

# PESANTREN AND SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON PESANTREN AL-IMDAD YOGYAKARTA AND PESANTREN MASLAKUL HUDA CENTRAL JAVA

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Poverty and social problems give rise to many different perspectives and analyzes related to the causative factors and their complexity. These differences have an impact on different social interventions conducted by various parties, including among pesantren in Indonesia. Using qualitative method, this study explores the perspectives and analysis of pesantren on poverty and community empowerment in two pesantrens organizing socio-economic empowerment programs for subordinate groups namely Pesantren Al-Imdad in Yogyakarta and Pesantren Maslakul Huda in Central Java. This research results in three types of analysis, i.e. conventional, semi-progressive and progressive. The conventional analysis defines poverty as community's inability to meet their basic needs, caused by their own mistakes of not having skills and entrepreneurship so that empowerment is viewed as a tool to direct the community in accordance with the pesantren's decisions of empowerment programs. The semi-progressive analysis defines poverty as a multidimensional problem, caused by structural and human factors so that empowerment is viewed as a strategy to increase the capacity of community and pesantren. The progressive analysis defines poverty as multidimensional problem, caused by structural factors and community is seen as a victim of unjust system so that empowerment is viewed as pesantren's alignments to subordinate groups by organizing joint forces to fight for the rights and interests of the community.*

**Keywords:** *Pesantren, community, poverty, empowerment, critical analysis*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Social problems such as poverty, violence, discrimination, oppression and other injustice practices in society are interesting discourses that never last forever. Much discussion and debate on how to see and analyze social, economic, political and cultural issues at the micro, mezzo and macro levels produce many different perspectives on the causes of problems and complexities that gave rise to various views on how to deal with social problems at the personal, cultural and structural levels. In this context, various community groups, government and non-governmental

organizations such as faith based and cultural based organizations have their own analysis of social problems that influence their intervention approach to overcome those problems (Fakih 2011).

Faith-based organization is believed to be one of the non-government organizations which has a very important role in handling these issues. It was noted that the successful role of faith-based organizations as agents of social change occurred in developed and developing countries. In several US states such as Appalachia, the Delta Mississippi, the Colonia Border, Indian, urban and rural

communities, their faith-based organizations are involved in poverty alleviation programs (Hacala 2001). Their successful contribution invited serious attention from the US government to work with the faith-based organizations, as was signed and officially announced by President Bush on January 29, 2001 (Bush 2002; Hacala 2001). In Latin America, Escobar (1997, in Candland 2000: 355) explains that Catholics and Protestants also contribute to social change in grassroots communities. In several developing countries in Asia, faith-based organizations successful programs on community empowerment and poverty alleviation implemented by the *Sarvodaya* Movement in Sri Lanka, *Santi Asok* in Thailand, *Jama'ati Islami* in Pakistan and *Pesantren* in Indonesia (Candland 2000).

Since the 1970s, *pesantren* as one of the religious-based educational institutions in Indonesia, has experienced great development in terms of number, diversity, location, and also their role in community development and empowerment programs, especially in rural areas (Subhan 2006). Data shows that there are more than 9000 *pesantren* (Mas'ud 2002: 25) with characteristics that differ from one another. *Pesantren* has a big role not only in education and religious practice but also in social action helping the community deal with their social problems, especially the rural communities around the *pesantren*. There are many studies on the contribution of *pesantren* in the socio-economic empowerment program for subordinate groups in Indonesia, namely labor *pesantren* in East Java (Bawani 2011), *pesantren*-based empowerment of farming communities in Bandung (Departemen Agama 2003a), *pesantren*-based economic empowerment in South Sumatra (Isnaini 2008), etc.

The growth in the number of *pesantren* was followed by changes in their perspectives on social issues. In the early 1980s, critical awareness emerged to analyze social problems comprehensively among social activists, including *pesantren*. This awareness analyzes various forms of injustice occurring at the personal, cultural and

structural levels which cause social problems especially poverty for subordinate groups. In this case, poverty is no longer considered as a matter of destiny, but is a part and correlated with problems at the cultural and structural level (Fakih 1996: 8; Hikam 2000; Mullaly 2002). Previously, *kiai*, *pesantren* and the Muslim community considered *zakat*, *infaq* and *sodaqoh* as part of their ritual obligations to provide social assistance to the poor. When critical awareness appears, they begin to realize that *zakat*, *infaq*, and *sodaqoh* can be managed in socio-economic empowerment programs as part of religious approaches in working with subordinate groups (Subhan 2006: 15).

Although *pesantren* and other social institutions share the same awareness in analyzing social problems, *pesantren* practices a different approach to social intervention. In this case, the *kiai* and *pesantren* do not use a religious approach for the purpose of polarization between the community and the government, but even they emphasize the importance of working with the government to truly fight for the interests of the community (Rahardjo 1999). However, not all *pesantren* have the same perspective in analyzing poverty and social problems. The difference in this perspective is because Islam is a plural religion in terms of theology, paradigm and social theory (Fakih 2011: 44). Theology consists of three aspects, namely theoretical aspects in the form of a belief system; practical aspects namely the system of rules that binds its adherents; and sociological aspects, namely religion which naturally forms and maintains social relations (Wach in Zubaedi 2007: 21). Rahardjo also explained that there are three aspects in Islam i.e. *aqidah* (belief systems), *ibadah* (human relationship with God) and *mu'amalah* (human relationship with one another) (Rahardjo 1999: 344). In theoretical aspects or belief systems all Muslim communities have the same belief in one God. However, in practical and sociological aspects related to rituals, ceremonial and social relations there are many different perspectives and implementations in the Muslims lives.

Therefore, the thoughts of *pesantren* as plural religious adherents cannot be reduced to only one thought.

Based on these reasons, this study aims to provide a qualitative understanding of the analysis of *pesantren* and society about poverty and community empowerment as part of a religious approach to contribute to social transformation. In this study there are at least three main concepts: poverty, empowerment and *pesantren*. First, poverty is generally defined as a lack of goods and services to obtain a decent standard of living. Whereas social problems, there is no agreed definition on this, but are generally understood

as problems such as poverty, crime, violence, homelessness, child abuse/neglect, exile, and so on (Mullaly 2002: 3). Second, empowerment is a method to increase the community's power by exploring their potential and strengthening their existence in social relations to build structural justice in all aspects of life. Third, *pesantren* is a religious education institution that also functions as a social institution based on religious values to provide assistance to the community in overcoming poverty and other social problems.

