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INTRODUCTION

Corruption in Indonesia has been terrible lately. The recent data placed Indonesia as one of the nation which has a high corruption in Asia and in the world. According to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2013 released by International Transparency, Indonesia ranked 114 from 177 countries surveyed with a score of 32. ASEAN countries like Singapore ranked 5, Malaysia ranked 53, and Brunei Darussalam ranked 38. However, This Indonesian rank was slightly better than in 2012. In 2012, Indonesia ranked 118 from 176 countries. It can be concluded that corruption in Indonesia is so complicated and at dangerous level. Corruption happens not only at bureaucracy sector but also at almost life’s entire sector. The fact indicated that corruption involved many institutions, at not only seat of government as well at local government such as institution of executive, legislative, judicative, and public figures.

Among the cases is mega corruption scandal of Century Bank that allegedly involving the ruling elite in Indonesia. Other cases are corruption that allegedly involving former chairman of the Audit Board, Hadi Purnomo. In addition, there are some corruption cases likes a corruption involving Akil Mochtar (former chairman of the Constitutional Court), Ratu Atut Chosiyah (former governor of Banten), and Rudi Rubiandini (former chairman of the Special Task Force for Upstream Oil and Gas Business Activities). Much earlier, there are many other corruption cases like Hambalang project corruption involving Muhammad Nazaruddin (former treasurer of the ruling Democratic Party), and Andi Malarangeng (former minister of Youth and Sports).

Recently, corruption also involves former minister of Religious Affairs, Surya Dharma Ali. Corruption in the Ministry of Religious Affair is a tragedy. The institution that should be moral guard even became a home for stealing government’s mone y. In addition, the institution was seated by ‘religious scholars’ who claim to have religion. Explaining above showed that state and also religion is powerless to face corruption.¹ This also shows that intellectual capacity does not have a correlation positively to one’s moral integrity.

However, corruption is not new phenomena in Indonesia. History of corruption in Indonesia is as old as this nation. The phenomena of corruption have become a tradition. The corruptor does not have a sense of embarrassing to steal people’s money. Legal remedy is not able to stop the corruption. The

fact indicated that all law institutions are passively to catch the corruptors. Moreover, most of them are involved in conspiracy with the corruptors. They have cooperated orderly to do this proscribed behavior. It is such a terrible thing that corruption becomes a crucial and never-ending problem in this nation.

Many people believe that religion still has moral force. Its existence is so significant to vote values of truth. Religion can give values and meaning for human life. The problem around religion is not relied on religion itself but religion in the relation of human in real life. In other word, human is as subject of religion, so that he has ability to manage it. In this context, the religious leaders are so important because they have ‘authority’ and access to teach divinity values for their flock. Sociologically, Indonesian Moslem society, which is communal and paternalistic, recognized the existence of ulama figure. Here, it seems they are so regarded and to be a good model for their flock.

It should be known that ulama are product of education. Hence, education can be instrument to internalize good model values to create anti-corruption mental for students. Education itself could be not separated from a system that is implemented, including pesantren. To produce anti-corruption students, they would become ulama caring to eradicate corruption in the future. Therefore, pesantren has to be education system that commit to corruption matters. Based on the academic reason, we have to try repositioning the ulama role to its ‘khittah’ (return to genuine roles). ‘Khittah’ is a try to reposition ulama role as one of moral force of nation to preach truth values including eradicating corruption.

**THE ROLE OF ULAMA IN ERADICATING CORRUPTION**

As known, Indonesian Moslem still admits ulama as influential figures that have a strong effect in the society. Ulama role is hoped to be ‘microphone’ that speaking anti-corruption loudly. It can be seen from social fact of Indonesia Moslem that is inclined to be mechanistic. Mechanic consciousness is based on ‘collective consciousness’ which refers to totality of beliefs and collective sentiments at the same society. Mechanistic society can be illustrated as communal solidarity recognizing a certain figure (ulama) as charismatic figure. Ulama with his all authority are able to courage and take mobilization his follower. For instance, history recorded that in 1859, Haji Rifai, ulama from Pekalongan, Central Java, with his charisma is able to gather his followers to

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rebel colonial. Ulama become deeply rooted in society and grow on midst of its community. With his popularity, it is possible that Islamic values would be accepted and absorbed by public. Here, ulama role is as cultural brokers. His capacity and access to public sphere is possibly to be an effective way to reduce social pathology likes corruption.

