

Indonesian Ideas of Reform From Santri Political Ijtihad

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Abstract: *The following article describes the notion of political Islam regarding state building in post-reform Indonesia. This article comes against the backdrop of academic anxiety about the separation between the tradition of Islamic studies on the one hand and political and state studies on the other hand which is stuck in making typologies. The main focus of this paper is the political ideas of Indonesian Santri regarding the post-reform Indonesian state. The main issues studied in this article are the image of the post-reform Indonesian state in the thoughts of Santri figures and how the contribution of the political thoughts of the figures in the effort to create a prosperous state and society. The basic framework of thought used to study the political thought of Santri in this paper is the sociology of knowledge which involves three dimensions, namely internalization, objectification, and externalization. The working of the three steps of the three dimensions is carried out simultaneously. An important finding from this article is in the views of Santri that the post-reform Indonesian state structure is a state whose position is the servant of the people and those who have sovereignty are the people. Such political thinking makes an important contribution to the realization of a prosperous state.*

Keywords: *Islam, Indonesian Santri, Political Ideas, Indonesia, and a Prosperous State.*

Introduction

After the collapse of the New Order regime in 1998, the development of political Islamic thought in Indonesia gained new momentum to express it. In this context, the thoughts of several figures from Santri backgrounds are the most prominent. However, studies of changes in the structure of the Indonesian state within the framework of the discourse on democratization generally tend to ignore the participation of these Santri, who respond to changes in the political situation not only with their actions but also with their thoughts.

Apart from that, various studies of Islam and politics in Indonesia, whether carried out by researchers who come from the Islamic studies tradition or the political science tradition, are trapped in constructing typologies or categories.¹ Even studies using this typological or categorical model can help to understand the dynamics of Islam and politics, but they contain serious weaknesses, namely the overlap between one typology and another, and not being sufficient to explain the substance and complexity of problems, as well as the dynamics of Islam and politics.

¹ William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 19, No. 3 (Agustus 1987), p. 307.

This article is driven by academic anxiety about the segregation and division between Islamic studies, especially the study of levels of thought on the one hand, and the study of political change and dynamics on the other hand. The researchers started with Islamic studies, starting from the internal position of Muslims with their own theological reference culture, starting from the fact that the thoughts of Islamic figures and society seemed to be isolated from political dynamics. At the same time, political and government scholars present Muslims only as citizens with typical Muslim characteristics whose responses to changes in state order or government reform are not influenced by the teachings and values of the religion they believe in.

The relationship between thought and ongoing political dynamics is not easy to show, considering that the nature of Islamic teachings itself has multiple interpretations, this study also assumes that state thinking is also different. However, even though Islamic thought and Muslim statehood have multiple interpretations, there are certainly strong currents that determine the direction or type of change that is taking place.²

This article focuses on the study of Islamic thought and Santri politics in the reform era and therefore gives in-depth attention to the social, religious, and state dynamics in Indonesia. Apart from that, these students also publish a lot of their works and are involved in social, political, state, and religious dynamics in Indonesia. Likewise, because there are quite a lot of Santri in Indonesia, their ideas and thoughts are responsive and full of dynamics. The main issue discussed in this article is what is the political thinking of the Santri regarding the future of the reformed Indonesian state, and what is the contribution of the political thinking of the Santri to building a prosperous Indonesia.

Islam and Santri Politics: A Theoretical Framework

The study of political and Islamic thought generally uses two approaches, namely first, the cultural approach. This approach emphasizes the traditions inherent in Indonesian Islam. In the process, this approach pays more attention to individual interpretations or Islamic mass organizations' interpretations of holy verses and their influence on political behavior. It can even be said that this approach is most widely used in Islamic studies in Indonesia.³ Second, is the security approach. This approach is mainly carried out by researchers who lack knowledge of Islamic teachings.⁴

² W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Nabi dan Negarawan* (London: Universitas Oxford, 1964), Bakhtiar Effendy, *Islam dan Negara Transformasi Gagasan dan Praktik Politik Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Project Democracy, 2011), p. 5.

