# Signifying Surabaya "Green and Clean" by Students of Urban Islamic Boarding Schools

# (Pemaknaan Surabaya "Green and Clean" oleh Santri Pesantren Kota)

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#### **Abstrak**

Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mendiskusikan cara santri atau masyarakat pesantren di kota besar memaknai "Green and Clean", slogan terkenal di Surabaya dalam upaya menghijaukan dan membersihkan Surabaya, serta untuk mengetahui cara mereka mengkonstruksi makna lingkungan. Berbeda dengan masyarakat pedesaan atau di daerah terpencil, pesantren perkotaan memiliki akses yang lebih luas ke media sehingga mereka lebih terpajan pada fenomena dan tren perkotaan. Data diperoleh melalui Focus Group Discussion (FGD) pada para santri pondok pesantren di Surabaya yang direkrut dengan teknik snowball sampling. Selain itu, peneliti juga melakukan wawancara kepada para pengasuh beberapa pondok pesantren. Hasil FGD dan wawancara menunjukkan berbagai praktik 'hijau' oleh santri dalam dan di luar pesantren berdasarkan peran mereka sebagai santri. Ulama atau Kiai, sebagai pusat pesantren, menanggapi isu 'hijau' dan memberikan dukungan kepada para santrinya dalam bentuk fatwa (hukum Islam yang dikeluarkan oleh Ulama) atau bentuk lainnya, seperti menyediakan media atau sarana lain untuk santri untuk mengekspresikan ide-ide 'hijau' mereka. Lingkungan bagi sebagian santri tidak hanya sekedar tempat tinggal tetapi juga tempat mendapatkan pahala. Kesimpulan yang bisa ditarik dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa santri dan pondok pesantren menyelaraskan ajaran agama Islam mengenai kebersihan dengan agenda "Green and Clean" untuk mendukung atau memberikan justifikasi kepada program kebersihan Pemerintah Kota Surabaya.

Kata kunci: ajaran agama, "Green and Clean", lingkungan, pesantren

#### **Abstract**

The paper aims to examine the way *santri* (student) communities in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in urban setting signify "Green and Clean", the famous slogan in Surabaya in referring to efforts of protecting the environment. Different from Islamic boarding schools in villages or remote areas, those in a big city like Surabaya have wider access to media and are thus more sensitized to urban phenomena and trends. The data were collected from a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in late 2011 attended by students of Islamic boarding schools in Surabaya recruited via snowball sampling. In addition, semi-structured interviews were also conducted to some Muslim clerics who lead and manage *pesantren*. The FGD and interviews revealed various 'green' consumption practices by the *santri* inside and outside the *pesantren* based on their roles as Islamic students. The *Kiai* or Muslim clerics, as the centre of *pesantren*, responded to the 'green' issue and provided support in the form of *fatwas* (Islamic jurisprudence issued by ulema) or any other forms, such as providing media or other means for the students (*santri*) to express their 'green' ideas. For a number of students, the environment does not only mean a place of living but also a place to gain rewards from God. The study concludes that students and Islamic boarding schools use Islamic values and teaching regarding cleanliness to support or justify the city government's program of "Green and Clean".

Keywords: environment, "Green and Clean", Islamic boarding school, religious teaching

#### INTRODUCTION

There are many Islamic Boarding Schools (pesantren) existing not only in rural areas but also in urban areas established by Muslim religious leaders and even local government to spread Islamic education. As an Islamic institution, pesantren has five characteristics: 1) a building for santri (students) to stay, 2) a mosque, 3) Islamic classic texts called as Kitab Kuning (yellow books), 4) santri or muslim students, and 5) Kiai (Muslim cleric) or the head of pesantren (Kementrian Agama Republik Indonesia 2012). Therefore, Kiai as the owner of pesantren, provides place for santri to live and stay inside to make it easier for them to study as the learning activities are nearly as long as 18 hours. It is usual for santri to live in pesantren for years to study about Islam. In fact, the percentage of students staying in pesantren in Indonesia is 79,93% or about 3.004.807 students (Kementrian Agama Republik Indonesia 2012:72). It is thus not surprising that many students may consider pesantren as their second home.

In Surabaya, there is about 81 Islamic boarding schools spread in various districts (Dinas Sosial Kota Surabaya 2012). Unlike those located in villages, *pesantren* located in big cities like Surabaya face more environmental issues than their rural counterparts, such as limited space as well as water and air pollutions caused by the increasing number of vehicles and factories from time to time. Therefore, it is interesting to find out how students of Islamic boarding schools in urban setting respond to such issues, especially since they are familiar with Islamic teachings regarding cleanliness and have wider access to the media. Not to mention the fact that they live in Surabaya, a city famous for its "Green and Clean" program to improve the quality of the environment. This paper, more specifically, seeks to understand how students of Islamic Boarding schools signify the "Green and Clean" program and construct the meaning of the environment.

