

## ELITE SCHOOL POLICIES; SUPERIOR ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to examine the policies of leading schools/madrasas in Indonesia, which have elitist tendencies and become reproductive forces rather than productive forces. This picture is evident from the community's view on identifying rich and poor schools, and even becoming a socioeconomic measure for the community. Furthermore, elite schools are seen as excellent schools that meet the quality standards of their graduates. The emergence of elite Islamic schools is at least motivated by several factors, including factors, ideology, social, historical, and psychology, as a response to problems in Islamic education that are always discussed by the world of education, where the tendency only functions in the spiritual. There are two formulations of this study's problem, namely, how does elitism emerge in leading schools/madrasas? Then, how to reconstruct the leading school/madrasa to guarantee access to education that is equitable for all children of the nation from all walks of life, especially among the poor? The results of this study, first, the elite schools get special treatment from the government by receiving block-grant subsidies and being given the freedom to collect school fees from parents/guardians of students. Second, reconstruction steps are needed to improve the education of the excellent schools/madrasas to be enjoyed equally by the entire community and educate all the nation's children.*

**Keywords:** *Elitist education, excellent schools/madrasas, Islamic, community, government*

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kebijakan sekolah/madrasah unggulan di Indonesia yang memiliki kecenderungan elitis dan menjadi reproductive force bukan productive force. Gambaran tersebut terbukti dari pandangan masyarakat pada peng-identitas-an sekolah kaya dan sekolah miskin, bahkan menjadi ukuran sosial ekonomi masyarakat. Dan sekolah elit dipandang sebagai sekolah unggulan yang memenuhi kriteria standar mutu kualitas lulusannya. Munculnya sekolah elit Islam paling tidak dilatarbelakangi beberapa faktor diantaranya faktor, ideologi, sosial, historis, dan psikologi sebagai respon masalah-masalah dalam pendidikan Islam yang selalu didiskusikan oleh dunia pendidikan, dimana kecenderungan hanya berfungsi dalam spiritual saja. Terdapat dua rumusan masalah dalam penelitian ini, yaitu bagaimana elitisme itu muncul dalam sekolah/madrasah unggulan? Kemudian, bagaimana cara merekonstruksi sekolah/madrasah unggulan tersebut agar dapat menjamin akses pendidikan yang berkeadilan bagi semua anak bangsa dari seluruh kalangan masyarakat, terutama kalangan rakyat miskin? Hasil penelitian ini, pertama, Sekolah elit mendapatkan perlakuan khusus dari pemerintah dengan menerima jumlah subsidi block-grant, sekaligus diberikan kebebasan untuk memungut biaya sekolah kepada orang tua/wali murid. Kedua, perlu langkah rekonstruksi untuk memperbaiki pendidikan sekolah/madrasah unggulan tersebut agar bisa dinikmati secara merata oleh seluruh kalangan masyarakat serta bisa mencerdaskan seluruh anak bangsa.

**Kata kunci:** *pendidikan elitis, sekolah/madrasah unggulan.*

## A. INTRODUCTION

National education is one of the government's media to create the goals of the nation, as mandated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution: "... to educate the life of the nation". However, have the people of Indonesia become more intelligent after approximately 71 years of independence? And, have all Indonesian people got their rights to get proper education from the government? The reason is that this has been mandated in the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia in article 31 which reads, "(1) Every citizen has the right to receive teaching, and (2) the Government strives and organizes a national teaching system, which is regulated by the Law" (Soedijarto, 2008).

Bahrudin revealed that according to the UN report in the Human Development Report 2004, the quality of Indonesian education (Education Index = 0.80) was below Vietnam (0.82) or the lowest among other ASEAN countries. Especially from UNESCO-OECD research in the Program of International Student Assessment (PISA), the reading skill of Indonesian children (aged 15 years) was very low (ranked 39 out of 41 countries studied) (Bahrudin 2008).