³ Vedi R. Hadiz, "Ketidakadilan Sosial, Akar Radikalisme", in *Komunitas*, Jilid III, No. 8, Agustus 2011, Jakarta: Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity, pp. 4-5.

⁴ John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 2-4.

Understanding Islamic thought using the two approaches above has given rise to vague indicators regarding Islamic thought. In this regard, it can be said that both the first and second approaches give rise to views about good and bad Muslims, or in Indonesia what is better known as moderate Islam and radical Islam.⁵ The consequence of these two approaches is that they oversimplify and reduce the problems of Islamic thought, even though the problems are very complex.⁶ Therefore, to understand the dynamics of Islamic thought after the collapse of the New Order, it is necessary to place it in the context of the complexity of the problems faced by thinkers, both locally, nationally, and globally.

Based on the explanation above and to develop a study of Islamic thought in the context of changes in state order in Indonesia, reform in this article apart from considering cultural-theological and political approaches, as mentioned above, sociological, historical, and political-economic approaches are also used. Thus, the study of Islamic political thought in Indonesia after the New Order, especially the study of the response of Islamic thought to political change in reform Indonesia, is based on the understanding of Islamic students, and combined with various approaches. mentioned above.

The focus of this article is Islamic thought in Indonesia in the context of changes in state reform. This article departs from the idea that the dynamics of Islamic and political thought cannot be separated from the thought products produced by these students, how these students understand Islam, as well as the context and complexity of the problems faced by Muslims and the reformed Indonesian state.

To follow the train of thought as stated above, the framework of thought used in this connection is the three-dimensional approach used by Kuntowidjoyo and Abdul Majid Umar al-Najjar in understanding religious reality, always including internalization, objectification, and externalization.⁷ The responses of these three thinkers need to be placed in the interaction between these three dimensions.

Based on the results of tracing the responses of the students' political and Islamic thinking to changes in state order in the reform era. The Indonesian Islamic thinkers who are the subject of this study are Islamic boarding school leaders.⁸ The determination of these Santri figures was based on the consideration that the thoughts

⁵ Vedi R. Hadiz, Ketidakadilan, pp. 4-5.

⁶ Abdullah bin Sheikh Mahfouz bin Bayya, *al-Irhab al-Tasihis wa al-Hulul* (Riyadh: Maktaba al-Ibiyaqan, 2007), pp. 39-42.

⁷ Kuntowidjoyo, *Muslim Tanpa Masjid* (Bandung: Mizan, 2001), pp. 139-140 and 337, dan Kuntowidjoyo, *Identitas*, pp. 82-83 and 90, Abdul Majid Umar an-Najjar, *Fiqh at-Tadayyun Fahman wa Tanzilan* (Tunisia: Az-Zaitunah, 1995), this book was explained the concept of internalization (fiqh al-fahmi dan fahm al- waqi), pp. 22-110, objectification (fiqh as-siyagah), pp. 125-201, and externalization (fiqh at-tanzil), pp. 207-245.

⁸ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam, Humanity, and Indonesian Identity: Reflections on History*. (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2018). Alwi Shihab, *Islam inklusif*, (Bandung: Mizan, 1998), p. 41, Tim Penulis, *Fiqh Lintas Agama Membangun Masyarakat Inklusif Pluralis*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Waqaf Paramadina dan Asia Foundation, 2004), pp. 208, 238-241. Abdurrahman Wahid, "Massa Islam dalam Kehidupan Bernegara dan Bangsa," in *Prisma*, Edisi Ekstra 1984, pp. 3 -9.

of these Santri were widely published in Indonesia, the thoughts of these Santri were very closely related, even related to state affairs in reformed Indonesia. Apart from that, even though the political thinking of Santri comes from the Indonesian Islamic tradition (devout Muslims, having studied at Islamic boarding schools, following the flow of substantive ethical political theology) their thinking in many ways surpasses the Islamic and political thinking of other Islamic figures and organizations in Indonesia.⁹

Sources or reference materials for the study of Islamic thinkers as individuals are the various written works of these three figures in the form of published books and articles. These sources or references can be grouped into primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources are various references written by relevant figures relating to Islam and changes in the Indonesian state structure which have been published since 1998. Meanwhile, secondary sources are sources written by other authors about Islamic thought and the state, both reforms and reforms.