Ulama role can be one of alternative to eradicate corruption. According to Ikhwan Mushoefaa, one of components, which have important role to build up social movement to eradicate corruption, is religious leaders that have central role in society. The engagement of ulama in eradicating corruption gives motivation and a strong encouragement to the society to participate it.

Azyumardi Azra said that corruption is a behavior opposed to fairness (al-‘adalah), accountability (al-amanah), and responsibility. Corruption with its negative side which makes a distortion to nation’s life and society can be categorized as fasad (destructive act in the earth), and cursed by God. Khamami Zada shouts out to Moslem to have jihad against corruption. According to him, jihad against corruption is needed in the form of responsibility to be religious people.

However, corruption in Indonesia has become a culture. It happens because Indonesian society has a character of permissive to moral deviations. Therefore, corruption is as usual problem that is disgraced in society from elite of government until common people. From the past up to now, the elite of government has been inclined to corrupt because his business is just power itself. Actually, the elite of government must not have a smart and diligent professional worker. Although he does not get salary, he still accepts the political power. He thinks that it will yield a wealthy for himself.

If corruption in Indonesia has been a custom and thoroughly inculcated in Indonesian’s back mind culturally. This phenomenon, however, cannot be separated from some values in society. In this case, ulama role is so significant to keep moral values in society. Nevertheless, take a look back, it had tendency that ulama did not have capability to respond their flock problems. It indicated

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5 Dawam Raharjo, Pesantren dan Pembaharuan (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1982).
6 Ahmad Najib Burhani, Islam Dinamik: Menggugat Peran Agama Membongkar Doktrin yang Membatui (Jakarta: Kompas, 2001), 149.
that their folk ignored their saying. Religious advice and fatwa of ulama are admitted as not important and stale to their flock. Their advices are told in rigidity and normative-doctrinaire. In other word, it is not down to earth. For instance, many ulama at mosque, majlis ta’lim (religious meeting), and some forums preach that thief, drunkard, gambler was big sin and forbidden to Muslim. They would be punished in the hell. However, they never explained the social implications from the deeds.

Anyway, ulama are a product from education system. In this case, education system, which results ulama, is pesantren. Pesantren is the oldest Islamic education institution, particularly at Java. The Dutch Colonial in 1831 had reported that the native institution of Javanese recorded Islamic institution likes pesantren achieved 1.853.11 Lately, pesantren has still existed although many other education systems are arising. Pesantren continually creates influential figures in society. Even though it has succeeded of producing ulama, it cannot respond their flock’s problems in Indonesia including corruption.

Discussing ulama role concerning to eradicate corruption as if it found the momentum when government with the rules and the law apparatus are not able to eradicate corruption. Many people are doubtful about the government’s policies, which are not capable to catch the corruptor. In Indonesian opinions, talk that corruption occurred overwhelmingly was rooting on degradation of nation morality. Therefore, it is hoping that the society desires attendance of moral preacher that can give enlightenment and solution to the corruption problem. One of these figures is ulama. Indonesian Moslem society believes that ulama are one of figure which preaches moral values amid society.

Corruption is a social disease, which is destroying the social life order. It hampers the development of nation. Because of the acutely complex corruption, the development’s hope is cutting it off on the way. Ironically, the corruption is to be such kind of ‘art of life’. It is saying so since the corruptors are so enjoyable to commit corruption as if they are not guilty and sin. Corruption is addressed to short cut to collect much money.

Kartini Kartono explains that corruption is a product resulted from group’s view, which takes money as the truth standard and absolute power. The implication is that corruptors and corrupted politicians can freely enter in bureaucracy. They place a high social status in public spaces.12 Corruption can

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be categorized as social pathology because it is criminal opposed to goodness norm, morality, and law.

