

## ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS AND THE THEORY OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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### Abstract

This article wants to analyze the relationship between social change theory and Islamic boarding schools in Southeast Asia. With a qualitative analysis method, in this article it is revealed that the pattern of Islamic Boarding School Education is adopted in several countries in Southeast Asia, especially in Malaysia, Southern Thailand and the Southern Philippines. Some scholars in Southeast Asia studied a lot in Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, and developed a similar pattern after graduating from Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools in Southern Thailand still maintain the tradition of reciting with pegon or Jawi letters in Pondok and Madrasah. They form Muslim leaders in Southern Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines as well as Muslim communities in other Southeast Asian communities. In the case of changes in Islamic boarding schools in Southeast Asia, both changes due to elements from within and from outside, the role of kyai as an actor of change occupies a very central position.

**Keywords:** : Islamic boarding school; social change theory; southeast asia

### Abstrak

*Artikel ini ingin menganalisis keterkaitan teori perubahan sosial dengan pesantren di Asia Tenggara. Dengan metode analisis kualitatif, dalam artikel ini terungkap bahwa pola Pendidikan Pesantren diadopsi di beberapa negara di Asia Tenggara, khususnya di Malaysia, Thailand Selatan dan Filipina Selatan. Beberapa Ulama di Asia Tenggara banyak belajar di pesantren-pesantren di Indonesia, dan membangun pola yang mirip setelah lulus dari Indonesia. Pesantren di Thailand Selatan hingga saat ini masih menjaga tradisi mengaji dengan huruf pegon atau huruf jawi di Pondok dan Madrasah. Mereka membentuk pemimpin Muslim di Thailand Selatan, Malaysia dan Filipina serta komunitas Muslim di Asia Tenggara lainnya. Dalam kasus perubahan di pondok pesantren di Asia Tenggara, baik perubahan karena unsur dari dalam maupun dari luar, peran kyai sebagai aktor perubahan menempati posisi yang sangat sentral.*

**Kata Kunci:** *pesantren; teori perubahan sosial; asia tenggara*

## INTRODUCTION

Zamakhsyari Dhofier highlighted the significance of 1910 and 1920 in the history of Islamic boarding schools. In 1910, these institutions, including the Denanyar Islamic boarding school in Jombang, began admitting female students. Subsequently, in 1920, several Islamic boarding schools, such as the Tebuireng Islamic boarding school in Jombang and the Singosari Islamic boarding school in Malang, introduced a curriculum encompassing general subjects like Indonesian, Dutch, Numeracy, Earth Science, and History.<sup>1</sup> This progressive approach led to a surge in student enrollment. For instance, the Tebuireng Jombang Islamic boarding school witnessed a remarkable increase from 28 students in 1899 to over 200 students by the end of the 1910s, eventually reaching close to 2,000 students within the next decade.<sup>2</sup>

Following Indonesia's independence in 1945, the landscape of education underwent transformation under the leadership of Mr. R. Suwandi, who served as the minister of PP and K from October 2, 1946, to June 27, 1947. He appointed Ki Hajar Dewantoro as the chairman of the Teaching Investigation Committee of the Republic of Indonesia. The committee's findings, presented in a report dated June 2, 1946, emphasized "The necessity to modernize and enhance the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools and madrasas, advocating for financial support among other measures."<sup>3</sup> This call for reform was further reinforced by Regulation No. 3 of 1950 issued by the Minister of Religion, K.H. A. Wahid Hasyim, which mandated the inclusion of general subjects in madrasas and the teaching of religious studies in public and private schools. Consequently, Islamic boarding schools transitioned from a traditional to a more modern educational approach, with

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<sup>1</sup> Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai*, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1994), h. 2, 37-38. In 1916 the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School founded the "Salafiyah Madrasah" which adopted a general education system and included general subjects, such as arithmetic, Malay language, earth sciences, and writing Latin letters in its curriculum. In 1926, Pondok Modern Gontor was founded, which apart from teaching religious and general studies, also emphasized aspects of mastering Arabic and English, in addition to additional extracurricular activities such as sports, arts, and so on. Then in 1927 the Rejoso Islamic Boarding School in Jombang also established a madrasa which taught religious and general lessons. And in 1932, Haji Abdul Halim, founder of the Ulama Association in West Java, founded a kind of madrasa which he called "Santi Asrama", which apart from teaching religion and general education also emphasized skill material (*vocational*) for his students. See Azyumardi Azra, *Traditional Islamic Education and Modernization Towards the New Millennium*, matter. 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai*, p.106-111. See also Abdurrahman Wahid, "Prospects of Islamic Boarding Schools as Educational Institutions", in Manfred Oepen and Wolfgang Karcher. (ed.), *Dynamics of Islamic Boarding Schools, Impact of Islamic Boarding Schools in Education and Community Development* (Jakarta: P3M, 1988), hal. 271.

