University-Community Engagement as a Mode of Knowledge Production in Indonesian Islamic Higher Education: Philosophical, Methodological, Policy Considerations

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Abstract: Arguing that a policy is not a copy-paste like enterprise, this paper is going to consider philosophical, methodological, and policy challenges that might be encountered by the Indonesian Islamic Higher Education (IIHE) in pursuing university-community engagement as well as possible solutions that could be proposed. Knowledge production in the IIHE is mainly sought in a disciplinary mode regulated by values, norms, and methods generated deductively from the divined resources, especially Qur'an and the prophetic traditions (*Sunnah*). This mode of knowledge production is influential enough in informing the way many scholars within this system perceive and approach knowledge and its production. They tend to deal with issues and problems from religiously loaded perspective. Instead of pondering what and how things operate, they are often tempted to see things from what they should be and how they should be. Consequently, they are most likely to face difficulties in discovering facts, leading to parochial knowledge. On the other hands, those who are less disposed to this mode, especially disciplinary experts in non-religious sciences, tend to see knowledge production as neutral activities. Both sides nevertheless have less cognitive and cultural competence to develop transdisciplinary exchanges in a distributed knowledge society.

Keywords: Islamic higher education, university-community engagement, Indonesia, knowledge management

Introduction

Recently, there has been a new movement to adopt university-community engagement in Indonesian Islamic higher education (IIHE),

especially in state funded institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. It coincides with the vision of transforming IIHE to become World Class Universities or Research Universities. In order to realize this goal, ongoing discussions and conversations between IIHE and other foreign universities in Canada and Australia (Diktis 2014, 2015) has been pursued. This engagement may come in various forms, and one of them is the engagement of the university research center and civil society to co-produce knowledge (Onyx 2008).

It should be, however, bored in mind that university-community engagement needs a particular cultural and organizational infrastructure that differs from place to place or time to time. Knowledge production in the IIHE is mainly sought in a disciplinary mode regulated by values, norms, and methods generated deductively from the divined resources, especially Qur'an and the prophetic traditions (*Sunnah*). This mode of knowledge production is influential enough in informing the way many scholars within this system perceive and approach knowledge and its production. They tend to deal with issues and problems from religiously loaded perspective. Instead of pondering what and how things operate, they are often tempted to see things from what they should be and how they should be. Consequently, they are most likely to face difficulties in discovering facts, leading to parochial knowledge. On the other hands, those who are less disposed to this mode, especially disciplinary experts in non-religious sciences, tend to see knowledge production as a neutral or free value activities. Both sides nevertheless have less cognitive and cultural competence to develop trans disciplinary exchanges in a distributed knowledge society.

The existing IIHE's knowledge culture seems to contradict the value of the university-community engagement by which knowledge production is conceived as a human collective effort in which all parties, formal and informal, are expected to contribute to the knowledge production process beyond religious values, disciplinary and localized boundaries.

Arguing that a policy is not a copy-paste like enterprise, this paper is going to consider philosophical, methodological, and policy challenges that might be encountered by the IIHE in pursuing university-community engagement in the context of knowledge society (see Välimaa and Hoffman 2008) as well as possible solutions that could be proposed. The focus is the existing challenges around the issue of religious text incorporation in knowledge production, and the epistemological dichotomy between so called religious and non-religious knowledge. This paper argues, first, that the issue

is not the incorporation of Qur'an and *Sunnah* in IIHE's tradition of knowledge production; it is the way people treat them in the process of knowledge production. Even though religious texts are part of people's religiosity, it is feasible to treat them as a common platform for human knowledge production. Secondly, real people integration and interconnectivity are far more needed in IIHE, rather than epistemological integration and interconnectivity, by restructuring IIHE in a form that can help them to become actors and collaborators in a knowledge production and distribution.

By doing so, IIHE may survive and not to be marginalized in the current arena of higher education internationalization. It should reconsider and strengthen its philosophical configuration in a way that enables it to perceive knowledge production as an objectively contested area. Within this contested area, it has to demonstrate its unique scientific paradigm. Simultaneously, it has to show that this uniqueness will enable it to collaborate better with other knowledge producers effectively.

