Sociopreneurship Empowerment as a Developmental Politic of Islamic Boarding School: A Lesson from Darul Mursyid

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ABSTRACT
This study analyses the sociopreneurship empowerment model performed by an Islamic boarding school from the perspective of developmental politics. Darul Mursyid boarding school, an Islamic educational institution in the Sipirok district in North Sumatera, has been known to employ this model as a part of its social development efforts in giving economic and social benefits to the Sipirok society. This study was carried out through subsequent descriptive-qualitative research, observation, in-depth interview, and FGD (forum group discussion) methods. The results exhibited that most of the sociopreneurship efforts had been directed at producing agroforestry commodities such as coffee, vanilla, honey, vegetables, etc., along with other economic activities. The existence of Darul Mursyid boarding school greatly supported the financial capabilities of the community. Overall, the findings of this study revealed the critical role of Darul Mursyid’s Islamic principles and the founding figures in driving enhanced sociopreneurship empowerment. This outcome also implicitly exhibited the significant role of Islamic boarding schools despite civil organizations contributing a lot of benefits to society’s welfare.

INTRODUCTION
The use of socio-entrepreneurship approaches as the model of political development has become an exciting study for many social scientists and practitioners, especially from the perspective of societal developments (Hastasari et al., 2022). Despite civil organizations' role in politics and society developments, an Islamic boarding school has also played an essential role in making a significant contribution to the enhancement of society's welfare, especially in education and economic aspects (Purnomo et al., 2015). Islamic boarding school is an educational institution that devotes its principal activities to Islamic teaching and learning and preaching the fundamental Islamic principles, Qur'an and Hadist (Farid & Lamb, 2020). The school consists of one or more students learning in it and is led by the boarding school's leader, so-called "Kyai," and helped by several teachers (ulamā/ustādz) (Choiruzzad & Nugroho, 2013).

The studies about socio-entrepreneurship of an Islamic boarding school are fundamentally considered according to the Islamic civil society’s social role (Nurbaiti, 2020). It comprises independent characters, volunteers, and goals for attaining society’s welfare. Furthermore, the fruitfulness of the developmental model is strongly influenced by the existence of charismatic figures/leaders and essential Islamic ideology in constructing a developmental frame (Kusmanto, 2017). Islamic developmental thinking is the direction or orientation of ideological thoughts, strategies, and development models that are
comprehensively realized to strengthen the civil society's role and existence in all aspects of developmental politics (Purwana, 2013). For example, developmental politics based on the Islamic principal methods had been adopted in the entrepreneurship activities of Shari’ah hotels in Jakarta. The rise of Islamic culture in Indonesia implied the growing number of upper-middle-class Muslim societies (Kusmanto, 2017).

Therefore, Darul Mursyid's socio-entrepreneurship should be considered a mixed process of political approach and economic activity. At least there are three essential hypotheses highlighted in this study. Firstly, the socio-entrepreneurship model does not solely result from the financial processes; it is derived from the political perspective and Islamic ideology. Secondly, the significant role of charismatic figures in the development process of socio-entrepreneurship is a part of the ideological manifestation and orientation of societal development. Thirdly, socio-entrepreneurship is not merely an individualistic effort; it is a complex dimension comprised of capital development efforts and joint ownership. This can be considered as an incision between capitalism and socialism within the frame of traditional Islamic thinking.

This study provides a brief insight into the social entrepreneurship model performed by an Islamic boarding school (Darul Mursyid) in the Sipirok district in North Sumatra. This boarding school is well-known for employing the socio-entrepreneurship model as a part of its political and social development efforts in giving economic and social benefits to the Sipirok society. To the best of our knowledge, the role of Islamic boarding schools in social entrepreneurship efforts has never been reported in the literature. The inside of the developmental model performed by Islamic boarding schools is meant to construct a better role model of socio-political development in contributing to the improved society's welfare.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

The study used a qualitative approach. (Taylor et al., 2015) suggested five characteristics of qualitative research, i.e., (1) it uses natural settings as direct data sources with the researchers as the main instrument, (2) descriptive, (3) it pays more to process than results or products, (4) inductive, and (5) meaningful. Data was collected through direct observation, interview and documentation, and forum group discussion (FGD). The FGD was conducted to reconfirm the subjective data obtained from the interview and observation steps, literature search, and documentation. The interview and FGD were also aimed to find new information from the participants for data enrichment. Some researchers in social sciences were also interviewed to gain much information regarding the social role of a boarding school from the perspective of development and politic. Before the analyzing step, all the data was presented to the School of Darul Mursyid’s Advisory Board and all participants to obtain approval. Hence, we confirmed that informed consent was obtained from all participants. Further, the consent data were analyzed to reveal and explain the existing phenomena.