Then added by Ngainun Naim quoting the report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) which

announced the Human Development Report, which included the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2007, that Indonesia's position was ranked 112 out of 175 countries in world. This condition was certainly very alarming because Indonesia's position was only slightly above Cambodia (130), Myanmar which was plagued by conflict (131) and Laos (135). While the position of other ASEAN countries was far above Indonesia, including Vietnam, which ranks 109<sup>th</sup> (Naim, 2009: 6–7).

It was also in line with the quality of human resources in the field of education. In the education sector, Indonesia was ranked 112 out of 154 countries in the world, while Vietnam was ranked 96<sup>th</sup>, Malaysia was ranked 56<sup>th</sup> and the Philippines was ranked 76<sup>th</sup> (Naim, 2009: 7).

On the other hand, Darmaningtyas stated that in developed countries, for example the United States, problems arise as a result of the large subsidies intended for poor people, whereas in poor countries, such as Indonesia, the problem lies in injustice in gaining access to education between rich people and poor people. In reality, the cost of educating rich and poor children in the formal education system is the same, and even tends to be more expensive for the poor. This is due to the fact that state schools with 90 percent of their funding are financed by the state which are

occupied by the majority of rich children (middle class). On the contrary, the children of factory workers, unskilled laborers, construction workers, fishermen, scavengers, farm laborers, farmers, etc. actually go to small private schools, where 90 percent of the funding is self-financing. Thus, rich people in Indonesia actually pay less education costs than poor people who have to pay much more education fees (Darmaningtyas, 2009: 326).

And if we look at the current condition of Islamic education in Indonesia, especially in the context of madrasas, it turns out that the majority of these educational institutions are privately owned, not public schools, with parents of students from poor families, not rich families. This can be seen from the report owned by Directorate of Madrasah Education in 2006, at MI level ('Madrasah Ibtidaiyah' / Islamic Elementary School) the total is 22,189 madrasas divided into 92.9% were private MI and 7.1% were public MI, at the level of MI MTs ('Madrasah Tsanawiyah' / Islamic Junior High School) out of a total of 12,619 madrasas, 90% were private MTs and 10% were state MTs, as well as at the MA level ('Madrasah Aliyah' / Islamic senior high school) out of a total of 5043 madrasas, 87.2% were private MA and 12.8% were public MA. Then, in terms of the income of parents of madrasah students, of a total of 26,075,210 parents, 42.18% of

them had uncertain income, 43, 75% earned below Rp. 1 million, and those who earned 1-2 million no more than 10.4%, while those who earned 2 million and above only 3.6% (Madarasah, 2006).

The preliminary data when using the Darmaningtyas thesis above shows that if the majority of public schools / madrasas are dominated by rich people, while private schools / madrasas are dominated by poor people, then the condition of madrasah education is a picture of injustice in gaining access to education between people rich and poor people in Islamic education in Indonesia. This is certainly not mandated by the 1945 Constitution, because the state is actually obliged to provide education for all citizens without exception, and all citizens have the right to education, even though they are poor. In addition, the explanation of the data revealed by the Directorate of Madrasah Education above also shows that the condition of Islamic education in Indonesia is still far from the expected quality.

According to Darmaningtyas, the new student selection system based on the *NEM* (*Nilai Ebtanas Murni* / the final score) or other selection tests that show the highest achievement is a source of injustice in accessing quality education. Because, the things that cause these high values are

complete learning facilities and nutritious food so that children become smart. These two prerequisites are only owned by people who are economically capable. Poor people whose nutrition has not been fulfilled since the beginning and the learning facilities do not support enable them to get low scores in participating in the new student entrance selection. As a result, they do not pass the selection to enter public schools or public madrasahs whose costs are mostly financed by the state. Until now, said Darmaningtyas, there have never been a policy of selection into formal schools based on the socio-economic abilities of prospective students. Thus, we have not seen signs of the end of these injustices. The rich still pay small, the poor still pay more (Darmaningtyas, 2009: 326).

That is exactly what happened in leading and well-known private schools / madrasahs, Darmaningtyas added. There is a selection system that uses both *NEM* and ability tests. However, behind the two, there is actually a sum of money that can be negotiated as an entry requirement. So if in a selection process there are several prospective students who have the same *NEM* or other test results, then those who are accepted are those who are able to pay higher fees to the school. Here, schools / madrasahs have become a business field for managers in the name of humanity and no

longer as a social calling, as was envisioned from the start when establishing the school (Darmaningtyas, 2009: 327).