In the last decade, there has been a trend of integrated-interconnected science paradigm along with the transformation of several Islamic colleges or institutes to become universities. This effort is claimed to be a solution for the problem of historical and ongoing dichotomy between science and religion (Ichwan and Muttaqin 2013) within IIHE. This however has not significantly changed the culture and structure of knowledge production within the IIHE system. The character of knowledge production remains very disciplinary and dichotomous. Interdisciplinary claim is more about rhetoric than reality. This disciplinary issue is even deeper when the religious and non-religious science dichotomy is taken into consideration.

Furthermore, the emergence of knowledge economy introduces a new challenge for IIHE. They are expected to produce knowledge that is valorized in economy society. It should be admitted that knowledge generated in IIHE has lower comparative advantage in knowledge economy. Producing knowledge in more collaborative and trans disciplinary fashion may allow them to produce knowledge that is valued and needed by the society. Problem based knowledge may contribute to the lessening of disciplinary knowledge boundaries. Engaging different parties to negotiate and renegotiate what knowledge can be accepted, and how it should be produced may bring about knowledge that serves the common betterment of humanity. It is however not clear how this engagement model will be implemented in the Indonesian Islamic higher education. This transformation is nevertheless urgently

needed in order to save IIHE from marginalization in knowledge society (Scott 1997).

Knowledge Production in Knowledge Society

The increased resource scarcity and competition offer an impetus for nations to make universities as centers of excellence and innovation in order to become competitive in internationalization arena. On other side, people incline to have less trust on expert knowledge (Beck 1992). In this context, theorists talk about Mode 1, 2, and 3 of knowledge production. In Mode 1, knowledge is produced in compliance with values, norms, methods that are considered legitimate in the community of scientists. Knowledge is monopolized by expert communities. In Mode 2, knowledge production becomes distributive, transient, trans disciplinary, socially accountable, reflexive, localized, heterogeneous, applicative, and collaborative (Gibbons et al. 1994, Onyx 2008). Lastly, in Mode 3, the heterogeneous mode of production is considered insufficient to enhance competitiveness. Knowledge production requires higher learning processes and dynamics to achieve higher intelligence, efficiency, and effectiveness. Within this system, the top-down and button-up processes are allowed to flourish (Carayannis and Campbell 2012).

Currently, research activities are characterized by "the steering of research priorities", "the commercialization of research" and "the accountability of science". Knowledge produced out of these activities are considered as private goods that are traded in the market like other commodities. Knowledge increasingly becomes the locus of contestation involving various parties. Before it is confirmed as official knowledge, it should be negotiated and renegotiated until it meets the interests of all actors concerned (Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons 2003, 181, Gallopin et al. 2001).

Scott (1997) argues that university could be a marginal institution in the future. The transformation of knowledge production, from disciplinary mode to trans disciplinary mode that demands higher social accountability and reflexivity, leads to the need to transform university from its disciplinary structure. University cannot anymore confine itself in a disciplinary boundary because knowledge production has been distributed to novel places and agents. University is not the only place where the production occurs. Civil organizations, corporates, consultancies, and other forms of associations have their own system of knowledge production. Universities have to produce a new kind of experts and scientists, who are able to collaborate with other

knowledge producers. Research and teaching are not anymore in their monopoly. Both activities may happen outside and without universities (Gibbons 1998).

We learned that universities had proved themselves as producers of knowledge in a disciplinary structure. When knowledge becomes widely distributed, however, universities cannot remain anymore as the producers only. They also have to become the knowledge assemblers. They have to produce "knowledge workers" who are "problem solvers, and problem brokers" (Gibbons 1998, 6) in order to be able to handle problems that are most likely multidimensional and require practical solutions. The signifycance of knowledge is not based on how sound the theory it adheres to, but on how capable it is to solve practical problems.

Against backdrop of increased resource scarcity and distributed mode of knowledge production, the notion of the university-community engagement gains its significance.

University-Community Engagement

The trend of university-community engagement in the last two decades should be understood in the context of declining state financial support for higher education as well as the declining social mission of higher education over economic benefits. In the industrial society, knowledge production and economy is not directly linked. Now, in post-industrial society, knowledge is directly linked to economy (Weerts 2014, Biesta 2007).

