

Globalization and Islam

A CASE STUDY OF INDONESIAN ISLAMIC NGOS

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BACKGROUND

GLOBALIZATION AND ISLAMIC IDENTITY

Many scholars have argued that globalization has undermined Islamic culture as it promotes Western culture through the media and its economic and political power. However, globalization is not at odds with Islamic culture. I will explain this through two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). By examining the activities of these two organizations, I argue that globalization has not necessarily affected Islamic cultural identity negatively. Instead, Islamic organizations responded to the challenges of globalization proactively and established interconnectedness, cooperation, and tolerance. As a result, they are reinforcing their Islamic beliefs and practices.



Discussing Muhammadiyah health care

RESEARCH QUESTION

How have Islamic mass-based organizations responded to the challenges of globalization?

ARGUMENT

The organizations are critical agents, not passive actors, because they help to alleviate the challenges globalization poses. In that process, they also promote Islamic cultural values.

NU AND MUHAMMADIYAH

NU

- Founded in 1926 in East Java
- Largest Islamic organization with 40 million members
- Traditional – pluralist
 - Combining Indonesian and Islamic culture

MUHAMMADIYAH

- Founded in 1912 in Yogyakarta
- Second largest Islamic organization with 30 million members
- Modern – reformist
 - Want to get rid of superstitious practices

SOCIAL WELFARE

EDUCATION:

- Both organizations have educational programs for students from kindergarten through university that provide secular and religious studies
- Promote gender equality in schools
- There are about 20,000 pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools) and over 30,000 madrasahs (Islamic day schools)

HEALTH CARE:

- Muhammadiyah has many hospitals and clinics throughout Indonesia to provide medical care for the poor at lower costs
- NU has mosques that provide free health services

PEACEBUILDING

- Muhammadiyah maintains interfaith dialogues and collaborates with other organizations
- Dr. Din Syamsuddin, Muhammadiyah's leader, promotes peacebuilding at lectures around the world
- These organizations are important in combating Islamic radicalization and they strongly support religious pluralism

THE ENVIRONMENT

- Muhammadiyah and NU have effective mobilization strategies to try and combat some of the environmental issues, including deforestation, increasing sea levels, and climate change
- Pesantrens are becoming more ecologically conscious and teaching students environmental values
- The organizations are creating fatwah to promote environmental sustainability



Pesantren in Surabaya



CONCLUSION

Muhammadiyah and NU are critical agents in the globalization process. They provide social services for many Indonesians through their education and healthcare programs. The organizations work together to promote peacebuilding and help to alleviate some of the environmental challenges Indonesia faces. They are important institutions to help promote Islamic cultural identity through their programs and collaborations with other organizations. While tackling issues of globalization, they enhance Islamic values and promote well-being and peace.



Meeting with Dr. Syamsuddin

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