelago or *Nusantara* has been going on since the 7th century. Thus, the spread of Islam along with the increasing flow of communications and maritime trade transport is Islam that developed in the early generations of Islam in West Asia, especially since the generation of *Khulafa al-Rashidin* or Prophet Muhammad's Companions. For the record, Islam at that time was an Arab–style Islam, which gradually in later times until about the 13th century, has

begun to connect with Arabic foreign cultures, such as Roman and Persian (HAMKA, 1975 dan 2017; Arnold, 1985; and Fatiyah & Hariyanto, 2016).

Therefore, when Islam spread over the Indonesian archipelago, from the 7th century until the 13th century, there was a consistency as a system of divine teachings conveyed by Prophet Muhammad SAW (*Salallahu Alaihi Wassalam* or peace be and blessed upon him), but the culture that accompanied the development of that teaching was Middle Eastern culture. For about five centuries, the spread of Islam in this region had not been supported by a strong community, and it was not until the 13th century that the Islamic kingdom was established in Pasai, North–West Sumatera. During the same time, Indonesian archipelago was still in the influence of Hindu–Buddhist kingdoms until the end of the Majapahit kingdom in East Java at the end of the 16th century (HAMKA, 1975 dan 2017; Soedjatmoko *et al.* eds., 1995; Azra, 2008; Abdurahman, 2011; and Fatiyah & Hariyanto, 2016).

The growth of Muslim communities in the Indonesian archipelago, especially those that emerged in the form of the Islamic sultanate after Pasai, occurred since the end of the 15th century and continued to flourish until the 17th century, such as Malacca in Malay peninsula; Aceh and Palembang in Sumatera island; Banten, Cirebon, Demak, and Mataram–Islam in Java island; Makassar in South Sulawesi; and Ternate and Tidore in North Maluku island. The establishment and development of the Muslim community in the center of the sultanate in various regions of that era marked the development of Islam in the context of the culture of *Nusantara*. For the role of sultans, scholars, guardians, and preachers, Islam is communicated to the community with local cultural tools, so that they presented Islam in the triumph of each sultanate through works of religious literature, moral teachings, ritual systems, language, and cultural traditions in its various aspects (Graaf, 1985; Ricklefs, 2008; Tjandrasasmita, 2009; Abdurahman, 2011; and Sunarso, 2018).

The development of Islam in *Nusantara* for the next period, especially in the 18th to 19th centuries, experienced a change from the cultural aspect. This tendency is indicated by the situation of *Nusantara* society facing the penetration of Western culture through colonialism and imperialism. As a result, the life of society and culture in the centers of Islamic sultanate experienced a shift, that is from its style based on local culture to a society influenced by Western culture. Even, the penetration of the West followed by the entry of Christianity, and the Christianization process became stronger and intensified after the Indonesian archipelago became the territory of the Dutch East Indies or Netherland Indie in the 19th century, and also coincided with the collapse of Islamic power and cultural centers (Azra, 1994; Ricklefs, 2008; and Suryo, 2009).

Therefore, most Muslim societies in colonial cities were compelled to be accommodative or influenced by Western culture, especially through education in Western model schools. Meanwhile, Muslim society living in the countryside become the community forces that defended Islam under the pioneering clerics with *pesantren,* or Islamic boarding school, as the center of civilization (Dhofier, 1987; Mas'ud, 2006; and Bruinessen, 2012).

The development of Islam in Indonesia has undergone tremendous changes since the beginning of the 20th century. Changes occur in various aspects of people's lives, either from the influence of Islamic reform and modernization in Islamic centers in the Middle East, or from the process of awakening the consciousness and

ideals of Indonesian independence from colonialism. Along with the spirit of renewal of Muslim societies, they took part in the rise and awakening of national movements through religious movements or nationalism–religion (Noer, 1996; Sunanto, 2005; and Naimuddin, 2014).

At that time, socio–religious organizations emerged with different motives and orientations. In summary, there are three shades of the organization movements. Firstly, the socio–religious movement is puritanism–reformist, which is a movement that seeks to do Islam purification or orthodoxy while improving religious, educational, social, and economic institutions. This movement is among others shown in *Muhammadiyah* (followers of the Prophet Muhammad) organization in Yogyakarta, Central Java; PERSIS (*Persatuan Islam* or Islamic Unity) in Bandung, West Java; and *Al-Irsyad* (Good Things) organization in Surabaya, East Java (Nasution, 1992; Noer, 1996; and Baskara, 2017).