Several studies have been conducted on faith-based organizations and community empowerment, as it is described in the table 1:

**Table 1.** Researches on FBO and Community Empowerment

No	Theme	Researcher
1	The influence of faith and the existence of FBO	Johnson (2007); Bradley(2009); Martin, Chau dan Patel (2007)
2	Empowerment Organization Management	Lin (1998)
3	The role of <i>Kiai</i> in changing <i>pesantren</i> 's values	Zubaedi (2007a)
4	FBO intervention and social change	Hogue (2008)
5	FBO in development	Candland (2000)

The results of the study show that religious beliefs contribute positively to development (Martin, Chau, and Patel 2007). However, the results of Johnson's study provides a different conclusion that people's beliefs do not significantly influence the existence of religious institutions and fundraising for social services (Johnson 2007). Apart from the differences, the provision of social services by faith-based organizations has a weakness that is the vulnerability of discrimination by certain religious institutions against adherents of other religions. In terms of faith based organization management, Lin's study produces a conceptual model of empowerment seen from four elements in an organization that will greatly affect the effectiveness and success of the empowerment programs which includes empowering leaders, empowering organizational culture, empowering management practices, and empowered employee/work teams (Lin 1998).

In the context of social change, Hogue's study shows that faith based organization interventions affect changes in religion, economy, and social

structure, even though it requires a long time process (Hogue 2008). The impact of the changes is experienced by those who are intensively getting involved in the organization. Related to development programs implementation, the success of faith based organizations in making their contribution is strongly influenced by government's support and policy (Candland 2000). In its implementation, there are various empowerment programs which depends on their respective contexts. For certain communities, empowerment means the construction of houses or shelters, but in other areas it means an increase in income and employment as well as community improvements to defend their rights against repressive social or political systems.

In Indonesia, especially in *pesantren* as one of the faith based organizations, the idea (*ijtihad*) of a *pesantren* leader (*kiai*) is very influential on changes in values, ideology, norms and practices in the *pesantren* community and society (Zubaedi 2007). This changes lead to a shift in tradition in the *pesantren* environment from a tendency of

normative-textual pattern to contextual, from a tendency of preaching verbally (*da'wah bil-lisan*) to preaching with real action (*da'wah bil-hal*), from a pattern of exclusive sufism to a dynamic sufism that gives more appreciation to worldly activities and from the tendency of ritual-individual piety to social piety.

Some of the above researchs show that there have been various studies on faith based organizations and *pesantren* from various aspects, such as the influence of policies, empowerment models, and social changes. However, research on *pesantren* is still limited to certain aspects, so there is still space available for research, especially related to *pesantren* and socio-economic empowerment, a study that discusses the role of *pesantren* in empowering the poor, links between the construction of thinking about poverty, the selection of empowerment strategies and their impact on the welfare of the *pesantren* community and beyond. In fact, the perspective on how to interpret a social reality determines approaches and strategies carried out within empowerment programs (Fakih 2003: 42).

The issue related to the concept of empowerment includes basic principles of freedom and liberation, equality, justice, participation and independence (Ife 1997; Ife and Tesoriero 2008; Pranarka and Moeljarto 1996). While a number of literature states that the pattern of *kiai's* leadership tends to be dominant or what Arif (2008: 170) states as the authoritarian-paternalistic. In addition, relationships built in *pesantren* are patron-client in nature (Lubis 2003: 78). In line with this statement, Wahid also states that the pattern of *kiai's* leadership is not accustomed to participatory activities, but tended to carry out his own will. This is where the challenge of *pesantren's* perspective on community empowerment is to sympathize with two seemingly contradictory demands namely patron-client relations on the one hand and equality, justice and participation on the other (Wahid 2010: 198). This phenomenon raises issues related to the *kiai's* and *pesantren's*

perspectives on poverty, their analysis on its causes, also questioning their views on community empowerment. Based on the problems above, this research is aimed to describe and analyze the *pesantren's* analysis on poverty and community empowerment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Poverty and Social Problems

The different view and debate around the issue of poverty among social researchers lies in their different focus on analyzing its causes and consequences. They are those who put more emphasis on poverty measures and those who focus on placing poverty in the context of injustice practices of system and structures. The first view belongs to economists or the measurers with their basic needs approach and the second one belongs to social experts or the explainers with their multidimensional approach (Saunders and Matheson 1992: 1). The multidimensional approach defines poverty as a multidimensional problem. Saunders and Matheson (1992: 1), Fakih (1996), Hikam (2000), and Mullaly (2002) have similar analysis that poverty must be placed in the context of socio-economic injustice practices in the structure, process, policy, and the underlying value. Therefore, Saunders (2005: 17) concludes that poverty is not only caused by the presence or absence of just one factor, but is caused by various factors that influence each other.

Various definitions of poverty above are inseparable from the paradigm or perspective of a social reality (Gendzier 1985 in Fakih 2003: 19). To provide a clearer picture, the views on poverty above are categorized based on Freire's classification of public awareness in understanding social reality, namely magical consciousness, naival consciousness, and critical consciousness (Freire 2011; Shiva 1988; Fakih 2003: 31). However, this does not mean that all definitions can be sorted out in one consciousness, but there is a possibility of a combination of two or three consciousness at the same time.

First, magical consciousness is awareness that is not able to connect or associate between one factor with other factors. Magical consciousness emphasizes factors outside human power as the causes of poverty and powerlessness of society, both natural and supernatural. According to this awareness, poverty is a destiny and has nothing to do with the systems and structures that exist in society (Fakih 2003). This awareness includes the view that considers disadvantages, physical weakness, disability, victims of violence, etc. are factors of poverty. This awareness is widely shared by traditionalist Muslims who believe that poverty is God's provision and plan. In this context, poverty is considered as a test to measure the level of faith among Muslims. The theological root of this view rests on the *Sunni* concept of predeterminism or destiny, namely God's provisions and plans long before nature was created (Fakih 2011: 248).

Second, naival consciousness sees human aspect as the root cause of poverty and other social problems. According to this awareness, issues of ethics, creativity and need for achievement are considered as determinant factors of social change. Therefore, they argue that poor people are caused by their own mistakes such as they are lazy, do not have an entrepreneurial spirit, or do not have a culture of development and so on. Poverty occurs due to human error and is not related to existing systems and structures (Fakih 2003). The majority of views on poverty embrace naival consciousness, because they emphasize human aspect. Other factors such as limited resources, low quality of human resources, low productivity and low income, lack of access, etc. as stated above are part of people's mistakes. In the perspective of structural social work, this view is categorized as blaming the victims (Mullaly 2002: 12).

Third, critical consciousness analyzes system and structural aspects as the source of social problems. The structural approach avoids blaming the victims and analyzes critically social, political, economic and cultural structures and

systems and how the interrelationships of these aspects impact on the state of society. Thus, according to this awareness, poverty is caused by social, political, economic and cultural structures that are interrelated with one another. This critical paradigm provides opportunities to the community to be able to identify injustice practices in the existing systems and structures, to analyze how they work and how to transform them in a process of creating a fundamentally new and fairer system (Fakih 2003).

