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ISLAM, MODERNITY, AND THE FUTURE
THE TRANSFORMATION
OF ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA¹

SUMMARY: Islamic higher education in Indonesia is arguably a microcosm of the deeper and larger dynamic of Islam in the country that happens in an increasingly intense interaction with global context. Islamic universities and institutes with their structures and curricula are crucial sites of critical discourse and negotiation. They have been affected by the intricate relationships and challenges of the larger Muslim community within the concrete historical context that is shaped, among others, by the negotiation of religious traditions and different forms of modernities. In these Muslim higher education institutions, important and crucial questions are debated, including a vision of Islam in its interaction with the questions of modernity and science, democracy and socio-economic welfare, sexuality and gender equality, religious pluralism, local culture, nation-building, global interaction, and internationality. Important agendas for long-term transformation are also negotiated and acted upon. Contestations and consensus have happened in this ongoing dynamic that can be highly political, where Muslim organizations, the government, and networks of scholars and knowledge interact in the ever-changing contexts.

Introduction

I remember my chit chat before delivering an opening lecture (*studium generale*) at the beginning of the school year held by a sociology of religion department of a

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