Previous studies on *pesantren* and cleanliness mostly focus on students' responses on cases of skin diseases or scabies (Badri 2007; Ma'rufi, Soedjajadi and Notobroto 2005; Nugraheni and Maliya 2012). Students' responses on "Green and Clean" program and its meanings to students living in *pesantren* are still underexplored. Studies on Surabaya "Green and Clean" are also usually done within the framework of environmental studies (for example, Premakumura et al. 2011; Tahir et al. 2012). Examining environmental issues under the framework of the humanities may give insights since since the problems are largely caused by human actions and behaviors (Barry 2007:9). As religious institutions are rarely discussed in relation to environmental awareness, this study is expected to provide understanding on the efforts made by Islamic boarding schools in supporting the "Green and Clean" program by Surabaya municipality.

Pesantren which located in urban area like in Surabaya involve in the process of urban development directly and indirectly. The geographical position gives many advantages for *pesantren* communities to get access such as to get economic benefits, educational access, and information and technology in which the *Kiais* and *santri* most of them are well educated. On the other hand, they face environmental problems as the common crisis among urban people such as water and air pollution, limited trees and lands, and the increasing of climate in Surabaya. Since the environmental

problems become more serious in urban area in recent times, *pesantren* as the muslim community always adjust to respond the environmental problems. Hence, *pesantren* must answer the problems of environmental in Surabaya by empowering the awareness among *santri* to reduce pollution in the city (Wasid 2007). The adjustment is done by involving to the real actions of reducing environmental crisis happens in urban area. They consume by using and acquiring (Gunn 2008) the famous slogan in Surabaya, "Green and Clean".

Like many cities around the world which have the same environmental problems (Schwela and Zali 2005:214), Surabaya faces environmental problems as the consequence of massive development such as settlements, factories, and the increasing of vehicles as the impact of the population increasing. Surabaya grows to be a big city and urban in Indonesia since its population is increasing from time to time. Forman categorizes city with range of population over 250,000 to over 10 million population; and Surabaya also called as Metropolitan area because of the amount of the population (Gottdiener and Budd 2005:17). Surabaya, the second biggest city in Indonesia, has much challenging related to environmental problems as the consequence of the growth from time to time. The growth of population (now the population of Surabaya is 3 to 4 million people, see the data) and economy carry on many problems such as the limited lands, water and air pollution because of increasing vehicles, the changing of lands from green area becomes new settlements and factories. These problems lead the government of Surabaya to solve the serious problems to get better life for their people. As a big city, there are many problems in Surabaya related to the environmental issues like other big cities in the world. The problems in the city related to environmental problems caused by interrelated problems such as the massive housing, the increase of vehicles and the development of factories.

Since 2000, the government of Surabaya has collaborated with Jawa Pos, the most outstanding newspaper in Surabaya, initiating the program of Surabaya "Green and Clean". This program is an effort to reduce the environmental problems in Surabaya. "Green and Clean" hence becomes a collective symbols means that a symbol to unify Surabaya people to preserve open place for planting trees in Surabaya. Fascinatingly, the program spread around the city in which this makes the people of Surabaya consume it by supporting through actions and behaviors. The competition of clean kampong is held every year to make Surabaya is green by planting trees in kampong and streets. The competition also spread to offices and companies in Surabaya to be "Green and Clean" in their surroundings. In Surabaya we can find many billboards in streets to show the intention of Surabaya government to reduce the impact of environmental problems. This is necessary since Surabaya people face more urban problems than their rural counterparts.

The geographic position gives big opportunity to *Kiai*/ulema as the owner of *pesantren* as well as the *santri* to get higher education. Many *Kiai*/ulema are university graduated and the *santri* are university students such as in IAIN Sunan Ampel and other public universities. Therefore, it is common that many *pesantren* in Surabaya are close to educational institutions. *Pesantren* surround the educational institutions are

advantageous for both, *Kiai*/ulema and *santri*. For *santri*, live in *pesantren* provide not only cheaper boarding house than out of *pesantren* but also offer additional Islamic knowledge for *santri* taught by the *Kiai*/ulema in the *pesantren*.