### **Community Empowerment**

Historically, empowerment emerged from a critical awareness of the oppressed groups and the emergence of a constructionist paradigm (Yip 2004: 479). Another opinion says, the origin of the term empowerment is closely related to the birth of modern Europe marked by the occurrence of enlightenment. Although the term empowerment did not exist explicitly, it was conceptually existed (Pranarka and Moeljarto 1996: 44-45). In spite of those differences of opinion, empowerment is recognized as the main concept in community intervention as an effort to improve people's welfare (Adi2013: 205). In its development, scientists put different emphasis and focus on defining empowerment.

1. Empowerment is defined as the process of obtaining or increasing community's power in their social interaction at personal, cultural and structural levels (Payne, 2005: 295; Cattaneo and Chapman 2010: 647). Rose and Kruger (2000) as quoted by Yip (Yip 2004: 49) states that empowerment is conceptualized in five levels of interaction, namely personal, interpersonal, political, professional and organizational. At the personal level, the goal of empowerment is to make changes; at the interpersonal level of empowerment is to strengthen social network support for the oppressed; while at the political level of government, empowerment is a collective action to influence government policy. Therefore, the term empowerment contains different meanings. At the micro

level, empowerment is defined as increasing people's confidence and control over their strength, while at the macro level it is interpreted as a process to increase political power.

2. Another definition states that empowerment is an equitable sharing of power within economic and political aspects so that people have a bargaining position in local, national and international levels (Friedmann 1992 in Wrihatnolo and Nugroho 2007: 60; Pranarka and Moeljarto 1996).
3. Empowerment is defined as community strength as the most fundamental thing in empowerment includes commitment, resources, and skills that can be mobilized and used by the community to solve social problems and strengthen community assets (Fetterman et al. 1996: 332; Rothman et al. 1995: 42).
4. Empowerment is a process of developing an organizational scheme with regard to how decisions are made, especially if those decisions will be implemented in a teamwork of different groups (Labianca et al. 2000: 236).
5. Another definition states that empowerment is basically an effort to make a fair and civilized atmosphere of humanity become more structurally effective for families, communities, countries, regions and international in politics, economics, culture, and other aspects of life. Pranarka also distinguishes the terms empowerment and to empower. Empowerment is to give power or authority to, while to empower is to give ability to or enable (Pranarka and Moeljarto 1996: 4).

Apart from these various views, Fetterman, Kaftarian, and Wandersman (1996: 129-130) quoted from Rappaport (1981) states that the concept of empowerment includes three main principles. First, everyone has the strength, ability and capacity to be more competent. Second, a person's failure is not due to a person's

shortcomings, but rather the failure of the social system to provide or create opportunities for individuals to show or possess competencies. Third, in situations where existing capabilities need to be strengthened or new abilities need to be obtained, the best way is through experience that encourages people to appreciate their ability to influence to important events of life.

### ***Pesantren***

*Pesantren* comes from the word '*santri*', an Islamic educational institution which is generally organized and taught in a non-classical way (a *bandongan* and *sorogan* system) in which a *kiai* teaches his students based on books written in Arabic by great scholars since the middle centuries. '*Kiai*' is the leader of *pesantren*, while '*santri*' are students who study and usually live in the dormitory (Departemen Agama 2003b: 12). According to Wahid (Wahid 2006), *pesantren* is a cultural institution uses Javanese cultural symbols that functions as an agent of social change by introducing the idea of rural development, as a center of community learning activities and an Islamic educational institution that relies on the syllabus of Islamic studies as references for traditional *pesantren*.

In its early days, *pesantren* was the only educational institution that is accessible for all levels of society since the palace's educational institution was only devoted to those who had royal blood and their relatives (Wahid 2006). This fact shows that *pesantren* is very close and in favor of the subordinate groups. This integration makes *pesantren* and community color each other and form their own various traditions. In this case, *pesantren* is not only an educational institution, but also a social institution that has relations of values with community culture especially those within its sphere of influence (Bawani 2011: 53; Mastuhu 1994: 39).

The enormous development of modernization and globalization makes *pesantren* as traditional Islamic educational institutions face increasingly complex challenges (Sabaruddin 2011: 5). One of the challenges is the rapid advancement of science

and technology which provides ease on the one hand, but also creates increasingly complex social problems on the other hand. This condition causes the changing of *pesantren* values and ultimately forces *pesantren* to carry out reforms. Salim (Salim 2002) states that *pesantren* itself is very dynamic and has a strong basis to participate in directing and driving the desired changes. Among the reforms that have been carried out by a number of *pesantren* are their renewal of functions, from the educational institution into social, economic, political and cultural functions (Azra 1999).

In the aspect of education, *pesantren* have three roles, namely transmission of Islamic knowledge, maintenance of Islamic traditions, and reproduction of *ulama* (Azra 1999). In the political aspect, the role of *pesantren* was very visible especially before the existence of colonialism and the struggle for Indonesian independence (Muhtarom 2002: 39). Before colonialism, *pesantren* had a strategic position in the government administration. This is evidenced by the emergence of the Islamic empire in various parts of the archipelago, where the trustees (*wali*) as the founder of *pesantren* also acted as spiritual figures or even the designers of the Islamic sultanate establishment scenarios (De Graaf and Pigeaud 1989: 80-85). During colonialism, *pesantren* became a center of resistance and defense against Dutch rule. In this case, *pesantren* is seen as an institution that has a dual role, namely the religious and political pedagogical roles (Muhtarom 2002: 40; Arif 2008: 178; Bawani 2011: 48). In the cultural aspect, the high role of *pesantren* can be explained by the acceptance of religious moral values carried by *pesantren* in people's lives (Bawani 2011: 55). As a social institution, *pesantren* for most rural communities have traditional legitimacy which makes it a cultural symbol and an effective means of driving change. In line with this, Mahfudh (1979: 46) states, that *pesantren* can not only color, but beyond that it is able to shape and direct the community. In the economic aspect, the existence of *pesantren* in within rural

community increasingly shows its significance value, including as a religious education institution that provides access to the poor and helps them to access economic resources through community empowerment and development activities (Bawani 2011: 57). In this context, the *pesantren* politically also acts as a facilitator that bridges power and society, especially those related to improving social welfare.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses an interpretive social science approach. As explained by Neuman (2006: 88), this interpretive approach is defined as follows:

“the interpretive approach is the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social world” (Neuman 2006: 88)

This interpretive approach is used to understand the complexity of the analysis on poverty and empowerment in the two pesantrens: *Pesantren Al-Imdad* and *Pesantren Maslakul Huda*. The selection of this approach is based on several arguments: (1) examine what is behind the analysis of *kiai* and *pesantren* on poverty and other social issues, also their perspective on community empowerment; (2) the interpretive approach makes it possible to understand the beliefs and awareness on social problems and empowerment from the viewpoints of local participants or actors; (3) this approach provides opportunities to conduct a holistic study on social problems and strategies to cope with those problems, because the phenomenon studied is an integrated whole inseparable, where the view of empowerment involves many interrelated factors.