The analytical method used to understand Islamic and political ideas which are a response to the political thinking of these Islamic students is the sociology of knowledge which explains the existence of a dialectic between Muslim thinkers, the context and reality of changes in the political order and state in reformed Indonesia.¹⁰ This dialectic takes place in a process of three stages at once, namely internalization, objectification, and externalization.¹¹

Discussion and Analysis

The discussion or analysis in this article about the political ideals of Islamic students covers three aspects, namely political theology, political ideals, and strategies for achieving political ideals. These three areas are an inseparable unity in understanding the political ijtihad of Islamic students.

Political Theology

Santri's thinking about Islam in the frame of Indonesianness and humanity is an integrative thought between Islam, Indonesianness, and humanity. These three things can be integrated to create an Islamic civilization in Indonesia that is advanced, progressive, friendly, open, and inclusive. This idea has the vision to provide space

⁹ Muhammad Iqbal Siregar, *Politik Santri dalam Pembaruan Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia Tantangan dan Prospeknya Pasca Orde Baru*, (Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2021), pp. 19-20, 116- 131.

¹⁰ Muhyar Fanani, *Metode Studi Islam Menerapkan Sosiologi Pengetahuan sebagai Perspektif*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2010), p. 54.

¹¹ Kuntowijoyo, *Muslim Tanpa Masjid*, (Bandung: Mizan, 2001), pp. 139–140, 337, Kuntowjyo, *Identitas Politik Islam*, (Bandung: Mizan. 1997), pp. 82-83, 90. Abdul Majid Umar al- Najjar, *Fiqh al-Tadayyun Fahman wa Tanzilan*, (Tunisia: Az-Zaitouna, 1995), pp. 22, 90, 125. Peter L. Berger dan Tommas Luckmann, *Tafsir Sosial atas Kenyataan Risalah tentang Sosiologi Pengetahuan*, Trans. Hasan Basyari (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1990), pp. 4, 5-6. Frans M. Parera, Mengungkap Misteri Manusia Sebagai Homo Faber, in Peter L. Berger dan Tommas Luckmann, *Tafsir Sosial*, xx dan Ahmad Salehudin, *Satu Desa Tiga Masjid Anomali Ideologi Keagamaan dalam Agama*, Foreword Prof. Dr. MC. Ricklefs (Yogyakarta: Pillar Media, 2007), pp. 89, 92, 95.

for the Islamic religion so that thoughts about Islam, Indonesianism, and humanity can be accepted and no longer need to be debated so that Islam is in line with these three things so that it manifests into an Islam that is an umbrella and provides a sense of justice, security, and protection for all Indonesian people, and that is the picture of a prosperous and just Indonesia.

Based on the explanation above, it can also be emphasized that the main theme of the students' reflections related to changes in Indonesia's state structure, and reform, is the objective need of the Indonesian state for changes in relations between countries. society and the state in Indonesia are reforming. Thus, it can also be read that the application of these themes is part of the strategy and considerations for mainstreaming Islam in the context of society-state relations in reformed Indonesia.

The foundation or roots of state political thought, especially in responding to changes in the state structure in reformed Indonesia, were put forward by Islamic students, who argued that Islam does not have a standard and proprietary constitutional system but rather is a set of ethical values for the life of the nation. This modern thinking is usually referred to as the ethics/substance school.¹²

In the realm of Islamic thought, the state paradigm of this ethical school can be interpreted as an instrumental paradigm, namely that the state is an instrument or means for the development of religion and the realization of religious and ethical values. This paradigm departs from the assumption that Islam only carries the basic principles of state life, and does not determine the form of a particular state. In this paradigm, religion has no formal or institutional relationship with the state and rejects the state's basis in Islam, or at least rejects the Islamic definition of a form of state.