#### **METHOD**

To serve the purpose of this study, the methodological framework used in this research was qualitative approach. As Jackson puts it, "qualitative research emphasizes verbal descriptions and explanations of human behavior" (1995:17). Since this study did not seek to provide generalization which require representative samples, this study focused instead on "careful and detailed descriptions of social practices in an attempt to understand how the participants experience and explain their own world." (Jackson 1995:17). This research is thus interpretive in nature, which stresses the importance of interpretation individuals put on their actions and the way they understand actions of others (Jackson 1995:9). In this case, the individuals were the students of Islamic boarding schools who interpreted "Green and Clean" program in their own environment and the way they made sense their lives in relation to the environment.

The tool used to collect data was Focus Group Discussion. In so doing, the research recruited participants via snowball technique. Based on the information provided by Social Welfare Department of Surabaya municipality, there are actually 81 pesantren or Islamic boarding schools (Dinas Sosial Kota Surabaya 2012). Since the official site did not provide data on contact numbers, it was difficult to reach each pesantren to recruit research participants. Alternatively, I used my personal contacts for initial approach and I asked them to provide names of friends or acquaintances who were studying and residing in *pesantren*. There was no specific criteria in recruiting informants except that they should be adult (18 years and up). On the one hand, the implication of this limitation was that the students recruited were only university/ college students. This, on the other hand, would give benefit since university students were expected to be more open to discussions. There were 13 participants recruited (with age ranging from 18-23 years old) who attended the FGD conducted in a room in State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya on 3 November 2011. The venue was chosen because the majority of students participating went to this university. Since the data from the FGD was saturated, there was no additional FGD conducted.

In addition to the FGD, I conducted semi-structured interviews with two Muslim clerics (*Kiai*), who responded to my request for interviews. The interviews were conducted in their *pesantren* on 12-15 December 2011. The data retrieved from the FGD and the interviews were then coded and analyzed.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### What Urban Pesantren Do

There are several concepts and actions which are done by *pesantren* in Surabaya inside and outside. Therefore, the paper explores how *pesantren* in urban areas construct their mind and actions responding the environmental issues in big city which more complex than those *pesantren* in rural areas. *Pesantren* usually have many actions and ideas to answer the challenging of environmental problems in big city.

Pesantren as the institution of Islamic education always adjust to the current issues and the social changing surround them such as environmental issues. They always try to adopt and respond in facing social changes, especially in the era of globalization and in the age of post-modernity. This can be seen through the development of pesantren in Surabaya when many *Kiais* as the central figure develop their *pesantren* into well informed and well educated among santri. In some pesantren affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama, one of the biggest Muslim organizations in Indonesia), they believe that it is their responsibility to participate and contribute to the environmental problems (Nahdlatul Ulama 2013). The respond of *pesantren* to the environmental problems can be explained by social theory since they evolve their involvement in reducing environmental crisis such as global warming, air and water pollution as the impact increasing vehicles and developing settlements and factories in big cities, one of them is Surabaya as the main concern in this article, in Indonesia (Barry 2007:6-7). Kiai and ulema as the owner of pesantren and followed by their santri do many efforts to control the impacts of environmental problems actively. They explore from the basic Islamic jurisprudence *Al-Qur'an* and *Hadist* related to environmental things to issue the *fatwa* to reduce the environmental crisis.

*Pesantren* in Indonesia, especially those affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in this case, even show their consistency to respond and evolve to answer the problems that appear in the society. It can be seen from the attention among *Kiai*/ulema in NU to give guidance for their followers to be a good muslims as well as *santri* in responding environmental issues. The *Kiai*/ulema even held a deep discussion among *Kiai* in NU communities or "Bahsul Masail" as the highest dialogue among *Kiai* in NU to solve environmental issues (Said 2006). They realize that environmental issues as global issues nowadays are very important to be solved.

Through the deep discussion among *Kiais*/ulema in *Bahsul Masail* in 1994 at Cipasung Tasikmalaya West Java (Said 2006:658-666), they realize that all people now face environmental problems and it becomes global issues which are important to be reduced. For the *Kiai* and ulema, environmental problems are not only influential for economic and political aspects but also for religious practices because caring environment means save for ritual practices. As the religious leaders in society, *Kiai* and ulema are familiar with the holy Al-Qur'an so that they always refer to the holy Qur'an verse in answering environmental issues such as Surah Hud 61, Surah Ar-Rum 41, Surah Ali-Imran 191, Surah Qaf 9-11, Surah Abasa 24-32, Surah Baqarah 205, and Surah Al-A'raf 85. Most verses are talking about the command from God to not to break environment and how to preserve it.