The data analysis was carried out in a series of consecutive ways, including (1) data description – the obtained data was comprehensively analyzed and categorized, and (2) data analysis – all the categorized data was discussed using in-depth theoretical thinking and analysis. The research was conducted in the Darul Mursyid boarding school located in the district area of Sipirok in South Tapanuli regency, North Sumatera province-Indonesia (Figure 1).
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islam in Indonesia: a Historical Perspective

The process of Islamization in the countries located around the Southeast Asian region was initially spread out by the Arabic peoples during the era of southeast Asia trading that was reported from 1450 to 1680s (Esfandiar, 2022). Most of the coming Arabic peoples were known as traders and Islamic scholars; hence, during the trading activities, they also preached about Islam to persuade the local leaders to embrace it as their faith. However, it had possibly been that Islam in Indonesia was spread out earlier, as indicated by the existence of a Muslim tombstone from the eleventh century in East Java (Abdullah, 1991).

The role of Islamic scholars was indeed significant during the Islamization processes to the local leaders who tended to be King-centric (Nurbaiti, 2020). Most of the local leaders accepted the presence of Islamic scholars and allowed their preaching activities; hence, the Islamization process was fruitful. According to the archaeological evidence (the tombstone in Samudera Pasai) and the traditional historiographies (the tale of the Kingdom of Pasai and Malayan history) that provided meaningful information about the history of Islam in Indonesia, it can be asserted that the rise of Islamic Kingdoms in Indonesia was marked at the end of thirteen century in Aceh (Karim, 2018).

Personal approaches primarily conducted the spread of Islam religion to the local people through the Sufistic way (soul purification) (Nurbaiti, 2020). This approach was significant to the native people's faith in myth and the truth of Islam. Despite the Islamization through formal methods (aqeedah, shari'ah, ubudiyyah, muamalah, etc.), the Sufistic approach proceeded with a domestication process along with Animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, which in turn led to the rise of Sinkretism. Several events exhibited the efforts to uphold or purify the Islamic religion, like the tale of Syekh Siti Jenar, who was sentenced to death by Wali Songo (Nine Ulamā), and the burning of scriptures that belonged to Hamzah Fansuri and Syamsuddin al-Sumatran (Rahmanto et al., 2018).

The efforts to purify the religion and faith improved along with the growing number of people of Indonesia learning about Islam in the Middle East countries. On the other side, the spread of the Wahabi movements implied the rise of high awareness of fiqh empowerment. As a consequence, the Padre war happened in West Sumatra. The attempts to purify and teach the real fiqh had driven the rise of Islamic civil societies and boarding schools in Java and Sumatra (Karim, 2018).

Orientation and Strategy of Developmental Politics

The politics of Islamic development differ from conventional developmental politics, which are only devoted to achieving capitalistic and materialistic goals (Appiah et al., 2019). It eventually implies the evolved paradoxical phenomena towards the Islamic perspective that provides a brief comprehensive approach to achieving a better life in the current world and afterlife (Warjio, 2016).

The brief insight of the development perspective has been placed in a narrow point of view, i.e., from the economic outlook; hence, it is almost certain to negate the role of political actors who determine the specific orientation or interests that may influence the social development perspectives. Therefore, the political perspective is supposedly presented to explain the model and orientation of
developments because it seems likely to be an economic-oriented perspective (Kusmanto, 2021).

The existing developmental model as the political product and processes becomes more critical to analyze comprehensively. The conflict of interests often emerges among the political actors due to the different perspectives in establishing identity and ideology. Usually, the political actors are indicated as groups or countries rather than individuals. They reflect a kind of interests from specific individuals, local, national, and even foreigners, for the ability to influence other political actors in the political processes. This process will determine the development orientation generated according to the ideas or ideology and their interest as a representation of their existence. The stronger their power or authority and ability to play a political bargaining lead, the more significant the chances of obtaining the political process' product (Kusmanto, 2021).