This is a case study research, because it involves a detailed and intensive analysis of the cases studied (Bryman 2008: 52). In the process, the researcher built intensive interactions with *kiai*, *pesantren* and the community to obtain detailed information about the characteristics of all informants' perspectives and analysis.

In addition, this study was conducted in a long period of time with the aim of being able to enrich the data obtained (Bryman 2008: 57). This research was conducted from November 2013 to October 2014.

### Informants Selection

The selection of informants in this study uses nonprobability sampling. The purpose of using this non-probability sampling in qualitative research, as explained by Neuman (2006: 220) is, "the primary purpose of sampling is to collect specific cases, events or actions that can clarify and deepen understanding". Thus, sample selection is based more on its relevance to the research theme rather than representation. This is as stated by Flick (1998) in Neuman (2006: 220), "it is their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which people to study are selected". Therefore, the researcher seeks to include everyone involved in socio-economic empowerment activities carried out by *pesantren* which includes *kiai*, staffs and teachers in the *pesantren*, *santri* and community figures.

**Table 2.** Research Infomants

Information obtained	Informant	Number	
		Al-Imdad	M.Huda
Analysis on poverty and its causes	Pesantren personnels involved in the empowerment programs	4	4
Perspective on empowerment, its rationale and objectives	Community figures	3	2
	Community members	3	4
Total		20 informants	

### Data Analysis Techniques

In this study, the first step taken was to collect raw data obtained through observation, interviews and documentation. The data generated in the form of interview transcripts, field notes, pictures obtained while in the field, as well as documents at the research location related

to the research theme. Then the coding process consists of five stages namely data sorting and classification, open coding, axial coding, selective coding, interpretation and elaboration (Ellen in Neuman 2006: 486).

### Quality Improvement Strategies and Research Limitations

Improving the quality of this qualitative research uses the Guba model (Krefting 1991) which bases on trustworthiness or the level of trust. These trustworthiness criteria include credibility; transferability; dependability; and confirmability. Based on these criteria, the triangulation strategy carried out in several ways including the selection of appropriate informants in accordance with research needs and checking different sources regarding the same questions related to research questions. Having applied triangulation technique, the data obtained of this study will be more valid and reliable.

This study is conducted in *pesantrens* which organize socio-economic empowerment for the subordinate groups. Thus, the research findings cannot be generalized to institutions other than *pesantren* with similar characteristics. In addition, the reliability of research related to whether or not this study can be repeated with the same results, it will be very difficult to measure the consistency of research results because the social context always changes over time and has its own uniqueness.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The various views of the informants described in this section are based on the experience of *Pesantren Al-Imdad* and *Pesantren Maslakul Huda* in their empowerment activities. Based on the data obtained, there are some similarities and differences in their views about poverty and its causal factors. The similarity is that the two *pesantrens* see poverty as a multidimensional problem, although each *pesantren* has its own explanation. While the differences can be seen



from the views of both *pesantrens* in identifying the causes of poverty. These thoughts are analyzed using a classification of public awareness in understanding social reality (Freire 2011; Fakhri 2003: 31).

## The Analysis of *Pesantren* and Society on Poverty and Community Empowerment

### 1. *Pesantren Al-Imdad*

*Pesantren Al-Imdad* identifies poverty as community's inability to meet their basic needs. This view is in line with the basic need approaches, in which poverty is mainly related to economic and social problems (Saunders and Matheson 1992). In the economic dimension, community's low income is viewed as the first indicator of poverty. They explained that most of *santri's* parents (*wali santri*) in this *pesantren* work as non-permanent workers. In addition, there are several orphans with single parents who also work as laborers with non-permanent income. As stated:

“...lha mohon maaf misale, lha yen yatim, ibue yo mung iso buruh nyuci, dia yo nyambut gawene meng ngono kuwi...kalo dia malah jadi pembantu. Kan ada, sini yang yatim dan yatim piatu itu sekarang ada 16 orang...” (BHA, November 2013). (“...for example, some of *santri* are orphans, their mothers are temporary workers, there are 16 orphan *santri* in this *pesantren*...”)

Among the poor, there are even those whose conditions reach the level of needy (*fakir*) which is defined as a condition where a person is not yet certain how they will meet their family's needs for the next day or living one day at a time.

The second indicator of poverty is the inability of the community to pay for their children's education. This information is based on the experience of informants who interact directly with the community and *wali santri* through discussion carried out by *pesantren* personnels to build closeness with the community and to understand their problems. While in the social dimension, one of the community's problems is the existence of abandoned children. Some *santri* at this *pesantren* are victims of domestic

violence. According to *pesantren's* analysis, the existence of these children victims is part of social poverty. In terms of poverty causes, the informants at *Pesantren Al-Imdad* identify structural and human factors. Structural factors include development gaps, especially lack of access in the provision of educational facilities for rural communities. While the human factor is the attitude of *qona'ah* and the fear of the risk of failure that makes people unwilling to try.

Based on the description of the views on poverty, it can be seen that the main focus of *pesantren* is meeting basic needs, especially in terms of access to education for the poor. Whereas their analysis on poverty causes shows that they identify the structural factors (critical consciousness), includes development gaps especially in the field of education. In addition to that, they also view that subordinate group of society are part of the cause of their poverty (naïve consciousness). Thus, it can be concluded that the analysis of *Pesantren Al-Imdad* regarding poverty and its causes lie between naïve consciousness and critical consciousness.

Related to their identification of poverty, *Pesantren Al-Imdad* sees empowerment as an effort undertaken by *pesantren* and community to meet the need for affordable education, especially Islamic based education such as *pesantren* that are accessible to the subordinate groups. As stated: “...kalo saya bagaimana orang miskin bisa belajar dengan baik...” (BHA, Oktober 2013). (...if in my opinion how poor people can learn well...). In this context, the *pesantren's* perspective of empowerment is directly related to and influenced by their analysis of poverty. The idea of empowerment as a process of mutual assistance between *pesantren* and the community emphasizes on community capacity (Fetterman et al. 1996; Rothman et al. 1995), which can be mobilized to solve social problems and strengthening *pesantren* as community asset. In this case, *pesantren* and the community work together to organize empowerment programs in various fields for subordinate groups.

*Pesantren Al-Imdad* also identify empowerment as a sustainable process that must be carried out through stages that have been formulated with continuous assistance and evaluation, not only limited to training programs that are widely given to the community. This opinion is in line with Adi's view (2013) that empowerment is an on going process that enables the community to go through stages in the empowerment process repeatedly to achieve the goals set, re-evaluate the activities that have been carried out, increase the knowledge and competencies needed in accordance with the objectives to be achieved.