If we look from the background of the emergence of these superior schools / madrasahs, according to Maimun and Zaenul Fitri it can be traced through the 1945 Constitution, in its opening which is clearly revealed that the reasons for the state were established to: (1) defend the nation, (2) improve people's welfare, (3) educate the life of the nation, and (4) participate in bringing the eternal and sustainable world peace. The concept of intelligent life of this nation applies to all components of the nation. This is also emphasized in the 1945 Constitution in article 31 paragraph (1) which states that every citizen has the right to education, and paragraph (3) confirms that the government strives and organizes a national education system that enhances faith, devoutness and noble character (Maimun and Fitri, 2010: 22).

Sociologically, the emergence of a superior madrasah is a necessity when the needs of society today are looking for things that have superior quality. A superior institution (madrasah) is a place that is expected to forge children in facing a future that has a professional attitude in life, so that people who are aware will choose a good madrasah (superior) and dare to sacrifice for

the sake of their children (Maimun and Fitri, 2010: 27–28).

There are three important things in a good (superior) madrasa, namely: (1) incoming students are prioritized (input), (2) the guidance process is prioritized, and (3) results or child products (output) are also prioritized. Then, according to Mutrofin, as quoted by Maemun and Fitri, that the indicator of superior madrasa is an institution that tends to facilitate graduates to move to the next level of education vertically. They make the graduates get the jobs easier and socially elevate their social prestige. And, a little more ideal, the superior madrasa indicator is a madrasa that can optimally actualize the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities of its students. From stupid to smart, from blunt to creative, from less civilized to civilized. Or in other words, superior madrasa is to educate the perfect human being, physically and mentally (Maimun and Fitri, 2010: 29; Syarif 2019).

However, on the other hand, the emergence of superior madrasahs will also lead to problems including: first, the gap in quality among the madrasahs at this time will result unequal competitiveness in the acquisition of business and work opportunities, and second it is feared that the emergence of superior madrasahs is not a manifestation of an

awareness of the need for quality human beings in the future, but instead makes education a part of economic liberalism (Maimun and Fitri 2010, 28; Syarif 2019c).

Although this view, according to Agus Maimun and Agus Zaenul Fitri, is considered not always true, it does not exclude the possibility that the emergence of a superior madrasa as a social institution will bring up educational elitism as its latent function, which cannot be denied (Alimandan, 2010: 21–23).

Elitism is a concept derived from the word "elite" which means "a small group of people who have high degrees, respectable people; the best people; something that is considered luxurious (about something)" (Erfina, n.d., 103). Eliteism is an ideology or "ism" about the elite. In other words, the purpose of educational elitism here is a view which sees that education is only the rights and authority of the elite, not the small and marginalized. While elitist education is a form of education that is only intended for a limited circle, namely the "elite" only.

This is reinforced by the opinion of Ariel Haryanto who stated that in the process of social transformation some parties who are already strong and have benefit from social conditions will become stronger and more victorious. While others who are disadvantaged, not because they do not get a school (the opportunity is formally more

open to many people), but because the quality and category of education they obtain is at the bottom of a new class discrimination. For the growing bourgeois class in Indonesia, and the gifted class, the changes that are taking place may be a process of independence, progress, development, and a golden opportunity. At least that process is a release from burdens that they never need (Heryanto, 2002: 46).

And, in another view of Heryanto, social class is not only determined by the ownership of financial capital, but also knowledge, diplomas, and cultural tastes. Wallerstein also reminded that anywhere in the world, no school / madrasa is fully open and accommodates all school-age children in its community. With various excuses (such as screening tests), schools will maintain a closed door for the oppressed class (Heryanto, 2002: 46). Especially if we look at the conditions that occur in such excellent schools / madrasas (as mentioned earlier), it will be very difficult for this Islamic educational institution to be able to provide quality and equitable education for all children in this country. It seems that it is these special or “elite” groups that may have the most opportunity to receive such superior education. And, for children from the marginal and poor community, to be able to enter the superior school / madrasa, it may just be a dream.