<sup>3</sup> Akh. Minhaji and M. Atho Mudzhar, in Azyumardi Azra, ed, *Menteri-Menteri Agama RI* (Jakarta: INIS, PPIM, Balitbang Depag RI, 1998), p. 47.

institutions like the Tebuireng Jombang Islamic Boarding School leading the way by establishing middle and high schools.<sup>4</sup>

The educational model of Islamic boarding schools gained traction beyond Indonesia, influencing countries in Southeast Asia such as Malaysia, Southern Thailand, and the Southern Philippines. Many scholars from these regions pursued their studies at Indonesian Islamic boarding schools and later replicated a similar educational framework in their respective countries. Notably, Islamic boarding schools in Southern Thailand continue the tradition of Quranic recitation using Pegon or Jawi scripts in Pondok and Madrasas, producing influential Muslim leaders not only in their own communities but also across Southeast Asia.

This research delves into the intricate dynamics of behavior and communication within Islamic boarding schools, emphasizing the symbolic and phenomenological construction of social reality. This study offers a novel perspective by exploring the lived experiences and interactions of students and teachers. By employing a qualitative field research approach, this study aims to uncover the nuanced social processes and cultural practices that shape the everyday life of Islamic boarding schools. This approach not only enriches the existing body of knowledge but also provides valuable insights for policymakers and educators seeking to enhance the educational experience in Islamic boarding schools and similar institutions globally.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative field research approach,<sup>56</sup> a commonly used model by researchers to explain social facts. It aims to construct this reality symbolically and phenomenologically concerning behavior and communication within Islamic boarding schools. The data collected, both primary and secondary, are then analyzed using descriptive-analytical methods through two stages: categorization and contextualization.

In the first stage, the researchers categorize or map the data that has been designed and collected. Following this, the data is contextualized based on evolving conditions. This

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<sup>4</sup> Kompas Team Report, "Pesantren: from Education to Politics" in Nurcholis Madjid, *Bilik-bilik Pesantren: Sebuah Potret Perjalanan*, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> Muhajir, *Qualitative Research Methodology* (Yogyakarta: Rake Sarasin, 2000), p. 341.

<sup>6</sup> Consuelo G. Sevilla, et al., *Introduction to Research Methodology* (Jakarta: UI Press, 2006), pp. 73-76.

method allows the researchers to provide a detailed description of the observed phenomena and understand the social context underlying the behavior and communication in Islamic boarding schools.

The study focuses on descriptive analysis to elaborate on various observed aspects and analytical analysis to comprehend the relationships between categorized data and its social context. This approach is expected to provide comprehensive insights into the social dynamics within the boarding school environment

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Understanding Social Change

Social change, termed as such in English, etymologically consists of two words: change and social. In general, change refers to a process of shift, reduction, addition, or development, while social pertains to matters relating to society<sup>7</sup>, which is an integrated system of social structures and functions<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, social change denotes the occurrence of these processes in matters relating to society.

Terminologically, the meaning of social change often overlaps with that of cultural change, as almost all forms of change encompass social and cultural aspects.

According to Selo Soemardjan, social change denotes any change in social institutions within a society, affecting its social system, including social values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns among groups.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, cultural change, as defined by Koentjaraningrat and associates, involves a process of shifting, subtracting, adding, and developing elements within a culture, occurring through interaction with residents supporting other cultures by creating new cultural elements and through efforts to adapt between these cultural elements.<sup>10</sup>

Horton and Hunt define social change as a change in social structures and relationships, while cultural change encompasses changes in societal culture. Social changes include alterations in the distribution of age groups, average education level, population birth rate,

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<sup>7</sup> Henry Pratt Fairchild and 100 authorities, "Dictionary of Sociology", in Soerjono Soekanto, *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar*, (Jakarta: Rajawali, 2003), p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> George Ritzer and Douglas J. Goodman, *Teori Sosiologi Modern*, Alimandan translation of *Modern Sociological Theory*, (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2007), p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Selo Soemardjan, *Perubahan Sosial di Yogyakarta*, (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 1981), p. 303.

<sup>10</sup> Koentjaraningrat et al., *Dictionary of Anthropological Terms*, (Jakarta: Center for Language Guidance and Development, Ministry of Education and Culture, 1984), p. 147.

the number of teenagers entering college, population death rates or life expectancy, changes in the role of wives in modern families, decline in the level of kinship and informality between neighbors due to rural-to-urban migration, and changes in the role of husbands from superiors to partners in democratic families. Meanwhile, cultural changes comprise the invention of the television set, emergence of new terms, art forms, invention and spread of cars, addition of new words to language, and changes in the concept of etiquette and morality.

It is evident that the examples presented above overlap with each other. In reality, almost all changes incorporate social and cultural aspects. Therefore, to encompass these two types of change, the term "socio-cultural change" is employed. In line with this notion, Soemardjan contends that it is difficult to imagine social change without preceding cultural change. For example, a social institution such as family and marriage will not change without fundamental cultural changes related to these issues. Although the difference between social change and cultural change theoretically exists, in practice, it is challenging to distinguish between them.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the difficulty in clearly distinguishing between social change and cultural change, social change encompasses a broad and complex scope, including processes and changing elements such as objects, ideas, values, beliefs, norms, and interaction models.<sup>12</sup>

From the definitions above and their scope, it can be observed that social change encompasses changes in value orientation. In other words, changes in value orientation are within the scope of social change. Value orientation refers to a complex of ideas or themes of thought directing the goals and ideals of the cultural values of most citizens of a society.<sup>13</sup> The orientation or direction of change includes efforts to abandon or change factors or elements of social life, embrace new forms or elements, and revisit forms, elements, or values that have existed in the past. Societies or nations often attempt modernization processes across various life areas, including economics, bureaucracy, defense and security, and science and technology. However, these societies or nations also endeavor to explore and discover elements or values of personality or identity as dignified nations.