As stated by Canda and Furman (1999), spirituality becomes the soul of activities to help others. Rothman (1995) also states that locality development strongly emphasizes the moral commonwealth as the foundation of community development. Based on the view of the *Pesantren Al-Imdad*, faith is identified as a rationale for empowerment. This foundation can be seen from the identification of religious values and values that exist in the *pesantren* as the main foundation behind the idea of empowerment. The data shows that the main foundation behind the *kiai's* idea of socio-economic community empowerment is religious values. In this context, *Pesantren Al-Imdad* interprets worship is not only limited to ceremonial rituals, but it also covers all aspects of human life. One of the religious values as their foundation for empowerment is the argument on the obligation to preserve environment. This value is the basis of the formulation of an environmentally conscious vision for *santri* and the establishment of a waste hut (*pondok limbah*) at *Pesantren Al-Imdad*. The objectives of this program are to encourage students and community to maintain environmental sustainability and recycle waste. Another value is equality, in which all humans are equal so that there should not be discrimination or subordination. In this context, this value is manifested in providing opportunities for all community to access *Pesantren Al-Imdad* as a religious based educational institution. Thus,

the implementation of equality in empowerment programs opposes the assumption that the relationship built among *kiai*, staffs, teachers and *santri* within *pesantren* are dominant-subordinate (Arif 2008).

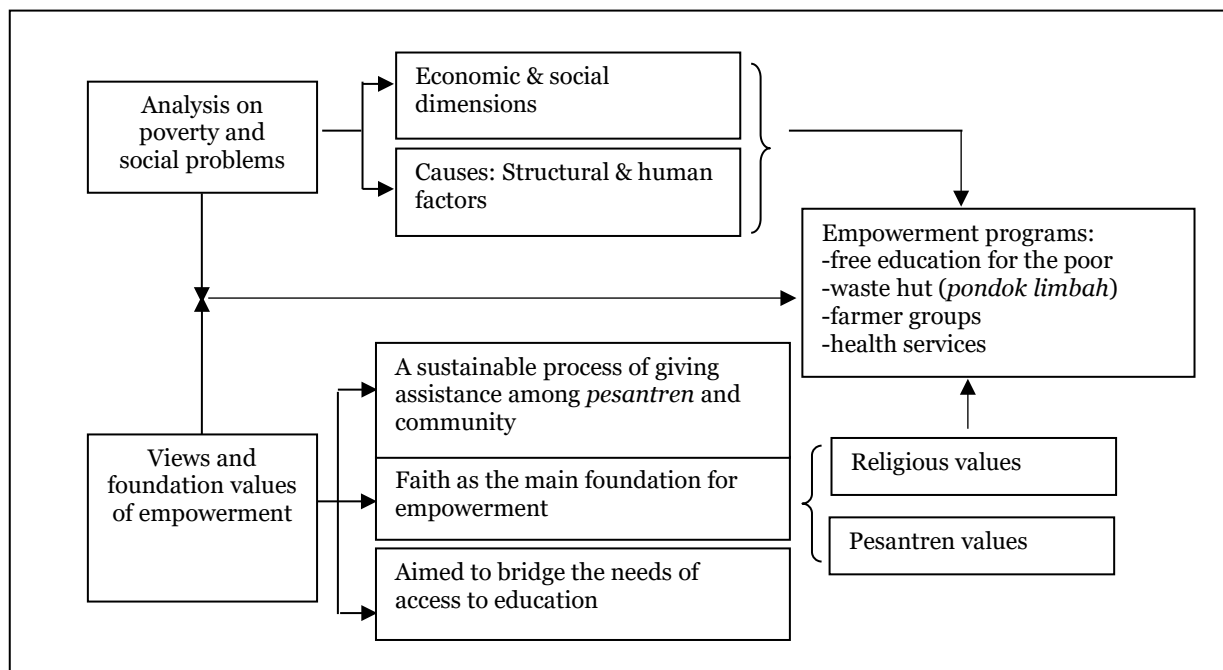
Other than religious values, there are also *pesantren* values regarded as the foundation for community empowerment. Those values include the belief that *pesantren* is not only popular for its role as an educational institution but also as a social institution. They believe that *pesantren* is an integral part of the community, which were born and developed within community. One evidence that shows the closeness of *pesantren* with the community is the physical building of the *pesantren* which does not have a gate, so that the *pesantren* building blends in with community's houses without a fence. In addition, the *kiai* intentionally decides not to build a mosque inside *pesantren*, but only a *mushola* to support *santri* learning activities. Thus, *santri* perform their religious activities at local village mosque together with the community. This value is in line with the history of *pesantren* proposed by Wahid (Wahid 2006), where *pesantren* is a community institution that provides religious education for Muslim communities accessible for all levels of society, at the time where education could only be accessed by the upper class community. Thus, the closeness of *pesantren* with the subordinate groups has been shown since the beginning of its emergence. The function of *pesantren* as educational and social institution shows the responsibility of *pesantren* towards the community. In addition to providing religious knowledge with *da'wah bil-lisan*, *kiai* and *pesantren* also help them in overcoming various social problems (Subhan 2006).

The view of empowerment in *Pesantren Al-Imdad* shows a conformity between *pesantren* analysis on poverty that identifies access to education as a major social problem with the view of empowerment as an effort to build access to education for all levels of society. Thus, the purpose of empowerment is identified

as bridging the needs of the poor for access to education. In addition to that, empowerment carried out by *Pesantren Al-Imdad* is not only limited to empowering the education sector, but also in other socio-economic fields to help the community overcome their problems. In this case,

the *pesantren* works with community to organize empowerment programs and community services such as free education for the poor, farmer groups, waste huts (*pondok limbah*) to process waste into

**Figure 1.**  
The analysis of *Pesantren Al-Imdad* on poverty and empowerment



organic fertilizer, and health services.

The analysis of *Pesantren Al-Imdad* of poverty and empowerment, as well as the rationale underlying the empowerment effort and its objectives are described by figure 1:

## 2. Pesantren Maslakul Huda

Different from the views of *Pesantren Al-Imdad* about poverty, *Pesantren Maslakul Huda* analyzes it as multidimensional problems include economic, socio-cultural and political dimensions which influence each other and shape the complexity of social problems. They view poverty in the context of injustice practices which occur in various dimensions, including economic, socio-cultural and political. As stated: “...*ketidakberdayaan untuk mendapatkan hak-hak yang asasi, hingga ketertindasan mereka ketika berhadapan dengan kekuatan yang lebih besar...*” (AS, January 2014). (...the inability to

obtain basic rights to their oppression when faced with a greater force...). Another informant stated: “...*kan perbandingan dulu dengan sekarang, namanya program pemerintah tidak merata, jelas tidak merata ...pada waktu itu...(hanya) daerah-daerah tertentu yang mendapatkan bantuan atau perhatian dari pemerintah...*” (AH, January 2014). (...government programs were not evenly distributed, clearly uneven ... at that time ... (only) certain regions received assistance or attention from the government).