**Society Empowerments: Perspective and Goal**

Empowerment originally comes from the word "power," which means strength, ability, and having power. Therefore, empowerment is usually intended for the people having weak and powerless. (Soetomo, 2011) stated that empowerment is a process of multidimensional changes aiming to create a balanced condition between the needs and available resources through anticipating, solving problems, and taking advantage of the existing opportunities and resources. On the other hand, community empowerment can be defined as a valorizing process of every current potential resource to achieve prosperity and welfare. Even (Mufidah & Adi, 2018) asserted that community empowerment is an effort carried out by a community aiming to increase strength, opportunity, knowledge, expertise, and so forth.

In another study, empowerment can be defined as an improvement process in the people's independence based on the capacity and internal strength of the material and non-material resources through capital redistribution. Empowerment might be considered a fair sharing of power to increase political awareness of vulnerable groups, aiming to boost development efforts (Anheier et al., 2010). Accordingly, empowerment should result in an encouraging process of social change that allows marginalized people who are indicated powerless to exert greater influence in the political arena, either at the local or national level. (Atkinson, 2017) has formulated that community empowerment has several objectives. The first is to improve education by cultivating a lifelong enthusiasm for learning. Second, the improvement of accessibility, with the growth and development of the spirit of lifelong learning, is expected to improve the accessibility of information, innovation, financing, provision of products and equipment, and marketing institutions. The third is the improvement in action; armed with advances in education and accessibility with a variety of good resources, it is hoped that there will be changes to better activities. Fifth is an institutional improvement, namely the development of business partnership networks. Sixth, improvement of the business or business being carried out. Seventh is the income improvement and a better network of business and business partnerships. Eight is improving the physical and social environment because the environment is often caused by poverty and limited income. Ninth is the improvement of life, with the level of income and improved environmental conditions expected to improve the needs of every family and community. The last is improving society with a better life supported by a better physical and social environment.

**Socio-entrepreneurship: Definition and Outlook**

There are several definitions dealing with social entrepreneurship (sociopreneurship) perspectives. (Ebrashi, 2013) defined sociopreneurship as
traditional entrepreneurship with a mission to change the state of society. (Leadbeater, 2015) explained that social entrepreneurship utilized the previously neglected resources in new and strategic ways to empower them. Social entrepreneurship was the creation of social value resulting from collaboration with other people and organizations from the community involved in creating social innovations in economic activities (Lang & Fink, 2019). Hence, from this definition, it was thought four criteria of socio-entrepreneurship: are social value, civil society, innovation, and economic activity (Palesangi, 2012).

(Shahid & Alarifi, 2021) had developed a framework for understanding the relationship between social entrepreneurship and its attachment to the community environment. The model was conducted by examining several illustrations of cases in several areas of society. The results showed that engagement with local communities was a prerequisite for accessing and building local resources, including building trust with community members. It meant that engagement with local communities would help to build solid and stable relationships with external stakeholders.

(Lateh et al., 2018) demonstrated that social entrepreneurship has played a natural and essential role in solving social problems. Social value creation and innovation were the main instruments in social entrepreneurship. She noted that Bina Swadaya and Mitra Bali had played a role in encouraging the improvement of the community's economy to reduce poverty. Social goals with the impact of community empowerment became an essential value in the practice of social entrepreneurship.

The meaning of the term entrepreneurship itself is even broader. In simple terms, (Wibowo & Nulhaqim, 2015) divided entrepreneurship into two major dimensions: mindset and pattern of action (method). The philosophy concerns our perspective on something, optimistic attitude, never giving up, initiative, innovation, and others. The action pattern is related to the way of carrying out the entrepreneurial activity, such as production management, marketing strategy, finance, etc.

Social entrepreneurship also emerges as a response due to the inability of business entrepreneurship activities and government activities to meet the community's needs. According to (Hamid et al., 2018), a program for business entrepreneurs was an opportunity for social entrepreneurs. They also added that the success of commercial entrepreneurship would benefit society through the availability of new and valuable goods, services, jobs, and transformative social impact. This could even become a driving motivation for other business entrepreneurs to take action.

**Agroforestry-preneurship: Role and Benefits**

Agroforestry has two meanings. Linguistically, agroforestry comes from two words, i.e., agros and forestry (Putri et al., 2015). Agros is the Greek language, a form of a combination of agricultural activities with other activities on the land. At the same time, forestry comes from the English language, which means everything related to forests (forestry). Forestry includes all efforts, knowledge, processes, and all behaviors in managing forests and using natural resources for human beings' benefit and welfare (Arts et al., 2012).