According to a study conducted by Bowles and Gintis as quoted by Nuryatno, there is indeed a strong indication that there is a relationship between school and social injustice or between school and social reproduction. As an argument, almost all cases show that the majority of children from the upper middle class will enter the same social class when they grow up. Conversely, children from the grassroots community will also return to their original social class position when they grow up. This is because upper-middle-class children have the capital to get a good education with very adequate facilities. While children from the grassroots community do not or rarely have the opportunity to get such education. The majority of them only get a mediocre education with inadequate facilities. By getting the quality of education as mentioned above, surely they will get a great opportunity to return to their original social class when they grow up. Thus, the school actually has a contribution in reproducing the position of students and maintaining the social class hierarchy in society (Nuryatno, 2008: 62).

From the explanation of some of the facts, opinions, and assumptions above, it is considered important to study more deeply about elitist education policies in superior schools / madrasas in Indonesia. For this



reason, the subject matter will be explored using a sociological perspective by conducting a literature study. As for after the subject matter outlined above, some of the problem formulations which are the focus of this study are as follows: how does elitism emerge in leading schools / madrasahs? Then, how to reconstruct the superior school / madrasah in order to ensure equitable (not elitist) access to education for the children from all communities, especially the poor? Based on these two problem formulations, the study in this paper was carried out.

## **B. OVERVIEW OF THEORY**

The meaning of policy deals with the idea of organizational arrangements and is a formal arrangement that is accepted by institutions and or government to achieve goals. Policy is a written rule that is a formal decision of an organization that is binding and regulates behavior with the aim of carrying out new values in society (Syarif, 2017). According to Fajar Syarif that education policy can be interpreted as a set of regulations made by authorized people so that the goals of the education system can be achieved (Syarif, 2019b).

Policies are related to rules that meet established standards. Various assessments of the quality of education and education

participation rates have not shown significant improvements, namely concerns about the low quality of Islamic education and at the same time provide solutions to the challenges of science and technology and the Imtak. Therefore, elite schools are expected to be able to answer various problems being faced by internal Muslims themselves (Syarif, 2017).

Elitism is a concept derived from the word "elite" which means "a small group of people who have high degrees, respectable people; the best people; something that is considered the best or luxurious (about something or something)" (Eka Yani, ttp). Elitism is an ideology or "ism" about the elite. In other words, the purpose of educational elitism here is a view which sees that education is only the rights and authority of the elite, not the small and marginalized. While elitist education is a form of education that is only intended for a limited circle, namely the "elite" only.

That is because the process of social transformation that has been strengthened and has benefited by some social conditions will be stronger and more victorious. Most of the others were disadvantaged, not because they did not get a school (the opportunity was formally more open to many people), but because of the quality and category of education they obtained at the

bottom of a new class discrimination. For the bourgeoisie that is just growing in Indonesia, and the gifted class of gifted cities, the change that is taking place may be a process of independence, progress, development, and a golden opportunity. At least that process is a release from burdens that he never needed.

And, in Heryanto's other view, social class is not only determined by the ownership of financial capital, but also knowledge, diplomas, and cultural tastes. Wallerstein also reminded that everywhere in the world, no school / madrasa is fully open and accommodates all school-age children in its community. With various excuses (such as screening tests), schools will maintain a closed door for the oppressed classes. Especially if you look at the conditions that occur in such excellent schools / madrasas (as mentioned earlier), it will be very difficult for this Islamic educational institution to be able to provide quality and equitable education for all children in this country. It seems that it is these special or "elite" groups that may have the most opportunity to receive such superior education. And, for children from the marginal and poor community, to be able to enter the superior school / madrasa, it may just be a dream.