In economic dimension, they identify poverty as the community’s inability to meet basic needs, low income, difficult access to education and health. This view is in line with Sukmana (2005) in identifying poverty in economic dimension. In addition to that, the *pesantren's* explanation of the poor condition also addresses the context of the surrounding community, in which the absence of agricultural land is a challenge for the village

community, unavailable access to healthcare, as well as relatively undeveloped economic businesses. In socio-cultural dimension, *pesantren* analyzes that some people see poverty as their destiny, since they experience it for generations and they have become accustomed to this condition. This analysis is categorized as internalized oppression, in which people unaware of their helplessness, and begin to adjust to the oppression they experience (Mullaly 2002). In this context, internalized oppression is very dangerous because it leads to people's assumption that the oppression and injustice practices they experience are their destiny that must be accepted as it is and cannot be changed. In political dimension, *pesantren* links poverty with human rights issues and dominant-subordinate relation between powerless society and dominant groups. This view is in line with the structural approach, in which the problem of poverty must be placed in the context of socio-economic injustice in the structure, processes, policies, and underlying values (Fakih 1996; Hikam 2000; Mullaly 2002). In this case, *kiai* and *pesantren* analyze that poverty is highly related to dominance by the ruling groups over the sub-ordinate groups, which results in community powerlessness.

The informants' analysis that identify various forms of injustice practices as the cause of poverty is categorized into structural factors. In this context, *pesantren* sees the community as victims of injustice practices. The first structural factor of poverty in rural communities is the development gap. This gap is regarded as a form of injustice policy practices such as uneven implementation of development programs among regions, the top-down approach that places community as an object of development without getting involved in the process, the lack of social and environmental analysis on the impacts of development programs.

The second factor is the implementation of development programs which are not entirely in favor of the community's need. It is identified in the implementation of development projects, including infrastructure development, in which budget absorption is regarded as the indication

of the success of the program or project, without analyzing the quality of development outcomes, its suitability to needs, and its impact on improving people's welfare.

Third, *pesantren* views the existence of corrupt officials within the government is also categorized as one of structural factors. In this context, the notion of development is only used by individuals for their political interests, by exploiting community's problems as a tool to obtain and maintain their status quo. It is true that *pesantren* justifies that one of religious teaching is to believe in destiny, regarding the fortune that a person obtains is a provision from Allah. However, it is also believed in religion that leaders must strive for the welfare of their people. In an *ushul fiqh rule* it says "*tasharrufu al-imam'ala al-ummati manuuthun bi al-mashlahah*", which means that all policies of a leader must be directly related to people's welfare (Wahid 2010). Thus, the belief in destiny must also be accompanied by maximum efforts to achieve community welfare.

Fourth, the absence of agricultural land is also analyzed as another cause of poverty in the village. As with other villagers in general, most community's expertise is in agriculture. Due to the limited area of the village, most farmers work as farm laborers in other villages.

Fifth, the imbalance exchange rate of the prices of agricultural products with other products as a cause of poverty is analyzed as one form injustice practices of economic system. Poor farmers are most affected groups of this policy, where their production cannot be exchanged to meet other living needs. Meanwhile, big business people get big profit from this unbalanced exchange rate. Thus, this injustice practices of economic system have a great impact on poverty of rural community.

Sixth, there is a biased media in the formation of public opinion towards rural communities. This analysis was based on an example of how the media gave a beautiful picture of the landscape in the agricultural area, without revealing the

farmers' suffering behind the beauty depicted. As a result, the injustice practices experienced by farmers in rural areas are not understood by other communities.

Based on *pesantren's* analysis on poverty and its causal factors, it is stated that poverty is closely related to the injustice practices of the economic, social, political and cultural system that results in community impoverishment. In Freire's classification of consciousness, this view belongs to critical awareness, where people are seen as victims and not as causes of poverty. In this context, *pesantren* critically analyzes the state of society as a result of interrelated economic, social, political and cultural structures that create poverty. This view does not blame humans - in this case is the poor - for their poor conditions, but sees them as victims of unjust structures. The analysis that links social problems with the system and structure is termed as personal is political (Mullaly 1997). Separating personal problems from socio-political structures is often the cause of powerlessness (Adi 2013: 221). Thus, this *pesantren* thoughts about poverty can be categorized into critical awareness.

In relation to the view of empowerment, *Pesantren Maslakul Huda* focuses on community capacity as stated by Fetterman, Kaftarian and Wandersman (1996) and Rothman (1995). In this context, *Pesantren Maslakul Huda* emphasizes on organizing community strength to build community-based institutions in various fields (Wahid 2006). As stated:

*"...pemberdayaan dimaknai sebagai sebuah proses di mana masyarakat dan pesantren bersama-sama melihat dan menganalisa masalah yang mereka hadapi, bersama-sama merencanakan upaya untuk mengatasi masalah tersebut, dan melakukan evaluasi terhadap kegiatan yang dilakukan dengan mengedepankan potensi yang dimiliki... (AH, January 2014). (.empowerment is defined as a process in which the community and pesantren together see and analyze the problems they face, jointly plan efforts to overcome these problems, and evaluate the activities carried out by prioritizing the potential pos-*

*sessed...).*

Based on the *pesantren's* view of empowerment, there are several meanings that basically focus on community power, including empowerment as a problem-solving process with a bottom-up approach, efforts to build community self-sufficiency, reciprocal relationships between *pesantren* and the community and a sustainable process.

As a problem-solving process with a bottom-up approach, empowerment is defined as a process, in which the community and *pesantren* as facilitators work together to assess problems, identify their potential, and determine efforts by organizing and developing their potential. Furthermore, they also carry out program evaluation to identify shortcomings and appreciate mutual success. In this context, society is positioned as the subject of development, where their rights to express opinions and ideas are highly valued. They are also given the freedom to make choices and decisions on their own. This view is in line with the locality development approach promoted by Rothman (1995), which states that social transformation requires participation of all elements of the local community in setting goals and implementing their activities. Empowerment as a process to build community self-reliance can be analyzed from the opinion that *pesantren* seeks to facilitate the community so that they can help themselves, and eliminate their dependence on other assistance in overcoming their problems. Building self-sufficiency is the main focus in empowerment, because the majority of rural communities, including communities around *pesantren* are accustomed to receiving social assistance that overrides self-sufficiency. The next view defines empowerment as a reciprocal relationship between *pesantren* and the community, in which helping the community means focusing socio-economic empowerment program on the community. In other words, community needs are the main basis for empowerment programs in the process of

building community self-sufficiency. Meanwhile, the community also supports *pesantren* to create a conducive environment for the teaching-learning process. Thus, *pesantren* and the community both benefit from community empowerment in different forms. In addition, *pesantren* also sees empowerment as a sustainable process that should be carried out continuously.