In the context of Islamic teaching, corruption is a behavior opposed to *al-ʿadalah* (fairness), *al-amanah* (accountability), *insaniyyah* (humanity), and *riʿayah* (responsibility). The bad effect of corruption leads to the nation and society in disorder. This deed can be categorized as *fasad* (damage) on the earth and cursed deed. *al-fasad* is all of behaviors causing destruction of society and life such as making terror that make people frightened, kill, and take someone’s property. Therefore, pertinent to notion above, corruption is as bad and wicked as terrorism. This can be categorized to have *jinayah kubra* (the high crime).¹³

Corruption that classified as extra ordinary crime have created social problem. This is disturbing, harming, and damaging many people, which makes social integration worse. It is possible happening when law institution is so powerless to face corruption. It causes to the society is more untrustworthy to the dignity of law institution and it is possible to them to solve the problem on their own way. This can happen because they are distrust.

Description about corruption above seems difficult to eradicate. Many cases of corruption are unsolved. The corruption likes ‘vicious circle’, which is dilemmatic. Legal remedy is not able to catch the corruptor although many rules are produced and many government and non-government institutions like KPK (Commission for Eradicating Corruption) and ICW (Indonesian Corruption Watch) are established. The corruptors in bureaucracy especially elites, still enjoy freely with their wealthy. No wondering, they can go anywhere they want likes going abroad for shopping or just hanging out.

The acute corruption has united in state structure. It has spread up extremely on social institution and social life. Of course, all societies have to be involved to solve this problem. The eradication of corruption will not be successful if many societies do not support it. One of component, which has a strategic role to build anti-corruption movement, is religious leaders. They are eligible to motivate and courage their followers to participate in eradicating corruption.

Masykuri Abdillah said that based on Islamic doctrine, ulama have a high position and important role in people life. It is the implementation of his role as a descendant of prophet. In other word, this role is ‘*amār maʿrūf nahiy munkar*, which has some duties. *First*, educating people both religious sciences and other sciences. *Second*, taking a control to the society. *Third*, solving problems

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in society. *Fourth*, being agent of social change. This role covers up in social, culture, economic and politic sphere.\(^{14}\)

Abd. A’la stated that Al-Qur’an mentioned four significant roles for ulama. *First*, sending messages of the prophets that there is on al-Qur’an. It is explicitly stated on al-Maidah: 67, “Hi, the messenger! Give a message what you get from your God”. *Second*, describing religious doctrines for humankind. It can see on al-Qur’an al-Nahl: 44, “And We down holy book in order that you could explain to people”. *Third*, solving problems in society. It is explicitly stated in al-Baqarah: 213, “and God down with them a holy book truly in order to solve problems they dispute”. *Fourth*, giving a good model of behavior as explained in a Hadith that Aisyah was saying that what he deed is from al-Qur’an. Therefore, ulama are heirs of the prophets so that they have followed what prophet did. Their role is to guide and give a way in the form of religious values and to overcome the disputes and social problem around society. In other words, ulama have a role to spread up *ma’ruf* (good behavior) and to get rid of *munkar* (bad behavior) through Islamic, humanistic, non-violence, wisdom, persuasive, and dialogist way.\(^{15}\)

In Indonesian history, it can be said that the ulama role is so important. Ulama played an important role in political processes in the state that constituted pre-colonial and colonial Indonesia. In the pre-colonial era, ulama participated in decision making in the sultanates of Aceh, Palembang, Mataram, and Sambas. In the colonial era, some ulama served the government, while others devoted themselves to education and reform. Moreover, ulama also were actively involved in rebel movements or, later, in the struggle for national independence.\(^{16}\) Ulama were viewed as a threat for the Dutch. Raffles, as quoted Zamakhshyari Dhoefier, *kyai* was proved to commit a rebellion. He saw that *kyai* was holy person and have a mysterious power. Therefore, *kyai* is regarded so that he has an important position in society. These influences have raised rebellion movement to the Dutch.\(^{17}\) Moreover, Snouck Hurgonje as quoted by Nourouzzaman Shiddiqi, stigmatizes ulama as a trouble makers.\(^{18}\)


\(^{15}\) Abd. A’la, *Melampaui Dialog Agama*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 2002), 89.


However, ulama role right now has dimmed the light and lost his influence. Ulama still concerns on ‘ubudiyah than mu’amalah matters. They would response at ikhtilafiyah (al-masa’il fiqhiyyah; the difference of opinion in fiqh) than social humanity problems. For instance, ulama would be frantic when seeing the activity of deviant groups, but most ulama are tend to be silence when corruption case appears or illegal logging case happens. In the relation of corruption, they have faced many obstacles both internally and externally.