The *Kiais* and Ulemas even strengthen their *fatwa* to make green the earth by quoting the Prophet Muhammad's statement, "At the end of the day, the lucky people are those who plant trees because the God will bless them for the practice," (Said 2006: 662). By the Qur'an and Hadist above as the basic principle for all muslims, *Kiai* and Ulema issued several recommendations: environmental conservation is a mandatory for all muslims, the development of the country which are done by government should be environmental friendly, *Kiai* and Ulema should provide enlightenment to

all people about environmental care in their sermons, and all people should not use more than they need to reduce the effect of environmental problems.

Interestingly, NU issued *fatwa* to preserve environmental problems in 2007 as follow up *fatwa* in Muktamar (the highest conference in NU community) in Cipasung in 1994. This *fatwa* strengthens the decision before and shows how NU and *pesantren* pay more attention to the environmental care. *Kiai* and ulema within NU see that Indonesia faces environmental crisis as the impact of development which ignoring the environmental aspects. Therefore, the *fatwa* contains the mandatory to all elements in Indonesia to preserve the environmenta.

NU's *Kiai* Sahal Mahfud, NU's leader and the owner of big *pesantren*, even moves ahead by issuing new Islamic jurisprudence called *fiqh* among muslims as the attempt to solve the environmental crisis in Indonesia. Through *Social Fiqh* as new trend in Islamic law, he categorizes the efforts of environmental preserving as social responsibility for every muslim inside and outside *pesantren* (Mahfudz 1994:371). In his arguments, *pesantren* can do two exertions in preserving environmental problems: by project and by motivation. Motivating *santri* is more important because it has long effect to the *santri'* awareness. Next, we can also see the other attempts of ulema in Surabaya in constructing environmental awareness through their sermons in Friday prayers. Referring to attitudes of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims should not cut trees and even all Muslims should plant trees because it is recorded as giving practice by God.

Pesantren hence have many concepts about how to protect environment from destructions caused by the global warming based on their Islamic laws and values. They realize that environmental problems become common issue nowadays in which it is because not only many media report it massively through TV or newspaper but also from the real condition they see and face in their daily life. The member of Islamic Boarding of State Institution for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Sunan Ampel which has 300 hundred *santri*, Wasid K, states, "Pesantren has many rich concepts about environmental issues because it is written in holy Qur'an, hadist and Islamic books references that we studied intensively among Kiais and santri" (Wasid 2011).

Almost all *pesantren* in Surabaya show their involvement to participate the activity of environmental movements. *Santri* in Surabaya are aware that the issue of global warming becomes more and more important nowadays since they do not only read and watch many media and advertisement of "Green and Clean" done by Surabaya government but also feel the impact directly. They face the environmental problems in daily life since they stay and live in *Pesantren* as their boarding house while studying at school or universities near the *pesantren*. In their daily life in *pesantren* they meet several problems in Surabaya, such as hot weather, limited water, air pollution, and limited lands.

Through the interview with many *santri* in Surabaya, most all *santri* know the slogan of "Green and Clean" as the famous slogan of Surabaya and support it very much. Fajar Herviyati, a *santri* of *pesantren* Nurul Falah, stated, "I know the slogan of

"Green and Clean" Surabaya from the billboard in the streets. It is very good because Surabaya is a hot city. Therefore, I hope it will be done well to make Surabaya to be a beautiful city" (Herviyati 2011). Another *santri* of *pesantren* Al-Jihad said, "We should support the program to care our environment by planting trees in *pesantren* we live" (Primadani 2011).

Santri in Surabaya find the real problems of environmental crisis since they live in very small room as the consequence of limited lands in Surabaya. They live together with their friends in one room containing ten to twenty santri in which this makes them feel uncomfortable because of hot weather. One of santri in pesantren Amanatul Ummah, Robit Arijuddin stated, "We live in a small room with twenty friends. As a santri it is not a big problem to live in hot weather because it is part of the struggle as muslim student" (Arijuddin 2011). At the same tone, a female santri of pesantren An-Nuriyah namely Nur Hasanah says "We live in one room with 6x7 meters containing ten to fifteen santri. So you can imagine how we live in hot condition. That is why we always keep our pesantren clean and planting trees surrounding it" (Hasanah 2011).

Agus Fahmi, a young *Kiai* in *pesantren* An-Nuriyah, confessed that the *pesantren* in Surabaya are overloaded (Fahmi 2011). It is difficult for the principal of *pesantren* to expand their building for room and classes because the land in Surabaya is very limited and expensive. Therefore, *pesantren* in urban area work hard to make their place clean and green. In his words, "We plant trees together with all *santri* here surround *pesantren* to reduce the hot weather in Surabaya" (Fahmi 2011).