The *pesantren*'s views on empowerment are in line with three main principles of empowerment (Rappaport 1981 in Fetterman, et al. 1996). First principle, everyone has their strength and ability to be more competent. The community is the subjects of development who have rights to make choices and decisions for themselves. In this context, *pesantren* functions as facilitators that encourage the community to analyze their problems and to map out community's potential. The second principle, a person's failure is not due to a shortcoming owned by that person but the failure of the social system to provide and create opportunities for individuals. In line with these principles, critical awareness always links the problems with the existing system (personal is political). In this view, people are poor not because they are lazy, afraid of failure, or do not have the capacity needed, but because systems and structures do not create opportunities for them to develop their capacities and competencies. The third principle, in situations where community's abilities need to be improved or new abilities need to be obtained, the best way is through experience that encourages them to appreciate their ability to influence important life events. In this context, *pesantren* become facilitators for the community by creating opportunities for them to increase capacity and gain the new abilities they need.

*Pesantren Al-Imdad* and *Pesantren Maslakul Huda* have the same thoughts that faith is the foundation for their notion of empowerment, even though each *pesantren* identifies different religious values and *pesantren* values as their *dalil* (proposition). In seeing religious values, *Pesantren Maslakul Huda* identifies the virtues of social worship (*ibadah sosial*) and *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*. Whereas in the values

of *pesantren*, they believe that *pesantren* has a role and responsibility as education and social institutions. Furthermore, this *pesantren* also identifies its responsibility to take part in development programs.

First, *Pesantren Maslakul Huda* has faith that social worship is better than individual worship in term of its benefit. Social worship provides benefits to the community, whereas individual worship benefits return to the individual concerned. Second, the value of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* is explained with a deep philosophy relating to critical awareness in community empowerment. As written in one of the *pesantren*'s documentation, the order to prevent *munkar* is placed after the *amar ma'ruf*. In this case, the command to prevent people from doing damage or harming others must be preceded by understanding their social problems and helping them to be able to overcome those problems. This interpretation is based on the view, that the emergence of crime and destructive actions caused by unsolved social problems. They believe that the community's inability to meet their needs due to the system that is unable to create opportunities for them to improve their competencies (Rappaport 1981 in Fetterman, et al. 1996). Therefore, efforts to improve people's welfare are prioritized as efforts to prevent harmful actions.

Associated with *pesantren* values, there is a view of *pesantren* as an integral part of the community. There is no dividing fence between *pesantren* building and the community's houses and there is no mosque within the *pesantren* so that *santri* mingle with the community in carrying out rituals of worship at the village mosque. In this case, the integration between *pesantren* and the community makes them shape each other and form their own traditions (Bawani 2011). The view that *pesantren* also functions as a social institution is analyzed from the view that *pesantren* does not only carry out *da'wah bil-lisan*, but also *da'wah bil-hal*, one of which is manifested in community empowerment. In

this context, Islam is not only regarded as a set of values and moral ethics, but it is a religion of actions. Thus, Islam is believed to be a force to overcome social problems in economic, social, political and cultural aspects (Subhan 2006).

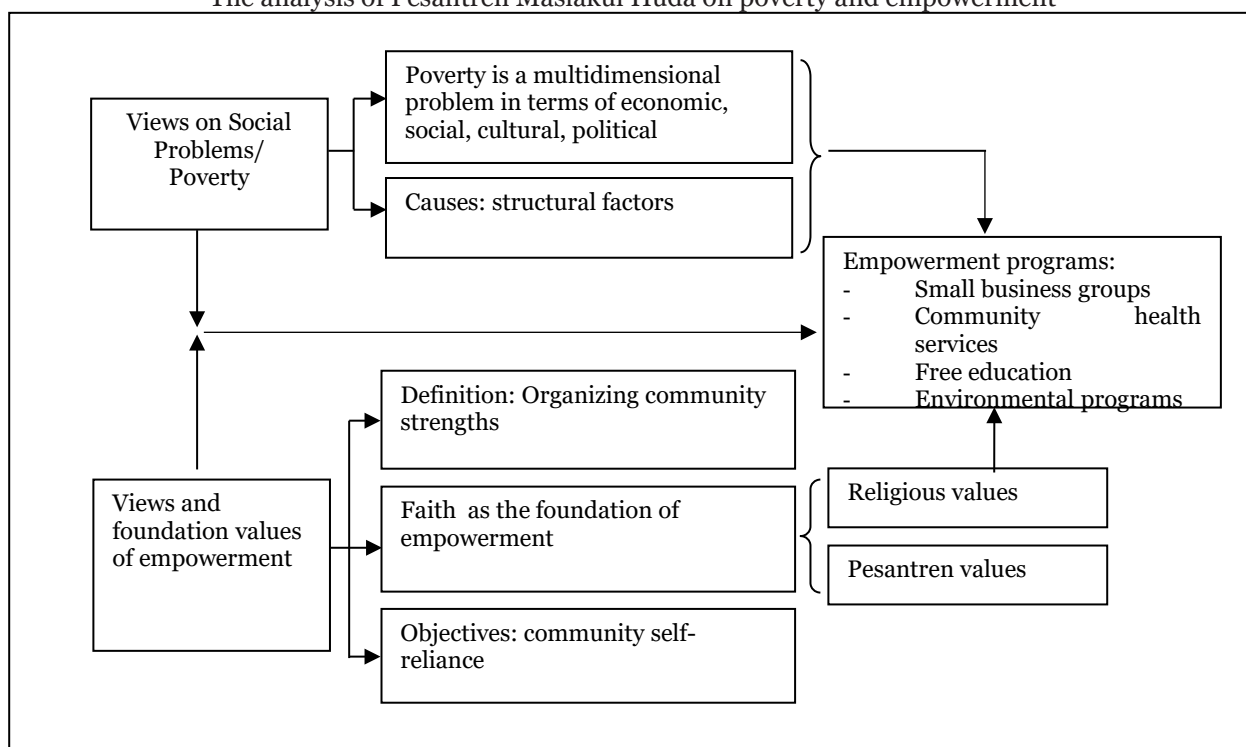
The believe that *pesantren* must take part in development process can be analyzed from their principle that *pesantren* must involve in improving the welfare of the community. Development disparities identified as one of the main causes of poverty in rural communities encourage *pesantren* to be able to play a role in bridging tensions between the community and the government. Thus, *pesantren* based community empowerment is not an anti-government action, but they see the government as a working partner to optimize performance to help the rural poor.