Carnegie Foundation defines university-community engagement as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (Driscoll 2008, 39). This definition emphasizes the presence of mutual benefits coming out of the engagement. This differs from the existing practices where universities often engage in community-based collaboration without necessarily bringing about such mutual benefits.

Within the process of university-community engagement, universities can claim their significant role in knowledge production without undermining the role of other parties outside. In knowledge production, university research centers can play various role, such as collaborator, mediator, and independent critical analyst (Onyx 2008).

College in America is used be defined as a community of learning where strictness and collegiality is combined to produce the "whole man-his body and soul as well as his intellect" is nurtured to become citizens that have quality of "unity, gentility, and public services". In the later development, as college mission was expanded to research as well as teaching, beyond character building, as a place to seek "all knowledge into a unified whole", colleges became universities. At that time, boundaries between disciplines did not exist as they are today. A Harvard graduate (class of 1825) wrote, "There is one truth, even as one God". In Colombia University, on a domed building erected in the first decade of the 20th century, inscription reads, "Erected for the Students that Religion and Learning May Go Hand in Hand and Character Grow with Knowledge" (Delbanco 2012, 38, 40, 79).

Colleges and universities in Indonesia, of course, have their own social history and localized cultural meaning. Altabach (1989), nevertheless, argues that initially Asian universities, including Indonesia, take the Western model of education system. In the later development, they became Asian as much as Western. Following the globalization characterized with increased connectivity and collaboration, they tend to converge with the Western model. In fact, the ongoing change and transformation within the IIHE demonstrate how Islamic higher education system, part of the Indonesian tertiary education, evolves, even involves in global education contestation.

In the last three decades, academic discussions have been occupied by topics around top-research universities. World ranking institutions publish their annual reports to expose the standing of universities across the globe. Universities are racing to become top-research universities. Altabach and Salmi explain that there are three main factors mainly attributed to identify top-research universities: "a high concentration of talent", "abundant resources", and "favorable governance features" (p. 3).

Internationalization of higher education has been a trend, not only in English speaking countries, but also in non-English speaking countries; most of them are developing countries. In the former, internationalization operates as selling education to buying countries, mostly Asia and Latin American. In the later, it operates as selling education to the privileged citizens. Internationalization of higher education offers more benefits and control to developed English-speaking countries. Money making is the main driving force of internationalization as well as the growing demand for it. Multinational arrangements characterized with inequality in benefit and

control are undertaken to facilitate internationalization (Altabach and Knight 2007).

In such a structure of university arrangement, community engagement is promoted in order to participate in knowledge production. Community can be defined as territory and neighborhood or the nature of human relations. Human relations are more likely to be associated with interests (McMillan and Chavis 1986). In a community, activities and interactions occur by which human products are generated, including knowledge (Jonassen 1960). Freilich (1963) in his classical study argues that community has an operational definition that represents people who are interconnected through various centers where information is distributed. Simply put, community is individuals or groups of citizens drawn together by identities, interests, and locations (Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi, and Herremans 2010).

In knowledge economy, universities by and large have redefined their relations to community or society. Universities initially perceived themselves as independent producers of knowledge. Nowadays, they deal with community as partners to co-produce knowledge. However, this knowledge production is defined in economic terms. Therefore, many view that universities in knowledge economy have abandoned their historical and social mission. In order to redirect this ongoing orientation, according to Biesta (2007), universities should rethink about their civic role. Universities should work to create knowledge democracy rather than knowledge economy.

The declining support of the state to higher education in some countries is sometimes understood as a consequence of the fact that universities do not demonstrate enough evidence that they are addressing societal needs, such as crimes, poverty, and unemployment. Weerts (2014) argues, however, that the relationship between engagement and state financial support is not as simple as it is because state support for higher education is always embedded in wider political and economic contexts in which the support of politicians from different parties is not easy to predict. Weerts (2014) suggests that what determines whether a university will engage with community or seek for a state financial support through community engagement is its dependency on resources.

In a context of firm-community engagement, Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi, and Herremans (2010) argue that basically the character of firm-community engagement may come in three main forms: transactional, transitional, and transformational. The return of this engagement however

tends to be long-termed legitimacy for parties involved. The same might be true for universities, especially research universities.