Based on the explanation above, it becomes clear that religion (Islam) can play a role in bringing ethical and moral values to the development of political life and state life. This paradigm is not too interested in the form of the state, in the sense that Islam does not establish a single format regarding the state or government. On the contrary, this paradigm places more emphasis on the principles of Islamic justice, namely the embodiment of the meaning of Islamic values in their substance, in the political process, and in the life of society, nation, and state. Based on this perspective, the political activities of Muslims are in a cultural order, namely the development of a cultural foundation for the realization of a society that follows Islamic values.¹³

The main thesis of the Santri thinking mentioned above is a strategic choice for the actualization or transformation of ethical-substantive Islamic thought at the level of state reality in Indonesia. In this way, the thoughts of these two figures show how much attention these two figures have on various state, nation, and state issues, such as the issue of pluralism in the nation and state, democratization, civil society, and social justice.

¹² Sjadzali, *Islam*, pp. 1-2. Yusdani, *Teologi Baru Politik Muslim Pertautan Agama, Negara, Politik dan Isu-Isu Politik Kontemporer*. (Yogyakarta: PS2PM dan Diandra, 2023).

¹³ Al Munawar, *Fiqh*, pp. 38-39.-

In other words, the various topics targeted by the students are strategies for realizing their state ideas, ranging from religious understanding (Islam) to intellectual property and Islamic boarding school culture. This is based on the thoughts of religious students obtained from Islamic boarding schools. This institution shapes the religious character of the students.

As is often mentioned, culturally students cross three cultural patterns. Firstly, the culture of the Islamic boarding school world is very hierarchical, full of formal ethics and respects local culture, secondly, Middle Eastern culture is open and strict, and thirdly, the Western cultural layer is liberal, rational, and secular. All these cultural layers seem to be internalized into the students' personalities to form a synergy. On this basis, it can be understood that until the end of their lives, students were always in dialogue with these three cultures. Maybe this is also the factor that makes students always seem dynamic and not immediately clear or controversial.¹⁴

Reformation Political Ideas

From the discussion of Santri's thinking, it can be seen that the ideal ideal of state building and order in Indonesia which is consistently fought for is a commitment to the national political order to create a just society and the declaration of independence democratically. All citizens have the same status regardless of cultural background, religion, race, ethnicity, language, and gender.

The views of the students above can be called a vision of Indonesia's future, namely a vision of a just and democratic Indonesia that guarantees equal status for all people from various religious or ethnic backgrounds; and has the same rights and obligations.

According to these three figures, in the reform era, people must be empowered and aware of their rights as citizens. Raising people's consciousness so that they are aware of their position as dignified creatures and therefore aware of the need to continue to control the state so as not to deny the dignity and worth of humanity. In government, this can be done by society through various levels of structure, from the community to the state level and even to the global level.

As a form of concern for the welfare of the people as a whole, this idea proclaims the establishment of democracy and law enforcement institutions without discrimination. Citizens' rights must be the main pillar of democracy and the rule of law. Based on this commitment, one can also understand the ideas pioneered by Islamic boarding school students who frequently criticize government policies that are unfair to minorities, as well as the actions of the majority of Muslims who want to carry out tyranny over the majority. Apart from that, the two figures also connected their thoughts about political change and answered the demands and issues that affect state life in Indonesia. reform, both locally, nationally, and globally, especially the rapid flow of globalization.

¹⁴ Syarkun (ed.), *Ensiklopedi*, VI: 334-336.

The discussion of the thoughts of these Santri shows that the ideal of the state in Indonesia which is consistently fought for is obedience to the national political order created by the proclamation of independence which is just and democratic. All citizens have the same status regardless of cultural background, religion, race, ethnicity, language, and gender.

From the perspective of senior students, it can be said that the vision of Indonesia's future is a vision of a just and democratic Indonesia that guarantees equal status for all people of different religious backgrounds and nationalities who have the same rights and obligations.

According to these Santris, societal reform must be empowered and aware of their rights as citizens. The people are aware of their position as valuable beings and are therefore aware of the need to continue to control the state so as not to deny the dignity and worth of humanity. Control of the state can be exercised by the people through various levels of structure, from the community level to the state level and even to the global level.

From the perspective of reformed national economic life, Santri wisely responds to global economic liberalization as a phenomenon that cannot be avoided by the Indonesian state and society. However, errors in economic and development policies under the New Order government led to the destruction of people's sovereignty and the country faced pressure from the outside world in the political, cultural, and economic fields, especially in the management and utilization of Indonesia's natural resources. The most serious consequences are the losses and suffering that befell the Indonesian people as the founders, creators, and owners of the country.