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<sup>11</sup> See Paul B. Horton and Chester L. Hunt, *Sosiologi*, Volume 2, (Jakarta: Erlangga, 1984), p. 208-209. Revelation, *Perubahan Sosial dan Pembangunan*, (Jakarta: Hecca MU, 2005), p. 3. Soerjono Soekanto, *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar*, (Jakarta: Rajagrafindo Persada, 2003), p. 308.

<sup>12</sup> See: Candace Clark et.al., *Social Interaction*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 533. See also Peter Burke, *Sejarah dan Teori Sosial*, (Jakarta: Indonesian Obor Foundation, 2001), p. 196.

<sup>13</sup> Koentjaraningrat et al., *Kamus Istilah Antropologi*, p. 125.

## Factors of Social Change

In general, two factors can cause social change: internal factors (endogenous) and external factors (exogenous). Endogenous factors explain changes in society by identifying sources of change within the society itself. Evolutionary and structural-functional schools use this approach. In contrast, exogenous factors explain social changes by identifying external influences. In this paper, the sources of change will be examined by considering both internal and external factors. Sociologists and anthropologists have long recognized the importance of historical approaches and cultural contact as sources of social change.

Internal factors (endogenous) include: (1) increases and decreases in population, (2) new discoveries or innovations, (3) conflict, and (4) revolution. External factors (exogenous) include: (1) changes in the physical environment, (2) wars, and (3) the influence of other cultures, such as advancements in science, technology, or modernization. These internal and external factors often complement and support each other.<sup>14</sup>

Not all of the factors above are always at play in social change. For example, in the context of changes in Islamic boarding schools, only a few factors were at work, namely population increase and decrease, innovation, conflict, and the influence of other cultures.

In the case of Islamic boarding schools, population changes can be equated with the increase in the number of Kyai families within these schools. This factor has facilitated the institutional organization of inheritance, such as the establishment of Islamic boarding school foundations to distinguish between school assets and those of families or individuals.

Innovation involves introducing new ideas or technologies. Innovations can be ideas, processes, or products in various fields. In Islamic boarding schools, innovations can come from both external advances in science and technology and internal needs for progress, potentially spurred by conflicts. The drive for new discoveries arises from individual awareness of cultural deficiencies, the qualities of individuals in a culture, and incentives for creative activities in society. While some individuals may leave deficiencies unaddressed, others or groups seek immediate changes to rectify them.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, societal conflicts can also prompt social and cultural change.

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory*, *History and Social Theory*, translated by the Indonesian Obor Foundation, *Sejarah dan Teori Sosial*, (Jakarta: Indonesian Obor Foundation, 2001) p. 242

<sup>15</sup> Koentjaraningrat, *Pengantar Antropologi*, (Jakarta: Djakarta University, 1964), p. 137. Soerjono Soekanto, *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar*, p. 299-308. Koentjaraningrat, *Metode-metode Penelitian Masyarakat*, (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1990), p. 90.

External influences include the impact of other cultures, whether through science, technology, or modernization. Modernization involves efforts to create universal, rational, and functional values, contrasted with traditional societal values. According to Sztompka, tradition consists of inherited policies that reside in present consciousness, beliefs, norms, and values, as well as historical objects considered useful.<sup>16</sup>

Norms and traditions can be viewed from the perspective of modernization as follows: *First*, some traditions may hinder progress or modernization. *Second*, certain norms or traditions can be developed, refined, enlightened, or modified to support modernization. *Third*, some traditions are consistent with and relevant to new values.

Regarding modernization of society alongside traditional values, the specifications or qualifications of a modern society are presented: modern societies or individuals are those who are free from beliefs in superstitions. The concept of modernization is used to describe a series of changes occurring in all aspects of traditional society as an effort to transform the society into an industrial one. Modernization signifies the development of the structure of the social system, representing a form of continuous change in the economic, political, educational, traditional, and belief aspects of a society or a particular social unit.

In line with the above ideas, Karel Steenbrink argues that changes in traditional Islamic boarding schools are driven by the impetus for renewal and modernization of Islamic education. Additionally, Steenbrink identifies several factors contributing to these changes: the desire to return to the Quran and Hadith, the spirit of nationalism in resisting Dutch colonialism, and the strong efforts of Muslims to strengthen their organizations in social, economic, cultural, and political fields.<sup>17</sup>

Changes similar to those occurring in pesantren were also experienced by Islamic educational institutions in Turkey and Egypt since the last quarter of the 19th century. The modernization of Islamic education began in Turkey in the mid-19th century before eventually spreading to almost all the territories under Ottoman rule in the Middle East. Initially, Turkey's educational reform program did not target the traditional Islamic educational institutions, *Medresse* (madrasas). Instead, new schools were established based on the European education system, aimed at supporting military and bureaucratic reforms within the Ottoman Empire. In this context, the phenomenon of the *Mektebi Ilmi Harbiye*

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<sup>16</sup> Piotr Sztompka, *Sosiologi Perubahan Sosial*, (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2005), p. 74-75.