Internal factor covers up: First, education system and religious teaching which are not adaptable in responding the progressive times. It can be seen in the curriculum of various pesantrens, which are out of date in implementing the material of education. For instance, Uqud al-Lijain, a book consisting gender relation and tend to be patriarchy, lately still has been used in many pesantrens whereas there will be attempt to reconstruct on that book. Of course, the teaching material is contrary to the progressive times.

Second, this education system would produce the static ulama. In this context, ulama focused on normative-doctrine religious teaching that tend to be prescriptive (halal-haram oriented) than applicative religious teaching. M. Quraish Shihab underlined that ulama should be study not only fiqh, tafsir, hadist, memorized and static insight but also the comprehensive Islamic studies and the sustaining knowledge to understand society progress. Asghar Ali Engineer said that ulama wrote many books of ritual and spent many times to examine furu’iyyah in syari’at (Islamic law) and reduce the meaning Islam to make social justice for people.

Meanwhile external factors comprise. First, constricting ulama role by the authority. Depolitization, cooptation, and even a systematically repressive to ulama have reduced their roles as if they were an adviser and moral guidance in one side, and the other side as legitimator of government. It is seen the phenomena of most official visiting to the many pesantrens in the time of public election campaign. The aim is just to get ulama endorsement so that the vote would be rising.

Hairus Salim categorizes two patterns of relation between ulama and government; first, the government’s ulama mean that ulama support the government policies. In other word, these ulama have a role as assistance of government. These ulama are affiliated to the MUI (the Council of Indonesian Ulama). Their activity is usually published by mass media massively. It is shown

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when economic crisis in 1998 occurred. At that time, most ulama was donating golds, exchanging dollar, having a meeting with huge mass to pray. The point is that ulama generally believe that crisis in Indonesia was caused by strange intervention which was conspiring to break up government, not Indonesian government’s mistake. Second, independent ulama mean that they have been yielding critics and correction to the government policies through *khutbah Jum’at* (preach on Friday), and religious teaching. This type consists of *mubaligh*, *dai*, and *kyai*. It seems clearly, when K.H Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) refused to join ICMI (the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) and he choose to join *Forum Demokrasi* (Democracy Forum). He had a view that ICMI was government tool.

However, this critics and independent often is stifled the authority. A various rules proposed by government to press their activities likes a license for *mubaligh* (preacher), controlling the material of preaching, sensor of record cassette and papers, controlling performance in public sphere such as radio or TV, and so on. Due to that policy, these ulama reduce gradually and even disappear. Moreover, they are jailed into prison. When ulama became a government’s body, they would be trapped into “insult” of power. Whereas the critically independent ulama would not able to do most if their space were prohibited. Therefore, the function of ulama to yield morality would be mission impossible.

Second, ulama are difficult to affect the public policy. It would be a common when ulama did not have a role since their activities to spread up morality were limited. No wondering that many ulama down to political practice, but their idealism are usually reduced when facing a political interest. Some political parties are steered by ulama, which struggle to get a power so that they ignore their constituent.

Actually, ulama have power to contribute in eradicating corruption. Besides they have a capability in religion notion, they also have influences to the society. Therefore, it is easy thing for them to conduct the messages, but the fact shows that ulama are not optimal to eradicate corruption. They have yielded a truth include eradicating corruption, yet they are not strict as if the wind blew. A few ulama have really concerned on corruption problem. It indicated that anti-corruption movement stirred by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyyah is just only conducted on elite’ structural level. Unfortunately, the grass root is not responding to the movement. Related to this point, M. Machasin said that:

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22 Ibid., 33-34.
"The anti-corruption coalition declared by Muhammadiyah and NU seems to represent a commitment to the moral message of Islam. However, nothing significant has been done so far in terms of real work. One thing is clear, but not easy to prove, that at a time of you can do whatever you want to do anyone — including those who are supposed to be clean can take part in corruption."  