(Tolentino & Landicho, 2011) defined agroforestry as an ecological dynamic of natural resource management system by planting trees on agricultural land and pastures to obtain various products sustainably to increase social, economic, and environmental benefits for all the land users. Therefore, agroforestry is a step towards a more significant role in rural development. This opportunity will be more meaningful if it goes along with the intensification of silviculture. Now is the time for forestry to work efficiently, concentrate on a narrow area, and provide many other forest areas to increase community welfare contributions (Hani & Suryanto, 2014).
One of the benefits obtained from the agroforestry system is an increase in output that varies in the form of food, fiber, wood, fuel, etc. Economically, the agroforestry system offers a reduced risk of crop failure from one component. Thus, it can still be covered by yields (harvests) from other components, simultaneously increasing the farmers' income (Van Alfen, 2014). This model can be used for conservation or rehabilitation purposes to be sustainable and multi-purposed. Forest utilization innovation is a solution to maintain the function of the forest while using it for the improvement of the people's welfare in the environment (Fisher et al., 2018).

**Developmental Politic in Sociopreneurship Empowerment**

The Islamic boarding school of Darul Mursyid possesses the Islamic ideology of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama’ah (Aswaja). This is a group of commentators, hadith experts, and jurists. They are the ones who follow and adhere to Sunnah (traditions and practices) of the Prophet Muhammad and khulafaourrasiyin (the Prophet Muhammad’s companions) (Sarkun, 2019). They are a group gathered in four madzhab (school of thoughts), namely madzhab Hanafi, madzhab Syafi‘i, madzhab Maliki, and madzhab Hanbali.

In the study of faith/theology, the term Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama’ah (Aswaja) corresponds to an ideological understanding carried by Abu Hasan al-Asy’ari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi that is contrary to the Khawarij and Jabariyyah’s thoughts (textual perspective), and the Qadariyyah and Mu’tazilah’s perspectives (liberal perspective) (Syarkun & Huda, 2020). In the study of jurisprudence, the term Aswaja is even attributed to Sunni jurisprudence, which refers to the jurisprudence of four madzhab (Hanafi, Maliki, Syafi‘i, and Hanbali), which are different from the Shi’i jurisprudence, Dzhahiri, Ja ‘fairy (Sarkun, 2019).

The Islamic boarding school of Darul Mursyid adopts Aswaja as the fundamental principle for managing the organization, following the Asy’ari and al-Maturidi’s thinking. In the meantime, the school emphasizes the implementation of madzhab Syafi‘i (Syafi‘iyah). The definition of Aswaja generally follows Imam al-Ju’ayid al-Bagdadi (d. 297 H / 910 AD) and Imam al-Ghazali at-Thusi’s (d. 505 H / 1111M) thinking, which are moderate Islamic principles.

Initially, the Islamic boarding school of Darul Mursyid was a conservative boarding school with a mission to merely deliver the preaching of Islamic learning through educational activities. However, after the demise of the school’s chairman in 1997, the new leadership brought about a significant change in managing this conservative boarding school into a modern Islamic school with the vision of "Empowering the People to Achieve the Glories of Islamic Civilization." Hence, Islamic preaching activities are not merely devoted to providing Islamic education; this school has been directed into the development model toward an advanced and prosperous Islamic civilization.

The new leadership has changed the traditional management into a modern way, with a new basis of thinking in advancing Islamic civilization, referring to the Qur’ān Surah Al-Anbā‘a verse 107. Being mercy for all universes can be realized if the Islamic community reaches a civilized state. Therefore, it is necessary to change the way of managing an education pathway or preaching that refers to Islamic civilization’s visions. Changes in the ideological thinking to continuously encourage people to move forward is the new leadership’s vision to make this Islamic boarding school leveled off a modern school.

Ideologically, many changes made by the new leadership towards modernization follow conservative thinking. It can be seen from the students’ Islamic curricula and teaching materials. All the curricula and teaching materials refer to the Aswaja teachings. The changes of vision toward establishing Islamic civilization through modernization are definitely still aligned with Islamic thought and principles. The improvements in curriculum, management, and community empowerment activities are carried out modern and innovatively. Seriousness in the attempts to achieve an Islamic civilization with education and
community empowerment is realized through the enrichment of the school's educational activities to improve the student's ability to master Islamic knowledge, science, and technology.