<sup>17</sup> Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dan Kurun Modern*. (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986), p. 26-29.

(military school) emerged in 1834, modeled after the French system.<sup>18</sup> In 1838, Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) launched Islamic educational reforms by introducing the Rusydiyah Schools, which fully adopted the European education system. The Rusydiyah Schools operated independently of, or even in opposition to, the *Medresse*. Furthermore, in 1846, Sultan ‘Abd al-Majid issued regulations separating Islamic education from general education; *Medresse* fell under the jurisdiction of the Shaykh al-Islam, while general schools—at various levels—were placed under direct government responsibility. Despite the expectation that these general schools would become the backbone of modernization, their development was slow. This prompted the Ottoman government to issue the “*Ma‘arif Umumiye Nizamnamesi*” (General Education Regulation) in 1869 to expand and accelerate the development of the European-style general education system, often at the expense of the *Medresse*. The final blow to the *Medresse* occurred in 1924 when Kemal Ataturk abolished the *Medresse* system, converting them into general schools.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, in Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha modernized education by establishing public elementary schools alongside madrasas and Kuttâb, aiming to prepare students for military school. Initially, the curriculum combined Islamic and general subjects, but later emphasized general subjects. At the same time, Muhammad Ali Pasha also established advanced public schools known as *Tajhiziyah* schools. This school primarily taught general sciences, such as arithmetic, geometry, algebra, and drawing, in addition to offering some religious subjects.

Meanwhile, madrasas and kuttâb did not experience significant development. Kuttâb merely served as a supplement to public schools, providing additional religious education. In fact, in 1868, Khedive Ismail issued a decree to integrate madrasahs and kuttâb into the general education system. This effort was largely unsuccessful, as the madrasah and kuttâb systems persisted during the British colonial period. However, after independence, citing reasons for integration or nationalization of Egypt's national education system, Gamal Abdel Nasser abolished the madrasah and kuttâb systems in 1961.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today*, (New York: Preager, 1986), p. 188. Azyumardi Azra, "Pesantren: Kontinuitas dan Perubahan" in Nurcholis Madjid, *Bilik-Bilik Pesantren, Sebuah Potret Perjalanan*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), p. x.

<sup>19</sup> Harun Nasution, *Pembaruan Dalam Islam: Sejarah Pemikiran dan Gerakan*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1975), p. 145-155. See Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam, Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru*, (Jakarta: Logos, 2002), p. 96, and Mundzior Suparta, *Laporan Penelitian Pembaharuan Pemikiran Keagamaan dan Pasca Kemal di Negara Turki*, (Jakarta: State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Syarif Hidayatullah, 1996), p. 14-15.

<sup>20</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam, Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru*, p. 96-97, compare with Harun Nasution, *Pembaharuan dalam Islam: Sejarah Pemikiran dan Gerakan*, p. 29-33.



The experiences of Turkey and Egypt illustrate the decline of traditional Islamic education systems amid modernization. However, the sociological and political contexts of Medresse in Turkey and madrasas and Kuttâbs in Egypt differ from those surrounding Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, allowing these schools to survive.

## Patterns of Social Change

Etzioni-Halevy and Etzioni argued that based on the thoughts of classical sociological figures, social change can be classified into three patterns, namely linear patterns, cyclical patterns, and combined patterns between these two patterns.<sup>21</sup>

First, *the linear pole*. According to this idea, the development of society follows a definite pattern. This pattern was pioneered by Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer.

Comte (1798-1857) believed that social change progresses through a fixed sequence of stages, starting from the initial stage of development and culminating in a final stage. Once the final stage is reached, change ceases. The stages proposed by evolutionary theorists are: (1) the theological stage, guided by supernatural values; (2) the metaphysical stage, a transitional phase where belief in supernatural elements is replaced by abstract principles that serve as the foundation for cultural development; and (3) the positive or scientific stage, where society is governed by empirical reality and scientific principles. At this stage, reasoning and observation become the primary tools of thought.<sup>22</sup>

In accordance with Comte, Spencer (1820-1903) discerned parallels between organic evolution and social evolution, delineating society's progression through various stages from homogeneous and rudimentary tribal communities to sophisticated modern societies. Within this evolutionary framework, diligent and adept individuals emerge victorious in the struggle for survival, while those lacking initiative or strength are relegated to the periphery. This perspective, labeled 'Social Darwinism,' gained substantial traction among the affluent segments of society.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Etzioni-Halevy dan Etzioni, *Social Change: Sources, Patterns, and Consequences*, (New York: Basic Book: 1979), p. 3-8. Kamanto Sunarto, *Pengantar Sosiologi*, (Jakarta: UI Faculty of Economics, 2004), p. 213-214.

<sup>22</sup> Etzioni-Halevy dan Etzioni, *Social Change: Sources, Patterns, and Consequences*, p. 14-19. Paul B. Horton and Chester L. Hunt, *Sociology*, Volume 2, p. 208-209.

<sup>23</sup> Paul B. Horton and Chester L. Hunt, *Sosiologi*, Volume 2, p. 209.