**RECONSTRUCTING PESANTREN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Take a look back; ulama role would be not optimal because the education system of pesantren was not accommodated on corruption problem clearly. Study on corruption in pesantren is just a little part of all subjects given, and this is secondary subject. Corruption is not comprehensive to discuss when kyai explains fiqh subject about thief (sariqah). There is no a specific study regarding corruption. However, study on corruption implicitly is taught at pesantren and is introduced informally. Besides that, there is neither specific study on corruption nor institutional or study forum which committed to corruption problem. It indicated that pesantren did not concern on responding corruption problem in state context.

Because education model at pesantren salaf (traditional pesantren) is more focusing on memorized system so that it does not create a critical and creative thought and in turn, it will be an excessive dogmatism. Teaching learning at pesantren is inclined to be verbalism. It can be seen on sorogan and bandongan method. Therefore, when pesantren faced on social problem likes corruption, they are not too responsive. Based on the condition above, it is needed to reconstruct pesantren education system. Considering that kyai (ulama) role is so central and dominant in Pesantren, ulama are insisted to reconstruct their pesantren education system.

There are some steps that able to be done to implement the idea. First, teaching anti-corruption education in pesantren. This step done by giving more

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26 Sorogan method is a method which santri read a *kitab kuning* (teaching book) head to kyai. When his reading has a mistake, kyai will correct it. Zamakhshyari Dhofer, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi…*, p. 28-29. Bandongan method means that a number of santri listen their kyai who reads, interprets, and explains the content of *kitab kuning*. Each santri concerns on his *kitab kuning* and takes a note both meaning and explaining regarding difficult words and explanations. M. Bahri Ghazali, *Pendidikan Pesantren Berwawasan Lingkungan: Kasus Pondok Pesantren An-Nuqayah Guluk-Guluk Sumenep Madura* (Jakarta: Pedoman Ilmu Jaya, 2001), 22.
portions about danger of study of corruption, either time allocation or material. The materials of anti-corruption education can be taken from *kitab kuning* and other references. Second, implementing critical-transformative methods in learning. This does not mean that pesantrens are neglecting their learning model. *Sorogan* and *bandongan* methods could be still implemented in pesantren. Third, establishing a forum or institution concerning on corruption matter. This forum is established continually on various activities such as having a discussion for *santri*, publishing bulletin or scientific journal, and other step strategies. Fourth, building a network with external especially stakeholders and decision makers like KPK, ICW, and other institutions which concerned with combating corruption. This is so urgent since eradicating corruption cannot stop on discourse and teaching learning at pesantren, but it is necessary to follow up on policy area in order that it is optimal and efficient. In this context, ulama are not only as moral leader and as religious teacher but also as agent of social change concerning contemporary issues like social justice, democracy, humanity, environment, and so forth. In contemporary era, ulama have many responsibilities and their role become so heavy. Therefore, ulama should understand scientific knowledge in order that they are able to participate actively in solving nation problems including corruption. Thus, they will always be able to answer the challenges of modernity.

**CONCLUSION**

From the discussion above, there are some points to conclude. They are as follows: First, people view ulama as figures which have moral-religion integrity. With their spirituality, ulama would present as religious leader, which have a huge influence at society. No wondering that when Indonesian society has an acute problem, they would ask to ulama to participate to solve the nation problem includes corruption. Second, there are two factors causing ulama role are not optimal in eradicating corruption; internal and external factor. Internal factor consists of education system and religious teaching which does not respond the progressive times. Therefore, it results a conservative ulama. External factor consists of pressing the ulama space comprised depolitisation, cooptation, and even systematic repression to the ulama, which have reduced their role are just adviser or moral guide in one sense, and legitimized government policies in other sense. The other factor is there are no accesses to conduct public policy. Third, pesantren education model generally is inclined to be cognitive-verbalism and exclusive so that critical, creative, and transformative thought will be dull. Fourth, it is the right time to ulama to reconstruct pesantren education system with many strategies in the way of teaching anti-corruption education on pesantren,
implementing critical-transformative methods in learning, presenting new strategies in learning, establishing a forum or institution regarding corruption matters as well builds up network with external sides especially those whom are the stakeholders and decision makers. Besides, ulama should understand scientific knowledge in order that they are able to participate actively in solving nation problems including corruption.

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