According to informants in this *pesantren*, community empowerment is aimed to encourage

the community to be able to be self-sufficient in solving their problems and foster their creativity. Based on those views on empowerment *definitions* and objectives, the *pesantren's* notion of empowerment is in line with Pranarka's opinion (1996) that empowerment defined as to give power or authority to community and to give ability or enable community. In the first category, empowerment is realized by raising critical awareness of the community over existing problems, motivating the community to be able to identify their potential, and respecting the community's rights to determine choices and make decisions to resolve their problems. Whereas in the second category, *pesantren* strives to facilitate capacity building and expertise needed by the community, through trainings held in collaboration with government and non-government institutions. The views of

**Figure 2.**

The analysis of Pesantren Maslakul Huda on poverty and empowerment



*Pesantren Maslakul Huda* regarding poverty and empowerment are manifested into several programs i.e free education, community health services, environmental programs, and small

business groups.

As explained in the introduction, the perspective of poverty is very important to understand *kiai* and *pesantren's* alignments

**Table 3.** Pesantren's Views on Poverty and Empowerment

Poverty	Definition	Multidimensional problems (economy, education, social, culture and politics)
	Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural factors</li> <li>• Human factors</li> </ul>
Empowerment	Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottom-up approach problems solving</li> <li>• Encouraging community self-reliance</li> <li>• Mutual relationship between <i>pesantren</i> &amp; the community</li> <li>• Sustainable process</li> </ul>
	Foundation of notion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious values</li> <li>• Pesantren values</li> </ul>
	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building empowered community</li> <li>• Providing access to education for the poor</li> </ul>

with subordinate groups underlies their socio-economic empowerment. The discussion of the study shows the uniqueness of *pesantren* in defining poverty and empowerment as explained in table 3.

In this study, those views *pesantren* and community are categorized into three types of analysis i.e. conservative, semi-progressive and progressive. The conservative analysis understands poverty as economic problems, namely inability to meet basic needs. This analysis identifies human factors as poverty causes that includes low level of education, lacks of skills needed so that people unable to compete in entrepreneurship or to carry out other productive ventures. Based on this understanding of poverty, this type of analysis defines empowerment as a process of mutual assistance between *pesantren* and the community by providing education and training facilities that can be accessed by all levels of society. *Pesantren* bases their empowerment thoughts on religious values and *pesantren* values. They believe that *pesantren* does not only function as religious education institutions, but also becomes social institution that must play a role in improving the welfare of the community, especially the surrounding community.

This identification of the causes of poverty that tends to blame the poor is termed blaming the victims (Mullaly 2002). In identifying poverty, this type of analysis is influenced by naival consciousness (Fakih 1996; Mullaly 2002).

According to this view, an effort that can be done is to help the community to obtain skills and entrepreneurship. The focus of empowerment is on community change because according to this view community self-sufficiency can only be achieved through human change. However, this view has an impact on the *pesantren*'s dominance over community who are deemed not to have the expertise and ability to make decisions and determine what programs are needed to reduce poverty. In other words, *pesantren* tends to be authoritarian in the empowerment process that is carried out, so that the relationship that is built between *pesantren* and the community is a dominant-subordinate.

The semi-progressive analysis identifies poverty not only in economic and social matters, but also in political matters. Thus, structural factors are identified as one of the causes of poverty. However, in addition to these structural factors, this type of *pesantren* sees that people are also wrong because they do not have the ability, skills and courage needed to develop productive businesses to meet their basic needs. They define empowerment as an effort to help each other between *pesantren* and the community, so that it will benefit both parties. The goal to be achieved is to build community self-sufficiency and *pesantren* development. This type of analysis is influenced by naival and critical consciousness. They want to be neutral by recognizing the structural and human factors as the poverty causes. However, this attitude does



not show clear alignments towards the poor, since they do not conduct further analysis about the causes of the people who do not have the ability and courage to entrepreneurship. In the empowerment process, the intention to build and develop educational facilities by involving community's participation indicates that there is a goal to help the poor access the education. However, these efforts also show the interest to develop *pesantren* as a religious educational institution.

The progressive analysis views poverty as a multidimensional problem including economic, social, political and cultural dimensions that influence each other and create poverty. They define structural factors as the causes of poverty. In this context, the poor are seen as victims of injustice practices such as development disparities, policies that are not pro-community and inequality in the exchange of agricultural products with other products. According to this analysis, empowerment is interpreted as an effort to organize the power of the community to solve various problems using a bottom-up approach based on religious values and aimed at building community self-sufficiency.

This progressive analysis is influenced by a multidimensional approach (Saunders 2005) and critical awareness in viewing poverty and the poor (Fakih 1996; Mullaly 2002). According to this type of empowerment, communities have the ability to identify their problems, to map and manage their potential to improve welfare. In addition, people have freedom to make decisions and choices about their lives. The failure of people to meet their basic needs is not caused by their inability, but because of the lack of opportunity for them to obtain, improve and manage their abilities (Rappaport in Fetterman et al. 1996).

## CONCLUSION

The human diversity must be based on the research findings, the relationship between analysis on poverty and community empowerment is in line with the theory that

awareness of social reality very influential to analysis of social problems and the choice of intervention. This study answers questions about the various perspectives of *pesantren* on poverty and its complexity, i.e. conservative, semi-progressive and progressive that lead to various forms of empowerment programs. However, in addition to these conclusions, the results of this study also provide a more detailed picture of faith which is used as the main foundation in *pesantren* based socio-economic empowerment. In this context, empowerment is not only interpreted as a partiality of the subordinate groups (*mustadh'afin*), but more importantly is the belief, that the alignment and empowerment efforts by *pesantren* is a manifestation of religious values that must be implemented and valued worship. This study also produces findings that religious values interpreted with critical awareness by *kiai* and *pesantren* give shape to build democratic, participatory, equality values implementation in the socio-economic empowerment process. This finding addresses the concerns raised in the research problem about the dominant-subordinate relation pattern, not accustomed to democratic attitudes and participatory activities in *pesantren* between *kiai-santri* and *kiai-society*.

The typology of *pesantren* on poverty and empowerment is not intended to judge whether one's view is right or wrong. However, referring to the results of this study, efforts to empower subordinate groups need more than just good intentions to help others, but also should be based on critical analysis of social problems. Without this critical analysis, *pesantren* could be trapped to into taking advantage of community's problems and their potential for the benefit of *pesantren* itself instead of truly empowering the community. Thus, this typology is very important to understand whether *pesantren* uses religious values as the legitimacy of blaming the poor for their conditions as subordinate groups (*mustadh'afin*), or to really provide assistance to subordinate groups and work with them to change the oppressive systems to be anti-oppressive at the personal, cultural and structural levels.

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