All evolutionary theories are subject to certain weaknesses: (1) The data supporting the determination of a society's stage within a series of stages often lacks precision, resulting in the assignment of a society's stage based on what is deemed most congruent with the theory. (2) The sequence of stages remains somewhat ambiguous, as certain societies may bypass several intermediary stages and progress directly to the industrial phase, while others may regress to earlier stages. (3) The notion that major social changes will cease upon reaching a final stage appears simplistic, given the fluctuating nature of civilizational development. However, notwithstanding these limitations, evolutionary theory still provides numerous precise descriptions, and many societies continue to undergo transitions from simple to complex social structures.

Secondly, there is *the cyclical pattern*. This perspective views society's development as resembling a wheel: at times ascending, at others descending. This suggests that the process of human development does not conclude at the presumed "final" stage proposed by evolutionary theory, but instead loops back to the initial stage for subsequent transitions.

The advocate of the cyclical theory, Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), posited that each significant civilization experiences a gradual cycle encompassing birth, growth, and eventual collapse. This cyclic progression spans roughly a millennium, mirroring the historical trajectories of civilizations such as those of Greek, Roman, and Egyptian cultures. It is thus anticipated that European culture will undergo a comparable evolutionary path to these exemplar civilizations.<sup>24</sup>

In line with Spengler's perspective, Toynbee (1889-1975) delineated civilization as originating from primitive societal roots entrenched in historical traditions, subsequently evolving dynamically in response to various stimuli. Furthermore, Toynbee recognized civilization's susceptibility to environmental challenges, encompassing natural, social, and cultural dimensions. He cited the emergence of Egyptian civilization as a testament to this adaptability, where challenges presented by the Nile valley's swamps and wilderness spurred societal development, while other civilizations arose amidst intergroup conflicts.

Drawing from this framework, it can tentatively be posited that the trajectory of civilization is intrinsically intertwined with internal and external conflicts. However, the viability of such conflicts lies in their manageability; if they exceed tolerable thresholds, they

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<sup>24</sup> Etzioni-Halevy dan Etzioni, *Social Change: Sources, Patterns, and Consequences*, p. 20-25.

risk stalling or even dismantling societal progress. Toynbee therefore delineated two pivotal criteria for effective conflict resolution: the severity and navigability of the challenge, and the presence of an adept elite capable of spearheading responsive measures. Consequently, the advancement of civilization hinges upon the agency of a discerning minority, tasked not solely with conceptual innovation but also with fostering collaborative efforts toward societal betterment. Under proficient leadership, civilizations navigate adversities toward constructive outcomes. Conversely, inadequacies within the creative elite, waning majority allegiance, and deteriorating social cohesion may precipitate civilizational decline.<sup>25</sup>

Thirdly, a synthesis emerges that reconciles these two approaches. This integration is evident in Karl Marx's conflict theory. Marx contends that human history unfolds through an enduring struggle among social classes, embodying elements of cyclical pattern thinking. He argues that following one class's dominance over another, a recurring cycle of conflict ensues. However, Marx's framework also incorporates elements of linear progression. He posits that the rapid advancement of capitalism will incite a conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, culminating in the proletariat's triumph and the establishment of a communist society. Marx's linear perspective is further supported by his proposition that Western colonial powers will undergo processes akin to those experienced by Western societies.<sup>26</sup>

Marx is regarded as the central figure in explicating the origins of conflict and its role in catalyzing revolutionary social change. One of the key aspects of Marx's theory is his acknowledgment of the presence of a class structure within society. In essence, conflict emerges as a pivotal catalyst for change, with change itself being the inevitable outcome of conflict. Given the perpetual nature of conflict, change persists as a continuous process.

Marx, as cited by Turner<sup>27</sup>, presented several propositions regarding conflict: 1) The more unequal the distribution of income, the greater the conflict of interest between the upper and lower groups. 2) The more cognizant the lower groups are of their shared interests, the more vocally they question the legitimacy of the existing income distribution system. 3) Heightened awareness of their group's interests and increased vocalization about the legitimacy of the income distribution system amplify their inclination to collaborate in instigating conflict against the controlling group. 4) The stronger the ideological unity

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<sup>25</sup> For more details see Arnold J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1957).

<sup>26</sup> Kamanto Sunarto, *Pengantar Sosiologi*, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1999), p. 215.

<sup>27</sup> See Jonathan H. Turner, *The Structure of Sociological Theory*, (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1984), p. 129.

among lower group members and the more robust their political leadership structure, the more pronounced the polarization of the existing system becomes. 5) Increased polarization correlates with heightened conflict intensity. 6) Greater conflict intensity leads to more substantial structural changes within the system and a broader process of economic resource equalization.