Fitzgerald suggests (2012) that in order to support a successful community engagement, it is important to include mentoring, awareness-raising, and supportive university infrastructure. In university-community engagement, university should value research, knowledge integration, knowledge application through community, and teaching.

Research in the United States shows that research universities are slower in implementing university-community engagement due to its size and decentralized system, and due to narrowly defined scholarship. Weerts and Sandmann (2010) suggest that inclusive governing structure, mission, history, and location of institution to the community are important factors that should be considered when university-community engagement is to be taken into a policy measure. In the process, universities should be able to inclusively share resources and voices with community. Actors involved do not only need to bring their academic expertise, but also their social skills to integrate with the community.

Although it is clear that university-community engagement should be able to bring mutual benefits from reciprocal processes undergone, it is not always easy to define the success of a project. It is therefore very important for universities and communities to define their reference of indicators from the beginning. Hart and Northmore (2010, 8) propose indicators of a successful engagement: "public access to facilities, public access to knowledge, student engagement, faculty engagement, widening participation, encouraging economic regeneration and enterprise in social engagement (equalities an diversity), institutional relationship and partnership building".

The rise of university-community engagement phenomenon led to the emergence of scholarship of engagement (McNall et al. 2009). Then, how the Indonesian Islamic higher education fits into this relatively new scholarship?

Indonesian Islamic Higher Education as a Knowledge Producer in Knowledge Society

Compared to non-Islamic institutions, Indonesian Islamic higher education has a unique standing as a knowledge-producer. It has to meet three main goals. First, it has to represent Islam as one of the world religions. In order to realize this goal, IIHE has to demonstrate its commitment to Islamic identities, values and norms. Second, it has to serve the interest of

Indonesia as a country. In order to achieve this goal, IIHE has to put priority on national interests in producing knowledge. Third, it has to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and technology for the betterment of humanity as a whole. In many occasions, it is not always easy to reconcile these goals.

Similar dilemmatic situation was described by Welch (2012b) in relation to the effort of the Indonesian universities to become a knowledge hub in the Asian region. He suggested three important factors that constrained such an effort: (a) the competing presence of regional and trans-regional elements; (b) the Indonesia's engagement with China; and (c) issues of state capacity, corruption, and poor quality. Similarly, Indonesian effort to attract international students, especially those from Muslim countries met unexpected results. Indonesian Islamic higher education has lower level of development and lower ability to deliver international programs in English compared to Malaysian higher education (Welch 2012a).

I argue that in order for IIHE to survive and not to be marginalized in the current arena of higher education internationalization, it should reconsider and strengthen its philosophical configuration in a way that enables it to perceive knowledge production as an objectively contested area. Within this contested area, it has to demonstrate its unique scientific paradigm. At the same time, it has to show that this uniqueness will enable it better to collaborate with other knowledge producers effectively.

Philosophical Configuration

Within Islamic education, the ontological assumption is based on the view of the totality of reality, both physical and metaphysical. Reality comes from One Allah the Almighty. This ontological assumption is then translated into a unique epistemological mode in which divined and humanistic resources of knowledge are held together in knowledge seeking activities. Based on this assumption, Al-Attas (1993) criticized the stand of several Muslim thinkers in Indonesia and Malaysia who were, according to him, influenced by the Western secularism and secularization. For him, many of those Muslim leaders did not understand the underlying philosophy of both Western and Islamic worldview. From this point, he proposed the de-westernization of knowledge to be a solution for the Muslim underdevelopment. The vision of truth and reality, for him, should be built upon revealed knowledge and belief.

Similarly, Sardar (2006) proposed an alternative way of knowing shaped by Islamic norms and values. Such a project, according to him, should start from a way of knowing that would lead to answers that would be different from non-Muslim understanding. For Faruqi (1989), this project should be led by capable Muslim intellects who are knowledgeable about Islamic principles, values as well as modern sciences.

Within the Islamic higher education in Indonesia, in order to solve knowledge dichotomy between the Islamic and the non-Islamic, and between the Islamic and the Western knowledge, there have been efforts of knowledge integration. These efforts are described in various terms and metaphors, such as Spider Web introduced by Amin Abdullah in Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta, the Tree of Knowledge by Imam Suprayogo in Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Maulana Malik Ibrahim in Malang, East Java, and Indonesian Islam in Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta. Other Islamic state universities are trying to coin their terms or metaphors to deliver their knowledge integration projects (Darda 2015, UIN SUSKA Riau 2015, Ichwan and Muttaqin 2013).