For this, the Indonesian state and society regarding national economic stability need to be improved. With national economic stability, this nation will be better protected from the destructive elements of the greed of international economic adventurers. This description shows the urgency of the state's role in protecting its people from the damaging effects of global economic liberalization.

This view of state order shows that the interests of society in the context of national life are the basis of Santri's thinking. However, it should be noted that Santri's thinking, for example in the context of religious beliefs, does not question right or wrong or what they believe in, but rather the rights of citizens in believing in religion, someone in choosing a profession. Because, according to the students, the rights of these people are guaranteed by the constitution as well as guaranteed by Islam.

In understanding the basic premise of Santri concerning changes in the state order in reformed Indonesia, it must be linked to the history of the social life of these Santri as well as the mastery and management of the intellectual treasures of the world of Islamic boarding schools which became the intellectual basis of these three figures. Thus, understanding various topics and issues of Islamic thought regarding the thoughts of this Santri, in understanding the response to changes in the state order

in Indonesia, reform cannot be separated from the starting point of the Santri, namely Islamic boarding schools.

Tied to the views of Islamic students about the position of a sovereign people and a strong state in reformed Indonesia, Islamic history and traditions can be explained in the following description. In structuring a government or state system, as explained by al-Gazali, this power must be based on the most basic Islamic ethics, namely the implementation of justice for all people, apart from being a decree from Allah SWT. it is also an action that all citizens aspire to. So morally and religiously, the legitimacy of the power of a country or government is determined by actions to create justice for its people. In this connection, it can be emphasized that without justice, namely moral legitimacy, power does not exist, on the contrary, there is tyranny.¹⁵ People's obedience to the state or government, because the state or government can bring about justice or prosperity for all its people.

The explanation above essentially confirms that people's affairs are completely in the hands of the people following the aim of achieving the goodness/prosperity/justice they desire. The people are the source of state power or government.¹⁶ This is under the basic principle of "tasarruf al-imam ala al-raiyya manutun bi al-maslahah".¹⁷ or "at-tasarruf ala ar-raiyya manutun bil maslahah".¹⁸

The explanation above states that in every society there is a universal law, namely justice or prosperity, a characteristic that must always be present in every government or country if the succession of government or state power is to continue. Every government or country will always have demands to be able to represent the interests of all its people to achieve prosperity.¹⁹ If the government or state succeeds in realizing the ideals of prosperity for all the people, then the people will always submit and obey the state or government, in this situation the state or government has a strong position. Therefore, every government or state authority must be able to implement a government system for its people that adheres to the principles of justice or prosperity.

If the government or state manages an order that makes most people feel unfair, it will affect the government or state order will not last long. This situation is called strong people and weak countries. This illustrates when a government structure no longer wins the trust of its people. This meant that he no longer had a legitimate

¹⁵ Imam al-Gazali, *Al-Tibr al-Masbuk fi Nasihat al-Muluk*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah), pp. 43–44, 173, 181.

¹⁶ Abdul Wahhab Khallaf, *as-Siyasah asy-Syar'iyah* (Kairo: Matbaah ay-Taquadum, 1977), pp. 29.

¹⁷ Jalaluddin as-Suyuti, *al-Asybah wa al-Nazair fi al-Furu'*, (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, tt), p. 83. Ibnu Nujaim, *al-Asybah wa an-Nazair ala Mazhabi Abi Hanifah, an-Nu'man* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1993), p. 123.

¹⁸ Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Zarqa, *Syarh al-Qawaid al-Fiqhiyah*, (Damaskus: 1989), p. 309

¹⁹ YUSDANI, "Islam and Prosper Indonesia: Contestation and Fragmentation of Contemporary Islamic Thought" dalam *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* ISSN: 2527-922X (e); 1412-0992 (p) Vol. 22, No. 1(2023), pp. 205-234.

basis to rule. Such a situation will force the government to face various challenges from its people. In other words, it can be explained that a just country will be stable even if the country is infidel. On the other hand, a tyrannical state will be destroyed even if it is an Islamic state.²⁰

Based on the explanation above, it can be emphasized what is meant by a strong state if the state receives obedience from all its people because the state can realize the goodness of its citizens. Meanwhile, sovereign people means fulfilling the conditions for the welfare²¹ of all the interests of the people which the state can fulfill.