## Social Change Process

The process of social change can be delineated into three fundamental components: innovation, diffusion, and consequences. Innovation encompasses the generation or refinement of novel ideas. Diffusion denotes the spread of these innovative concepts throughout the social system. Consequences entail the resultant outcomes stemming from the acceptance or rejection of these new ideas within the social framework.<sup>28</sup>

*Innovation* represents a complex social and cultural phenomenon encompassing several stages: the initial discovery of novel elements, the subsequent diffusion of these cultural innovations throughout society, and their eventual reception, analysis, and integration into daily life. It is essential to differentiate innovation from both discovery and invention. Discovery refers to the identification of new cultural elements, be they tangible tools or intangible ideas originating from individuals or groups. The transition from discovery to invention occurs when society embraces and implements the newfound discovery, thereby transforming it into a practical innovation.<sup>29</sup>

*Diffusion* denotes the dissemination of cultural elements from individual to individual and from one group to another, occurring within societies and across societies. The efficacy of diffusion is determined by the capacity of newly embraced discoveries to proliferate within a society and reach broader segments of the community, thereby facilitating widespread adoption. This process serves as a catalyst for cultural growth and contributes significantly to the enrichment of societal cultures on a broader scale.<sup>30</sup>

The diffusion process sometimes occurs before innovation and sometimes concurrently with it. During innovation, the inventor (or innovator) communicates their new discovery to community members. Moreover, innovators have the capability to integrate innovation

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<sup>28</sup> Whyu, *Perubahan Sosial dan Pembangunan*, (Jakarta: Hecca Publishing, 2005), p. 2-3.

<sup>29</sup> Koentjaraningrat, *Pengantar Antropologi*, p. 136.

<sup>30</sup> Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, (New York: Appleton Century Crofts Inc, 1936), p. 324.

with other elements or components of culture. At this stage, there arise both advantages and disadvantages in the change process due to the integration of new discoveries with existing culture. These pros and cons can be addressed through correction by modifying traditional or newly accepted patterns, or by modifying both. The reintegration of a culture can be achieved through stages involving reinterpretation, selection, and elaboration of cultural elements.

Upon completing the integration stage, the subsequent step is the terminal stage, or temporary cessation stage, where the overall final outcomes of the ongoing changes. This stage is characterized by the establishment of equilibrium, overall stability, and cultural consistency. Concurrently, there is a pervasive sense of prosperity, security, and enjoyment, along with heightened social status, a strong sense of identity, and elevated self-esteem or self-confidence among the members of the community in question. In contrast, a state of disorganization can vary significantly in scope, ranging from minor disruptions to complete cultural disintegration. Severe societal disorganization can result from conflict, war, or conquest; it may also arise from contact between disparate cultures.

Social changes occurring in one element of culture inevitably cause changes in other elements. This indicates that revisions occur in accordance with changes in a set of existing knowledge models. Humans generally prefer not to live in chaos or constantly alter their way of life, because between the occurrence of change and the establishment of a stable way of life, there is a period of uncertain transition. This transition period is characterized by uncertainty about which life guidelines actually apply in the social order.

A system of values exists in life. These values complement each other, preventing extremism by avoiding the overemphasis on one value at the expense of others. Change can lead to two potential outcomes. *First*, society may discover a new value system and philosophy of life. *Second*, society may become overwhelmed by the problems it faces and unable to make decisions regarding the new reality. The first outcome is likely in communities that are culturally prepared for change through various means, such as systematic inheritance or socialization of cultural values, formal education, self-development, and so forth. With cultural preparation relying more on individual readiness, people can adapt without losing their identity. Conversely, without cultural readiness, the second outcome will occur, leading to alienation.

*Consequence* is the result of social change. Almost all changes involve risks. Change often brings not only positive effects but also disrupts the prevailing culture and destroys respected values and habits. Poor people are usually very reluctant to face change because they cannot afford any risks. The positive aspect of change can, at the very least, improve human quality. Theoretically, humans have various needs, such as moral needs, economic needs, achievement, and recognition, and so on. All needs will only be achieved through and determined by a more advanced or better social environment. For example, the introduction of industry in rural areas has brought modern technology, thereby transforming the rural landscape. Consequently, the advent of industry allows for various changes necessary for human development. Initially, the primary occupation in rural areas may have been agriculture. With the advent of industry, rural residents can work outside the agricultural sector, such as laborers, traders, service providers, or others. Another example is the development of transportation infrastructure, such as paved roads. Paved roads in rural areas have replaced traditional means of transportation using animals, such as *dokar*, *bendi*, *gerobak*, etc with modern tools. Thus, technological transformation in rural areas, apart from changing traditional transportation systems to modern ones, has both directly and indirectly improved human quality. Rural communities that originally relied on mystical, intuitive, or habitual thinking can shift towards analytical, rational, technology-based, and efficient thinking, partly due to these changes.

In addition to instigating social tensions, the adverse ramifications of social change may manifest as social problems. Instances of the deleterious effects associated with development projects include unemployment, civil unrest, criminal activities, and the emulation of lifestyles. Furthermore, within rural development contexts, certain farmers may encounter the dispossession of their agricultural lands. The monetary compensation from the sale of land impacted by development endeavors often proves insufficient to procure alternative parcels, diverting funds towards non-productive essentials. Consequently, this predicament precipitates adverse conditions for affected parties, including unemployment resultant from a lack of requisite skills for employment in alternative sectors such as manufacturing or other project-based endeavors.

Cohen posits that rapid social change tends to yield substantial negative repercussions. These adverse effects encompass feelings of alienation, solitude, and despondency, particularly when the change transpires abruptly. Such occurrences have the capacity to disorient and unsettle individual sentiments. Moreover, if this phenomenon exacerbates

cultural disparities, it significantly heightens the probability of societal disarray, given that social change frequently coincides with a plethora of social maladies.<sup>31</sup>

The logistical complexities inherent in effecting cultural change often entail significant economic ramifications and personal inconveniences. Typically, individuals driven by self-interest tend to resist change, yet on occasion, they may recognize its potential benefits. The success of change implementation is often contingent upon factors such as intelligence and social standing. Inadequate familiarity with societal culture renders change agents susceptible to failure, as they are prone to miscalculations regarding the ramifications and requisite implementation strategies necessary to achieve change objectives.