IIHE in Distributed Knowledge Society

Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions, as other Indonesian universities, tend to isolate people from community. Individuals work separately, and ideas remain theoretical. Topics taught are mostly social sciences and humanities with religious emphasis. Departments are classified based on disciplinary fields in which structured communications and interactions across disciplines do not exist at the institution level. Trans disciplinary contacts happen according to individual or group initiatives.

Nowadays, we live in a so-called distributed knowledge society. In knowledge society, education is considered as a key to prosperity so that competitive advantage of each nation is defined based on their national education quality, determined according to the international standards. In this society, the distinction between formal and ordinary knowledge has become blurred and fuzzy. Knowledge is defined as an ability to act, and its production and reproduction has not anymore followed a clear-cut procedure where higher education is privileged to produce it. Knowledge production is transferred to industrial laboratories, think-tanks, or consultants. Knowledge is transferred through its applicability (technological, market, organizational, and personal knowledge). Knowledge is distributed to wider society. Society become more reflexive, constantly questioning and evaluating why people are

doing what they are doing. The boundary between university and society has demarcated through contract-research. The state retreated from becoming the main financier of higher education (Weert 1999).

What could the Indonesian Islamic higher education do to survive marginalization in this ecological environment?

Discussion

When it comes to the university-community engagement as a mode of knowledge production, IIHE has to navigate through philosophical and policy challenges.

Philosophical Considerations

The project of integrated and interconnected science within the Islamic world in general and within the IIHE in particular is built upon the assumption of binary relation between religion and science. Such assumption is problematic because it confirms the presence of knowledge duality (divine knowledge and humanistic knowledge) in order to disconfirm it. As a result, it carries around the message of disintegration and disconnectivity in knowledge production. The second problem is that it places so much emphasis on knowledge integration and interconnectivity, rather than on knower or people integration and interconnectivity. Knowledge in human reality does not exist outside ourselves so that it should be talked about within the context of human interactions and experiences.

It is understandable that such a perspective occurred within the Islamic education system. It is not difficult to see its root in Islamic literature, both classical and modern. When they talk about the resource of knowledge, they mainly divide it into the divine text (*naql*) and the reason (*'aql*). Based on the assumption that every knowledge that human beings can produce comes from human experiences; then, it is humanistic, I argue that such a dichotomous division in scientific knowledge or ordinary knowledge does not exist in principle. All forms of sciences are the manifestation of human creativities and creativities, including those based on religious texts so-called religious knowledge.

On the first order, Qur'an and the prophetic traditions (Sunnah) are not the basis or sources of our knowledge in parallel to reason, as we in fact initially should employ reason to accept or to reject them. Therefore, reason on the first order is the source of our knowledge. Both Qur'an and the

prophetic traditions are data given to us to be observed and experienced as we observe and experience other available data in natural and social world. Muslims acceptance of both Qur'an and Sunnah as valid knowledge and information is not directly on the basis of their reason, but on their acceptance of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) testimony that Qur'an and Sunnah are the teaching of Allah the Almighty. We, Muslims, accept this testimony based on our reasoning that with all challenges that the Prophet has addressed to the nation of human and jinni, and until today none has succeeded to overthrow them, it is then logically necessary to be accepted that the Prophet testimony is valid.

Muslims' acceptance of the Qur'an and Sunnah on the first order then is not directly based on logical reasoning, and perceptual capacity towards the contents of them. But, it is through their logical acceptance of the Prophet testimony. The same is partly true for our acceptance of natural and social facts. We are told that they exist. Based on this others' testimony, on the second order, we approach them using our intellectual and perceptual capacity to generate ordinary or scientific knowledge. Therefore, on the second order, Qur'an and prophetic traditions are commensurable to social and natural facts. They are all data available to be explored scientifically using our intellectual and perceptual capacity. As a result, everyone who operates their methodological approaches on Qur'an and prophetic traditions should be accessible to testability as scientists do in social and natural knowledge production.