Next, religious impulse is the other factor for *pesantren* and *santri* to care about their environment. I find that most all *santri* realize that preserving environment is a mandatory for them. The role of *Kiais* and teachers in *pesantren* are very important to make the *santri* aware to the environmental crisis nowadays. They always remind their *santri* about how to reduce environmental problems in urban area and how to reduce it through their speech and sermon in everyday teachings. *Kiais* and teachers in *pesantren* find the facts of environmental crisis as the current problems and then find out the references from Al-Qur'an and Al-Hadist to support their sermons. Fahmi continued, "Environmental crisis becomes real now, we see that our world hotter than before. That is way, *pesantren* attempts to reduce it by preparing the *santri* to be a muslim who has caring to the environment" (Fahmi 2011).

As the central figure in *pesantren*, *Kiais* together with teachers always support the concept "Green and Clean" surround them. They are not only saying but also giving an example to all *santri* how to care to the environment. Ahmad Ilmi, a *santri* of *pesantren* Al-Jihad, inform that his *Kiai* always sweeps mosque and its yard even at every dawn or just before get praying Subuh and this makes all *santri* imitate to care the environment. Therefore, *Kiai* always reminds their *santri* to care to their environment not only inside *persantrens* but also outside *pesantren* when they live among society.

Ainur Rahmah, a woman ulema usually called Bu Nyai in Java and a principal of *pesantren* An-Nuriyah, states that her *pesantren* helps the kampong surround *pesantren* to make it "Green and Clean" by cleaning up the kampong together between all *santri* and the inhabitants once in a week (Rahmah 2011). She believes that *pesantren* has power to build the attitude among *santri* and the people as whole to reduce the environmental problems in urban area. The speech and sermon of caring environment inside and outside *pesantren* from *Kiais* or ulema as the head of *pesantren* are instruction for all *santri*. It is also very influential to raise the *santri*' environmental awareness. One of *santri* in *pesantren* An-Nuriyah, Nur Malika stated, "Bu Nyai always reminds us to care our environment. She usually does it when she teaches us" (Malika 2011).

## Cleaning One Piece of Rubbish Means One Reward from God

Religious intention is one of reasons for *pesantren* community to take care of the environment in their surroundings. *Santri* expected to be *salih* or good muslim, which means that they are the heir of nature so that they must preserve the environment given by God (Mahfudz 1994:374). A *santri* of *pesantren* "An-Nur" said, "It is our responsibility as a *santri* to support "Green and Clean" program because my religion talk about it." (Ilmi 2011). At the same tone, a *santri* of student *pesantren* IAIN Surabaya, maintained, "Islam is a clean religion so we must care to our environment by keeping it clean and green" (Zahra 2011).

Most *pesantren* in Surabaya, even all *pesantren* in Indonesia, are familiar with the environmental care. It is because *pesantren* as the place of Islamic educational institution know, understand, and teach their *santri* about the "hadits" or the saying of the Prophet Muhammad SAW that says "clean is part of Islamic pillar." The hadist is very popular among the *santri* in almost all *pesantren* in Indonesia.

One of interesting practices is done by *Pesantren* Amanatul Ummah, one of big *pesantren* in Surabaya which has two thousand *santri* live inside the *pesantren*, which has a good program called "Cleaning One Piece Rubbish Means One Reward from God." It means that whoever *santri* when he or she takes a piece of rubbish and then put it to the rubbish box he or she will get reward from God. As good muslims, *santri* feel that reward from God is the main goal for in their lives.

Hilmi Mustangin, a senior teacher and as the board of *pesantren* of Amanatul Ummah asserted, "to implement the clean *pesantren* we always remind at any time to our *santri* about the concept of reward from God. God loves clean so we have to keep our environment clean. This is for all *santri* and for teachers also without exception" (Mustangin 2011). Friday is sacred day for most of the *pesantren* to evaluate the program of clean *pesantren*. Amanatul Ummah has slogan: clean heart, clean when to speak, and clean environment.

### **CONCLUSION**

Most *pesantren* in urban area such as in Surabaya as the second biggest city in Indonesia show their active participation in preserving and reducing environmental problems. This paper also found that each *pesantren* in urban area has its own way in

constructing "Green and Clean" awareness among santri in the pesantren. However, it is difficult for pesantren to pursue their main goals in preserving pesantren. Pesantren affiliated with NU, for example, ndorse the actions of preserving environment surrounding them and even carry out the fatwa issued by ulema and NU. Surabaya government seems to be successful in convincing the society to actively follow the "Green and Clean". It may even be concluded that students and Islamic boarding schools use Islamic values and teaching regarding cleanliness to support or justify the city government's program of "Green and Clean". To strengthen this claim, future research should be conducted focusing on aspects unexplored in this research. One instance is a textual research on the teaching materials used in Pesantren related to health and sanitary issues.

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