Secondly, the movement is reformist–modernist, which is a religious–social movement that seeks to improve the social and political order of Muslims by following modern Western patterns, especially shown by the SI (*Syarekat Islam* or Islamic League) movement and other Islamic political parties, such as PSII (*Partai Syarekat Islam Indonesia* or Indonesian Islamic League Party), PERMI (*Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia* or Indonesia Moslem Unity), MIAI (*Majelis Islam Ala Indonesia* or Islamic League of Indonesia), and MASYUMI (*Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia* or Indonesia Moslem Advisory Assembly).[1]

Thirdly, the social–religious movement develops a reformist-traditionalist pattern, which is a

movement that seeks to maintain traditional Islamic religion; but in some aspects, its social order is also improved and adapted to modern development, for example shown in the NU (*Nahdatul Ulama* or Islamic Scholars Awakening), *Jamiah al-Wasliyah* (Connection Congregation), PERTI (*Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah* or Unity of Islamic Education), and NW (*Nahdhatul Wathan* or Nation Awakening) movements in Indonesia (Noer, 1996 and 2000; Ricklefs, 2008; and Kamsi, 2013).

The development of Islam in the organization of society and social movement, as mentioned above, continues to show its work up to now with the modification and orientation of the movement that changed. But since the independence of Indonesia, from 1945 to the present, there are also socio–religious organizations that were born and developed massively in various forms, streams, and ideologies in the political, social, economic, and cultural fields (Abdullah & Surjomihardjo, eds., 1982; Kartodirdjo, 1992; Noer, 2000; Kuntowijoyo, 2003; and Kamsi, 2013).

Along with the historical situation and the demands of the times that did not escape the ups and downs of the changes that hit the nation and state of the Republic of Indonesia, the development of Islam in mass movements also undergoes change and transformation. Judging from the background and the orientation of thought that runs through the Islamic movements in contemporary times, the tendency can be mapped briefly. Firstly, in the modernists themselves, there is a tendency for change to accommodate the classical Islamic treasures that are actualized in modern life, so this tendency is commonly referred to as the *neo-modernism movement;* on the contrary, secondy, traditionalists who are accommodative with the offers of modernity develop their movement

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[1]It is interesting to note here that SI (*Syarekat Islam* or Islamic League) in 1920-an, then, became the PSII (*Partai Syarekat Islam Indonesia* or Indonesian Islamic League Party). For Islamic political party untill 1960s, see Deliar Noer (2000); Merle Calvin Ricklefs (2008); and Kamsi (2013).

with the foundations and orientations of thought that are *neo-traditionalism*; and thirdly, there are those who do not take one of the paths of the two orientations, so they take the path of fundamentalization of religion or Islam in responding to various aspects of modern life or called the movement of *neo-fundamentalism,* and there are also people who tend to be similar to this but take the path of *liberalism,* that is not tied to certain tendencies and even the movement is shown by giving a lot of criticism of the ideology and religion that is considered established (Grunebaum, 1964; Sardar, 1986; Nata, 2001; and Wahid, 2001).

These socio–cultural changes have taken place and will continue to plague Muslims and the Indonesian nation in general, let alone the rise of the influence of new world life, globalization, liberalization of the economics world, and information technology and media today (Sardar, 1986; Wahid, 2001; Fakih, 2004; and Suharto, 2014).

Explanation of Multicultural Islamic History. The writing of history in general and the history of Islam in Indonesia, hereinafter abbreviated as SII (*Sejarah Islam Indonesia* or History of Indonesia Muslim) in particular, in the development of contemporary historiography, is demonstrated by the application of methodologies and multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches to the various historical objects. A simple understanding of the methodology is that the SII events can be interpreted on the basis of various perspectives, and conceptual and theoretical frameworks which are derived from scientific disciplines relevant to a particular area of history (Abdullah & Surjomihardjo, eds., 1982; Kartodirdjo, 1992; Abdullah & Hisyam eds., 2003; Kuntowijoyo, 2003; and Yakub, 2013).

It is also understandable that if the entire SII concerns the political, legal, social, religious, cultural, educational, science–technological, and humanities fields, these fields can be explained based on theories derived from such approaches as political science, sociology, anthropology, and psychology; each of which plays a role in providing the conceptual and theoretical framework of historical interpretation. So, the relevance of an approach depends on the kind of history being analyzed, so that the development of a historical assessment methodology will always direct an integrative perspective between history and other sciences (Ankersmit, 1984; Kartodirdjo, 1982 and 1992; Abdullah & Karim eds., 1991; and Kuntowijoyo, 2003).