Found on this argument, the operationalization of knowledge integration and interconnectivity, even idea and concept of knowledge integration and interconnectivity that is based on the dichotomous assumption of the scientific knowledge, is questionable both epistemologically and methodologically.

Epistemologically, it confuses the position of Qur'an and Sunnah as part of data making up the body of human knowledge. In addition, it is counterproductive because rather than reduces the ontological and epistemological tension between what is so-called religious and non-religious science, it intensifies it.

Methodologically, posting Qur'an and Sunnah as the main basis and resource of knowledge can complicate human knowledge enterprise. It is not because they directly prohibit it. Rather, it is the way we treat them and deal with them in the enterprise that causes such complication.

All statements in Qur'an and Sunnah are normative-idealistic because they are religious texts that have a mission to invite and call for human beings to comply with certain norms and teachings. Whereas knowledge seeking is an action of discovering, explaining and understanding facts as they are, including religious texts, not as they should. In other words, Qur'an and Sunnah should be treated and dealt with alongside with all God's creatures as open data available for human beings to produce knowledge. All knowledge then become the product of human experiences that stem from the interaction between human beings as knowing subject and data as known objects, including Qur'an and Sunnah. Therefore, the only scientific knowledge exists is the knowledge of human beings. Contradiction and dichotomy, usually expressed as the contradiction between religion and science or between religious and non-religious knowledge, never exists. What exists is the contradiction or dichotomy of human experiences. There is no such a science of religion versus a science of nature or society. It is only science on or about religion, nature, and society. When we talk about natural or social science, we actually talk about our intelligible experiences of the nature and society. The same should be true for science on religious texts. It is our intelligible experiences of religious texts.

I agree with people saying that research on religion is not commensurable to research in natural and social science because in religion people tend to have full "involvement" and "unreserved commitment" (Abdullah 2013, 16, Barbour 2000). But it does not mean research on religion cannot be done because each scientific enterprises consists somehow of personal involvement or unreserved commitment. And, if we are a serious observer, it is our duty to manage it so that it will not interfere with our scientific conclusions. It is a challenge that encounters each researcher in order to warrant the testability of their scientific inferences.

Methodological Consideration

From this point, the second argument becomes important: it is not knowledge that is to be integrated; rather it is knowledge seekers that are to be integrated. Each knowledge seeker has a unique experience of knowledge production, leading to differences and contradictions in knowledge production and product. Differences and contradictions are not the problem. Instead, they are structural resources that may enable or disable the advancement of knowledge. The outcome is dependent on how knowledge workers interact within and without higher education institutions. In other

words, increased collaborative and lived interactions among knowledge seekers or workers are needed. The solution is not to unify knowledge, but to communicate knowledge. The dichotomy or contradiction that is usually expressed as a serious problem is actually signs of failure to communicate expectations and meanings. The notion of "intersubjective testability" (Barbour 2000, Abdullah 2013) can only be applied when knowledge seekers and workers consciously interact in collaborative knowledge productions.

Abdullah (2013) vividly describes patterns of relationship between religious and non-religious knowledge using the Spider Web as a metaphor. He illustrates that each discipline is actively and dynamically integrated and interconnected to each other. Within the Web, many dotted holes characterize the patterns of relationships among them, indicating existing disciplinary, spatial and temporal boundaries differentiating one form of knowledge from another. It represents differentiated experiences across disciplines, time, and place.

It is argued that this description put emphasis on knowledge as a product of individual or group knowledge seekers. They may be imagined to work in isolation to produce scientific enterprises that are likely to be integrated and interconnected.

As I stated that it is not knowledge that is to be integrated; rather it is knowledge seekers that are to be integrated. Knowledge or science as human experiences across time and place does not require integration or interconnectivity. Claims to knowledge integration and interconnectivity presume the existing of dominating force that demand involuntary submission from knowledge product that denies it. Efforts to integrate and interconnect knowledge may lead to the emergence of dominant knowledge that often causes the intensity of truth claims.