The repercussions of change persist indefinitely. When new discoveries, inventions, and cultural elements are introduced into a society, they often set off a chain reaction of alterations that can erode various aspects of its culture. However, not all elements of culture undergo the same degree of transformation, as they are diverse, interconnected, and interdependent. As a result, there may be periods of adjustment marked by cultural gaps until the integration of new cultural elements is fully realized. Societies undergoing change inevitably confront such gaps, leaving individuals grappling with the challenge of establishing suitable behavioral norms, which can render them vulnerable to demoralization when hope for improvement wanes. While change may sometimes be accompanied by bitterness, staunch resistance to it can yield even greater discontent, given that change inherently involves both advantages and disadvantages.

### Cases of Social Change in Islamic Boarding Schools

In the context of changes within Islamic boarding schools, whether stemming from internal or external factors, the pivotal role of the *kyai* as agents of change assumes utmost importance. The concept of mediators or intermediaries, as introduced by the Japanese anthropologist Horikoshi, proves particularly insightful. This concept has emerged as a valuable analytical tool for understanding societal changes and fostering national integration, especially among scholars studying complex societies. Mediators can be understood as individuals or groups occupying intermediary positions between society and a more urbanized national framework. Depending on their structural placement within the intricate

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<sup>31</sup> See Bruce J Cohen, *Sosiologi*, (Jakarta: Bina Aksara, 1983).

network of a community, mediators may include traditional leaders who reinforce vulnerable points within the local system's fabric, thus facilitating connections with the broader societal framework. Moreover, mediators often serve as buffers or intermediaries during conflicts, preserving the momentum of community dynamics necessary for their operations.<sup>32</sup>

The esteemed status of kyai within society endures due to their knowledge and charisma. This is evident in West Java, where kyai are regarded with high regard. As Horikoshi observes, kyai, owing to their influential position, serve as mediators, although they are no longer the sole group with connections to the external system. Despite this evolution, kyai not only navigate the currents of change but also actively promote substantial transformations, fostering educational and economic advancements within society. Moreover, in times of societal conflict, kyai frequently assume roles as arbitrators and issuers of religious edicts (fatwas).<sup>33</sup>

Certainly, the most straightforward method to account for these instances is to assert that the society under examination has not yet transitioned entirely beyond its traditional past. However, such an assertion merely obfuscates the issue surrounding the structural role of mediators. This is because socio-cultural change unfolds gradually, and, as several anthropologists have pointed out, the dichotomy between traditional and modern is a heuristic concept imposed unilaterally by Western scholars, often lacking universal empirical criteria.

One often overlooked fact pertains to individuals who occupy intermediary positions (mediators or cultural brokers) and the advantages they derive from navigating between national and local systems. As Bailey has elaborated, a broker is someone who comprehends the fundamental principles governing intergroup relations. To retain their intermediary role, brokers must adeptly manage the flow of information between different sectors. Similarly, traditional leaders who have preserved their intermediary status across generations possess inherited knowledge about the dynamics between society and the national system. Understanding these mechanisms is crucial to their sustained influence, enabling them to strategically maneuver both groups for their benefit.

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<sup>32</sup> See Hiroko Horikoshi, *Kyai dan Perubahan Sosial*, (Jakarta: P3M, 1987), p. 237.

<sup>33</sup> Hamdan Farehan and Syarifuddin, *Titik Tengkar Pesantren: Resolusi Konflik Masyarakat Pesantren*, (Yogyakarta: Pilar Media, 2005), p. 152-158.



In this context, traditional leaders, such as Islamic scholars, can be regarded as proficient anthropologists, potentially surpassing professional anthropologists in certain respects. Positioned as intermediaries, adept leaders can navigate intricate power dynamics with the dominant external system while simultaneously employing symbols to reinforce their connection with followers and secure community loyalty.

Due to the kyai's role as a cultural broker, their leadership is bolstered by what Max Weber termed charisma (charismatic authority), a form of leadership derived from extraordinary personal qualities. This type of leadership is rooted in psychological identification, where an individual's emotional connection with the leader ties their personal fate to that of the leader. For followers, the leader embodies hope for a stable and improved life, being perceived as a savior and protector.<sup>34</sup>

Charismatic leadership is founded on the exceptional qualities inherent in an individual. This concept is deeply theological, as it presupposes that one's personal allure and stability are divine gifts. Max Weber frequently noted that such leadership traits are common among religious leaders. The presence of charisma in an individual can often be identified through physical attributes such as bright eyes, a strong voice, and a prominent chin. These features signify the spirit of a charismatic leader, reminiscent of the leadership exhibited by prophets and their close companions.

The term "charismatic" refers to the distinctive quality of an individual's personality. This characteristic sets them apart from the majority of people. Due to this exceptional personality, they are often regarded, and even believed, to possess supernatural powers, be a special human being, or at least hold a special status in the eyes of certain societies. These abilities and privileges are considered divine gifts bestowed by God upon His representatives in the world. An individual with these qualities is perceived as a leader. Independently, they are capable of discovering and cultivating an image that highlights their strengths. Concerning the term "charisma," Weber stated:

"The term charisma will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, super human, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Free Press, 1966)., p. 356.