Strategy for Achieving Reformation Ideas

In connection with the search for a new model of state order as a prerequisite for achieving prosperity and well-being, these students are wise in transforming and achieving the ideals of political reform by considering existing factors that can strengthen the relationship model between the two entities, as well as taking into account new factors. Factors influencing changes in the new state order in Indonesia as an objective reality, from the perspective of Islamic thought. These factors can be divided into three factors, namely cultural factors, rational-instrumental-structural²² factors, and new factors - globalization,²³ especially market forces.

Included in the category of cultural factors are ideological, cultural, and religious aspects. Meanwhile, factors included in the rational-instrumental-structural category are economic, political, bureaucratic, and legal. Both cultural and rational-instrumental-structural factors are long-standing factors that influence the pattern of relationships between two entities. Apart from that, what is included as a new factor in the context of changes in the reformed Indonesian state order is globalization, especially the global market economy. Apart from that, it can also be found the scope of problems that need to be answered by Islamic thought in connection with changes to the new state order in reformed Indonesia. Of course, it is necessary to consider wisely the three main levels of the problem, namely: the local level, the national level in the sense of the nation-state, and the global level.

It also needs to be emphasized that *ijtihad* and the transformation of *Santri* thinking in achieving the ideals of prosperity and well-being in Indonesia, apart from being rooted in substantive ethical religious/Islamic thinking, are also capable of integrating it with the demands of universal order and values in governing the country such as human rights, democracy, constitutional system, nation-state, and others. This

²⁰ Abdul Karim Zaidan, *al-Fardu wa ad-Dawlah fi asy-Syari'ah al-Islamiyah* (Gary Indo: IIFSO, 1970), p.62. A. Malik Madaniy, *Politik Berpayung Fiqh Membedah Perpolitikan Nusantara dengan Pisau Syari'at melalui Penggalan Khasanah Islam Klasik maupun Kontemporer*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pesantren, 2010), pp. 33-34.

²¹ Yusdani. *Islam dan Negara Sejahtera Studi Kontestasi Pemikiran Muslim Indonesia Era Reformasi*, (Yogyakarta: Diandra Creative, 2021).

²² Abdul Karim Zaidan, *al-Fard*, p. 34.

²³ *Ibid.*

way of thinking This way of thinking can be called sophisticated political ijtihad and also cultural cross-fertilization²⁴ political thought.

The Concluding Remarks

As a conclusion to the entire description, discussion, and discussion in this article, it can be concluded as follows.

First, the Islamic and political thoughts put forward by these Islamic boarding school leaders in responding to political changes in Indonesia, reform is a transformative and contributive response and ijtihad in Indonesia's democratization process and at the same time determines the direction of democracy in Indonesia which is based on rationality and ethics. This political ijtihad can be said to go beyond the thoughts and discourse of procedural (mechanistic) democracy developed by various parties in reforming Indonesia. Political ijtihad which bases democracy on ethics is expected to make the order of national and state life strong and dignified. This political ijtihad on the one hand represents the actualization of Islam which is contextually integrated, creative, and wise, and on the other hand, it describes the thinking of the state in its position as a citizen.

Second, only by understanding political ijtihad regarding changes in the state structure in Indonesia, it is hoped that reform will form the foundations of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, especially the direction of changes in the reform state structure, will be correct, and the creation of solid foundations will create a straight and strong state and nation. Without this strong foundation, the building of this state and nation will be weak. It is in this context that the contribution of the political ijtihad of Islamic boarding school students in this field to Indonesia will be very significant considering that Islam is a role model for the majority of Indonesian society.

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²⁴ Ahmad Gaus, AF, *Api Islam Nurcholish Madjid Jalan Hidup Seorang Visioner*, (Jakarta:Kompas, 2010).

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