Policy Consideration

Our methodological argument leads to the third argument. Many unresolved scientific and cultural communications within the IIHE embodied in what is so-called knowledge dichotomy are generated more by the failure of language transferability, rather than by knowledge contradictions. Each disciplinary knowledge has developed its own vocabularies, causing the difficulties of integrating and interconnecting to each other. Vocabularies that they develop and refine within their scientific circles define their scope of understanding and interactions. Consequently, out of this condition, parochial knowledge paradigm is developed and embodied in disconnected

units of expert enclaves. Even more challenging, the existing structure of most colleges and universities is congruent with this form of disintegration and disconnectivity. Ironically, the more we talk about interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, integration, and interconnectivity, the further we compartmentalize our universities.

If we are serious about university-community engagement as a mode of knowledge production, we have to become more realistic in our approach to knowledge. Our ongoing discussions of knowledge integration and interconnectivity within IIHE should be translated in a more systematic way. It should be translated into our norms and values in doing sciences, regulating the nature of interactions among knowledge communities.

If we are serious about it, we have to radically transform our universities to become the real gathering of all knowledge and its workers. We have to abandon the existing structure of our universities that isolate knowledge workers from each other. We may begin by establishing a Faculty of Transdisciplinary where knowledge workers can collaborate institutionally to develop a new science that comes out of new shared experiences. Al-Azhar University in Cairo has a Faculty of *Dirasaat Islamiyyah* (Islamic Studies) in which students and teachers are expected to master different branches of Islamic sciences. The proposed Faculty of Transdisciplinary may take after this model in a more radical way by which students and teachers from all fields of studies are lively integrated and interconnected. They do not talk about integrated-interconnected knowledge and science, but they live and experience it. This structure of university is expected to produce a new kind of scientists. Scientists who can communicate and apply their expertise with confidence without feeling the presence of obligation to integrate and interconnect the disintegrated and the disconnected. In addition, this will produce knowledge workers who are more capable of solving multidimensional problems. This new kind of knowledge workers are desperately needed in the current knowledge society. Furthermore, they are the ones who are capable to bridge university and community with their academic and social skills in knowledge production.

I understand that this is a Utopian, but this is one of the viable ways to escape from knowledge marginalization and disintegration that denies our ontological belief on the totality of reality, and our epistemological belief on the plurality of experiences and methods.

Finally, it should be bored in mind that university-community engagement is a locus of contestation. It is not a neutral zone where everyone

comes to contribute voluntarily. This reality leads to our fourth argument. Knowledge production should be based on an ethically sound political foundation, by which knowledge becomes a medium for enabling the disable and freeing the unfree (Apple). Therefore, university-community engagement should be developed as a smart coalition rather than dependency or survival strategy. A strong coalition for human betterment.

A commitment to a non-dominant knowledge is particularly important if university-community engagement will be allowed to serve human betterment. A non-dominant knowledge is a transformational knowledge that draw university, community, and government to lead social change through long-term negotiations by which interests are shared democratically. While university can play its role as an independent critical institutions, state and community can provide sufficient political and financial support in knowledge production. Each party should be voluntarily aware why and how they contribute to the knowledge production. It is possible also that the community members, both as individual and groups, become independent critical entities.

It is worthy to note that the distributed nature of knowledge does not only occurs within secular knowledge society, it is also happening in religious knowledge society. Nowadays, people learn and share religious knowledge through cyber and social media penetrating our traditional physical and cultural boundaries. People can learn religious contents without meeting a traditional teacher. People are autonomous and reflexive. They are able to learn outside and without authorized educational institutions. Religious learning centers are not anymore the monopoly of traditional teachers and institutions, including universities. People are thinking in an instrumental and applicative way. Norms and values underlying what they learn from various resources are not so much as important as what they can do with it in their practicality.

Within this environment, using university-community engagement as a mode of knowledge production, IIHE should define their roles and expand their boundaries to include community in order to facilitate engagement.

Conclusion

University-community engagement is one of the ways to produce transformational knowledge within the Indonesian Islamic Higher Education. In order to achieve this goal, knowledge workers within this

system should be able to: (1) redefine the role of Qur'an and Sunnah in their scientific enterprise so that both can become enabling, rather than constraining resources, for their contribution to scientific communities; (2) develop a new scientific paradigm that enables knowledge seekers and workers within this system to communicate and collaborate in an institutionalized fashion; (3) establish a common language that strongly represents this new scientific paradigm; and (4) demonstrate a strong commitment to develop scientific enterprise for the betterment of humanity as a whole. []

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