<sup>35</sup> Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, p. 358.

Often, an individual is deemed charismatic because others believe they possess extraordinary strength and power, which makes them impressive to many. Consequently, such individuals frequently engage in contemplation of the supernatural and practice meditation to seek inspiration, setting themselves apart from common behaviors. A charismatic person does not necessarily need to exhibit all these special characteristics at all times. What is crucial are the extraordinary qualities that others attribute to them.

Followers of charismatic leaders are often fickle and easily swayed. This results from the influence of charismatic leaders, who tend to be individualistic and dependent on their own inspiration. Such followers typically exhibit high levels of loyalty to their leaders, often to the extent of neglecting their own obligations, work, and family, and making significant sacrifices to adhere to their leader's recommendations. A close, familial bond usually forms between leaders and their followers, and this relationship also extends to interactions among followers within the community.

On the other hand, there exists a moral obligation for leaders to provide continuous guidance to their followers, whether solicited or not. Leaders often engage with their followers during times of significant hardship. The motivation and advice offered by the leader are perceived as reflections of extraordinary personal qualities, believed to be divinely inspired. This perception strengthens the followers' trust, as the leader is seen to possess an inherent ability to understand the circumstances of their followers. Among members of the *tarekat*, this concept is often referred to as *ma'rifat*.

Charismatic leadership, relying on an individual's perceived abilities and unique presence, results in behaviors and attitudes that are often unpredictable and variable. According to Max Weber, such leaders do not conform to the routine or the ordinary aspects of everyday life. Moreover, because their abilities are centered on their person, charismatic leaders pose a threat to established routines and order. This type of leadership also disrupts rational forms of leadership, which are based on a set of formally enacted and widely recognized regulations.

In societies that maintain traditional organizational systems, key positions are frequently held by family members of the ruling party. The selection of individuals for these positions is primarily based on the strength of their personality. Once chosen, they immediately gain the trust of their supporters, ensuring that the descendants of these leaders have a significant opportunity to succeed their predecessors in future periods.

Traditional bureaucratic structures often lack clearly defined authority based on impersonal regulations, a rational hierarchy in the relationship between the governing and the governed, a systematic process for appointment and promotion through voluntary agreement, consistent and ongoing training in necessary areas of expertise, and equitable compensation for all functionaries.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, Max Weber distinguished between *gerontocracy*, *patriarchalism* and *patrimonialism*, as follows:

“Gerontocracy and primary patriarchalism are the most elementary types of traditional domination where the master has no personal administrative staff. The term gerontocracy is applied to a situation where so far as, rule over the group is organized at all it is in the hand of elders which originally was understood literally as the eldest in actual years, who are the most familiar with which secret tradition .... Patriarchalism is the situation where, within a group (house hold) which is usually organized in both economic and kinship bases, a particular individual governs who is designated by definition rule of inheritance.”<sup>37</sup>

It is recognized that elements of patrimonial power, as conceptualized in Max Weber's theory, continue to manifest in the operations of Islamic boarding school organizations. These elements often find support in deeply ingrained emotional and primordial family attitudes and cultural norms. A pertinent illustration can be observed in the process of leadership succession within these institutions. Typically, individuals chosen or appointed for leadership roles are descendants of deceased Kyai. Traditional societal frameworks, such as those found in Islamic boarding schools, project an image of leadership characterized by a paternalistic style, evident both in the functions of leadership and the broader societal ethos. The prevalence of such patterns in societies can be attributed to various factors, including the enduring strength of primordial bonds, communal living dynamics, the significant influence of customary practices in daily life, and the robust interpersonal relationships within and between communities, as well as the persistence of extended family systems. Meanwhile, a leader's paternalistic perspective on their role within the organizational structure serves as a cornerstone for the hopes and expectations of their followers.

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<sup>36</sup> Abdurrahman, “Kepemimpinan dalam Administrasi Pembangunan Jawa”, UGM Research Report, 1982, in Sukanto “Kepemimpinan Kyai dalam Pesantren (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1999), p. 39.

<sup>37</sup> Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, p. 341.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that social change encompasses a broad and complex scope, including processes and elements such as objects, ideas, values, beliefs, norms, and interaction models.

In the context of Islamic boarding schools in Southeast Asia, both internal and external factors drive these changes, with the role of the kyai (religious leader) being pivotal. The kyai's position in society remains highly influential due to their knowledge and charisma, making them key actors in the process of change.

Regarding the educational process, contemporary pesantren have made significant strides by adapting to modern educational standards and seeking financial support from the government. Islamic boarding schools now offer a curriculum that includes both religious education and general subjects, meeting the demands of the modern era. This evolution signifies that pesantren have not only adopted the madrasah system but have also extended their reach by establishing public schools, demonstrating their competitive edge in the educational landscape.

This study's exploration of the symbolic and phenomenological aspects of behavior and communication within Islamic boarding schools provides a deeper understanding of the nuanced social processes and cultural practices in these institutions. The insights gained can inform policymakers and educators aiming to enhance the educational experience in Islamic boarding schools and similar institutions globally.

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