The boarding school also provides knowledge and skill for the community to develop business and management skills in lodging businesses, hygienic culinary, cleanliness, laundry business, making artsy handicrafts, and so forth. Social entrepreneurship has been attempted in a modern environment around the school area. The Islamic boarding school has also established new management in agroforestry community empowerment, aiming for forest conservation efforts with several activities such as planting coffee, vanilla, and honeybee cultivation businesses.

In carrying out the Cooperation Agreement with the Ministry of Forestry of Indonesia, the boarding school has successfully managed 200 hectares of forest area out of 600 hectares in the Sipirok district. This activity has involved several farmer communities that so-called “Poktan” from different districts and villages such as Saipar Dolok Hole district (Sidapdap Simanosor village, Ulumanis Situnggaling village, Batang Garut village), Arse district (Lancat village and Natambang Roncitan village), Marancar district (Aek Sabaon village), Sipirok district (Saragodung village), and from Angkola district (Sitartoit village).

The boarding school has functioned as facilitating media in forest conservation supervision to the farmer communities. On this occasion, the boarding school has provided various cleaning, drying, and coffee processing facilities that the Poktan can utilize. The districts shall be empowered, so they can benefit the forest to improve their life welfare while preventing the forest from damage or deforestation. As a result, the integrated plantation concept by involving the farmer communities from the eight villages succeeded in exporting the coffee products in 2021, with an average of 3.8 tons in the form of green beans, while the processed products in the form of roasted beans and coffee grounds had been marketed in the region of Sumatera and Java islands. Meanwhile, vanilla commodities are still in the process of growing and breeding. Honeybees have been produced in limited quantities.

The new chairman's role as the leading actor in changes has revitalized the Islamic ideological thinking about a better life with a new vision of advancing Islamic civilization through mastering science and technology and improving society's welfare. The development model through social entrepreneurship in agroforestry has shown promising results for society's interest. Figure 2 exhibits the adopted development model through empowering Islamic education and social entrepreneurship to improve society's welfare.

Figure 2. Developmental model in education and social entrepreneurship of Islamic Boarding School of Darul Mursyid

The successful transformation from a conservative boarding school into a modern one through a modernized management approach and ideological revitalization has been noted as a fundamental and meaningful achievement. Every change in managing efforts consistently exhibits clear goals and directions delivered to the boarding school stakeholders through good interpersonal communication. This is again clarified in detail, concise, clear, integrated, and easy to understand so that the changes can be made progressively to organize a professional culture. It is expected that the boarding school will be able to continuously grow and innovate through the established organizational and professional culture.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the boarding school's role as the agent of society empowerment is fruitful in developing both human and business capital and transforming the Islamic principles into the knowledge and
skills applied to a social charge. Indeed, this boarding school's existence greatly supports the society's economic capabilities. The findings of this study show the critical role of founding figures and Islamic principles of the Darul Mursyid in driving enhanced social entrepreneurship. This outcome also implicitly reveals the significant role of Islamic boarding schools despite civil organizations from the political development perspective, contributing a lot of benefits to society's welfare.

CONCLUSION

The Islamic boarding school of Darul Mursyid is an Islamic educational institution that has given many advantages to society's welfare. This boarding school has been well-recognized for its high-quality education in Islamic principles and preaching, Qur'an, Hadist, and socio-entrepreneurship. Ideologically, many changes made by the new leadership toward modernization followed the traditional thinking shown by the Islamic curriculum and teaching materials for students. All the curricula and teaching materials are referred to as ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah learnings. The changes of vision toward establishing Islamic civilization through modernization were still aligned with Islamic thought and principles.

The boarding school had functioned as facilitating media in the forest conservation supervision to the farmer. On this occasion, the boarding school provided various cleaning, drying, and coffee processing facilities that the Poktan utilized. The communities should be empowered so they can use the forest to improve their life welfare while preventing their forest from damage or deforestation.

Conclusively, the role of boarding schools as the agent of societal empowerment was meaningful in developing both human and business capitals and transforming the Islamic principles into the knowledge and skills applied to a social charge. This boarding school's existence greatly supported society's economic capabilities. The results of this study also showed the critical role of founding figures of the Darul Mursyid and the Islamic principles implemented in driving enhanced social entrepreneurship.

REFERENCE LIST