As I have pointed out at the beginning of this paper, SII from the cultural point of view has passed and faced with various cultural backgrounds of the Muslim community; then, its historical methodology, other than directed to the use of social and cultural sciences approaches, can also be developed on scientific trends or contemporary issues, such as multiculturalism as an alternative to methodological development in the rewriting of SII. The multicultural approach finds its relevance, because the objective reality of the past of Islam in Indonesia does not only always encounter various cultures, but the internal dynamics of various Muslim communities has also given birth to various cultures (Lapidus, 2000; Mahfud, 2001; Abdullah *et al.*, 2002; Abdullah & Hisyam eds., 2003; and Abdurahman, 2011).

The relationship of Islam with the cultural background of its adherents periodically can be categorized as follows: firstly, the early development of Islam in *Nusantara* (Indonesian archipelago) around the 13th century until the 17th century can be called as the period of Islam and *Local Culture* with various views of Islam on Muslim communities in various regions of the

Indonesian archipelago; secondly, the development of Islam in this region around the 18th to 19th centuries, which is much influenced by foreign culture, can be called as the period of Islam and *Colonial Culture* with various views of Muslim society responding to Western influence; and thirdly, the development of Muslims in the twentieth century can now be referred to as Islam and *Modern Culture* with various emerging community systems and changes occurring at the level of response to *global cultural bids* (Grunebaum, 1964; Ankersmit, 1984; and Suryo, 2009); and *language and cultural traditions in its various aspects* (Abdullah, 1987; Abdurahman, 2011; and Sunarso, 2018).

SII mapping, in a multicultural way, is not only done on the basis of periodic trends and certain geographical areas, but also in the reality of diversity, differences, and pluralism recognized by Muslim communities over a period of time. Such a study of history will gain the similarity and disparity of two or more historical phenomena with the same theme in different places, or *horizontal parallelism*, or repetition obtained if similarities are drawn between two historical phenomena with similar themes and places, but different times or *vertical parallelism* (Burke, 2001; Abdullah & Hisyam eds., 2003; and Abdurahman, 2011).

Thus, the term of Kuntowijoyo (2008) and other scholars, "parallelism study" has a strategic role to develop the atmosphere of multiculturalism, because there are so many very promising SII units from the point of resemblance and history. The study of parallelism is also the same as comparative history, in this case comparing the same historical events in SII (Abdullah & Karim eds., 1991; Kuntowijoyo, 2008; and Abdurahman, 2011).

As in the study of Alfian (1991) and other scholars, especially about the parallelism of *Muhamamdiyah* (followers of the Prophet Muhammad) movement in Java and in West Sumatra, that in both places *Muhammadiyah* shows different faces because the challenges it faces are different too. In Java, *Muhammadiyah* is accommodationist and pragmatic; while in West Sumatra, it is radical and idealistic. The main challenges in Java are the modernization (colonial government) and Christianization; while the challenges in West Sumatra are the Old and the Indigenous traditions/customs. Similarly, parallelism in other aspects can be explained from the history of the *Muhammadiyah* movement, or in other religious movements (Alfian, 1991; Shihab, 1995; Noer, 1996; and Nakamura, 2005).

The development of other analyzes can be carried out structurally, which is starting from the understanding of multicultural concepts that give understanding that Muslims in every period of its development is a pluralistic society and filled with diverse cultures; then, the basic assumptions that can be used as a reference to explain the tendency of multiculturalism in SII are:

Firstly, the circumstances of the Muslim society in its historical sequence can be presented in the form of their institution, which describes patterns of activity and patterns of social relations and a series of mental relationships (Abdullah & Surjomihardjo, eds., 1982; Lapidus, 2000; Abdullah & Hisyam eds., 2003; and Abdurahman, 2011).

Secondly, the institutional patterns of Muslim societies in Indonesia are built in conjunction with the pattern and identity of local cultures that create variants of society and culture. Based on this assumption, the variation in the structure of Islamic societies can be distinguished from their local, ethnic, city, national, ideological, and cultural characteristics; or other traits, such as syncretic, reformist, and traditionalist,

so that the diversity of the structure is very clearly manifested in SII (Abdullah *et al.*, 2002; Abdullah & Hisyam eds., 2003; and Abdurahman, 2011).

Therefore, in order to understand multicultural phenomena, it is possible to use various approaches in order to understand and explain the "cultural structure" of a historical object. For example, the history of Sufism in Indonesia, which has a number of dimensions, aspects, and facts, can be described objectively based on various disciplines, so that the study of the facts of Sufism history in the development of *tarekat orders* in formal–methodology way must combine historical approach and sociological approach in one facet to become the *historical-sociological approaches* (Soedjatmoko *et al.* eds., 1995; Burke, 2001; Suwirta, 2002; and Abdurahman, 2011 and 2018).

On the other hand, however, the Islamic approach, or Islamic doctrine, in this case especially the Sufism doctrine, can explain the ideological background inherent in the *tarekat* movements. Hence, integrative perspectives are established in three approaches: *historical, socio-anthropological,* and *sufistic* matters (Burke, 2001; Abdullah & Hisyam eds., 2003; and Abdurahman, 2011 and 2018).

