

Religious pluralism and contested religious authority in contemporary Indonesia

This present project will deal with the issue of religious pluralism and contestation of religious authority in contemporary Indonesia, by referring to two “traditionalist” Muslim scholars: A. Mustofa Bisri and Emha Ainun Nadjib. Bisri and Nadjib are considered unique; both are men of letters and Muslim scholars who have a background in the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school). This study will investigate the role of Bisri and Nadjib in promoting religious pluralism in Indonesia. It will also explore the extent to which these two scholars and their ideas on religious pluralism exert authority on contemporary Indonesian Muslims.

Through the study of Bisri and Nadjib, I would like to show that it is not necessary to base religious pluralism on “liberal” or “modernist” stance but rather can be smoothly connected to “traditionalism”, so that this may preserve greater credibility in the population at large. With this in mind, “traditionalist” scholars may play a considerable role in the preaching the virtues of religious pluralism in the society in general, and among anti-pluralist groups in particular.

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