The cinematic Santri : Youth culture, tradition and technology in Muslim Indonesia

Nuril Huda, A.

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Author: Nuril Huda, A.
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PhD Proposition

Ahmad Nuril Huda

1. The uptake of cinema by the santri is undoubtedly facilitated by the advance of technology. Yet, how they come to it, and the array of cinematic expressions that they are concerned with, are all inflected by their personal desires, ideological affiliations, historical experience, and socio-political and economic backgrounds.
2. Despite the rising popularity of cinema among the santri, I would still argue that film practices are seen as peripheral by a majority of NU-santri associates, especially its majority of "conservative" elites.
3. What is Islamic about film vis-à-vis a Muslim public is not that it is Islamic in the first place. Rather it is made Islamic through the negotiations that converge around it, involving diverse value regimes, whether political, economic, or ideological, that are embedded in the production process, circulation and consumption of a given film.
4. Images of Islam on screen can become a contested arena for the cultivation of religious selves where the relation of power among Muslim groups of different interests and ideologies are played out.
5. Young Muslims in any part of the world, just like young people elsewhere, have the conviction that they are part of the global world. Yet, in practice, their interpretation of this global world is strongly influenced by the social environment in which they live as it also is by their cultural background, religious affiliation, social class and economic well-being.
6. The importance given by santri to tradition, evident in the ways they deal with modernity, Islamic texts and the discursive practices that emerge from these, is a means through which the santri, more generally, justify and give meaning to the dynamics of their everyday lives.
7. Any study about Muslim santri should bear in mind that being a pious Muslim does not necessarily make him or her feel any more Islamic than other Muslims. This is because they do not aspire to a life that is exclusively religious in nature.
8. The secular is so inextricably linked to every aspect of religious life hat it becomes part of how human beings experience their religiosity. In other words, conceptions of the secular and the religious, and the boundaries drawn between them, are continually produced and reproduced by religious persons.
9. It is not mere technology that matters to society but the manners in which material forms of technology may help a society to (re)formulate its understanding of being human.
10. In a social-religious setting that is wholly patriarchal, popular culture is a fertile ground where understanding of Muslim female authority may flourish.