Different interdisciplinary integration can be done according to the multicultural Islamic history. Understanding of Islam itself is usually based more on the doctrinal system and the thought, and development of its teachings as a moral basis in the life of a people or a nation; multiculturalism directs its perspective into historical events; while history as an approach and methodology can develop an understanding of the multicultural–Islamic events according to the time dimension (Mahfud, 2001; Abdullah *et al.*, 2002; Abdullah & Hisyam eds., 2003; Abdurahman, 2011; and Wasino, 2013).

The explanation of the multicultural symptoms of SII on various fields (religious, social, cultural, political, economics, etc.) is always indicated in the historiography process. Each of these areas of history is also explained by a particular community in different regions and periods. Similarly, the review requires a relevant perspective, so that the process of multicultural analysis is integrated between historical approaches and other social sciences. Meanwhile, the Islamic approach with its various aspects is used to interpret all the historical phenomena of Islam, so that historians can present a critical explanation of certain historical objects (Burke, 2001; Abdullah & Hisyam eds., 2003; Abdurahman, 2011; and Suharto, 2014).

CONCLUSION[2]

Finally, through this paper, it can be asserted that the writing of Islamic history in Indonesia can be developed in a wide range, so that SII (*Sejarah Islam Indonesia* or History of Indonesia Muslim) is also useful to complement the history of Indonesia in general, whether it is developed functionally as a matter of knowledge or developed as a methodological reference to enrich the social sciences.

The SII reconstruction can be done in multicultural way on actual themes, but also always pay attention to the integration of temporal factors, socio–cultural situation, and the background of Islamic values and ideology. Therefore, multicultural
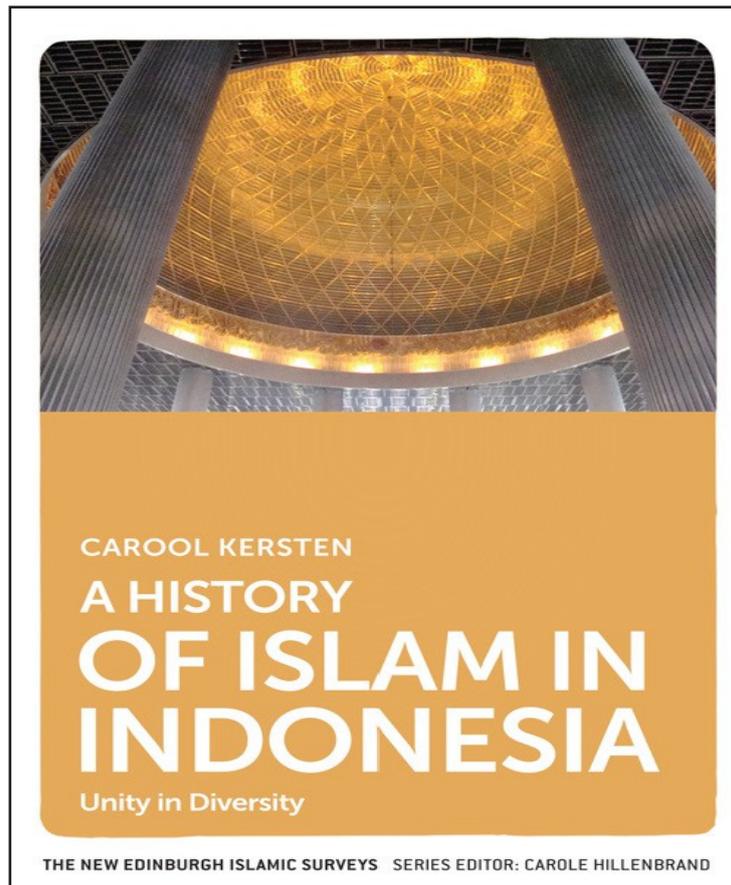
analysis is expected to be an alternative methodology for historians in conducting comprehensive Islamic history writing; even, it is done as a new effort to replace or complement the historiography of Indonesia today.[3]

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[3] **Statement:** I, hereby, declare that this article is my original work and that it is not the result of plagiarism. The sources that I quoted are also clearly indicated in the References. I am willing to get academic sanctions, if what I declare turns out to be, later on, not true.

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CAROOL KERSTEN

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The writing of Islamic history in Indonesia can be developed in a wide range, so that SII (*Sejarah Islam Indonesia* or History of Indonesia Muslim) is also useful to complement the history of Indonesia in general, whether it is developed functionally as a matter of knowledge or developed as a methodological reference to enrich the social sciences.