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### C. METHOD

The research method used in this study is qualitative research. Qualitative research is field research based on naturalistic research because it is conducted in natural conditions. The nature of this research is descriptive analytic. Field research is research carried out directly in order to



obtain the necessary data. So the key to qualitative research is the researcher himself because he acts as an instrument as well as a data collector, while instruments other than humans have a limited function, namely only as a supporter of the researcher's task. Qualitative research basically seeks to describe problems comprehensively, holistically, integratively and deeply through observing people in the environment under study and interacting with them.

The data analysis technique requires a process of understanding the data and understanding the interpretation of the meaning of data more deeply with the main components in the form of data reduction, data study and drawing conclusions or verification. Data analysis is intended to arrange the order of data and then organize it into a basic pattern, category and description unit (Sugiyono, 2017). Through the analytic process, it is then accommodated in the form of language in a narrative manner (Muhajir, 2000).

## **D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Elitist education in the development of Superior Schools / Madrasas**

Superior schools / madrasas arise as a result of the desire to create a madrasa that becomes a center of excellence to prepare ready-to-use Human Resources (HR) in the

future. The existence of superior madrasas, said Maimun and Fitri, can equip students with quality learning experiences, naturally they have greater opportunities to enter higher education levels according to their choices (Maimun and Fitri, 2010: 10–11).

Maemun and Fitri also stated that superior schools / madrasas are seen as having a great opportunity to meet the demands of the community for the following reasons: *first*, the occurrence of social mobility (ie the emergence of new middle-class communities especially intellectuals who have recently experienced rapid development), *secondly*, the emergence of new awareness in religion (*santrinisasi* / creating *santri*), especially in urban middle-class society, as a result of the process of re-Islamization carried out intensely by religious organizations, religious institutions or carried out individually, and *thirdly*, globalization and such rapid modernization needs to be addressed wisely (Maimun and Fitri, 2010: 11–12).

However, for the first reason above in particular, according to the theory of social reproduction or correspondence as initiated by Bowles and Herbert Gintis, as quoted by Nuryatno, it is difficult to accept, because schools only serve the interests of the dominant community and perpetuate the

existing social structure. As argued in this theory, school values and practices are basically a mirror of economic organization. Thus, in reality, as in Indonesia, Nuryatno revealed that this is very visible. How our education is in favor of those who have capital. Only those who have money can enjoy a good and adequate education. While poor and disadvantaged people do not expect to get a good education (Nuryatno, 2008: 61–63).

In this essential characteristic of schools / madrasas, according to Zainal Aqib, schools / madrasas must have advantages that are indicated by international recognition related to input, process, and the results (output) of education in various aspects. This recognition is proven by good certification from an OECD member and or other developed countries that have certain advantages in the field of education and are believed to have an internationally recognized quality reputation. And graduates of these schools also must have international competitiveness capabilities. In addition, each graduate is expected to master competencies with SNP in Indonesia, as well as master the key capabilities of the developed countries (Aqib, 2010: 88).

While in Hill's view, as quoted by Raihani, the criterion for a successful (superior) school / madrasah is the idea of values added by schools to students, "rather than" only the number of outcomes. Still in Raihani, Walsh also revealed something similar that a successful (superior) school is a school where students show significant development, regardless of whether they reach high standards or not. And, according to Beck and Murphy, also in Raihani, revealed that there are four imperatives for successful (superior) schools: first, the imperative to develop learning specifically not exclusively for students, secondly, imperative for individuals to carry out tasks leadership and focus the energy and resources of stakeholders productively, thirdly, the imperative to maintain a communal atmosphere within the school and unite the school with the wider and mutually beneficial community, and fourthly, the imperative to support efforts to build the capacity of administrative staff, teachers, and parents so that they can better support the learning process of students (Raihani, 2010: 7–9).

With such conditions, according to Zainuddin Maliki, for students who come from the middle class and moreover those who come from the upper class only require a little effort to be able to maintain a

superior position in the community. Moreover, the government spends funds for schools, ultimately only benefits those who are rich to get better education. With better education, students from middle and upper classes get wider opportunities to get achievements with all the rewards they get. Through this practice of education it is possible to have privilege and prosperity for the elite class (Maliki, 2008: 180).

S. Nasution states that such a thing happens because social groups determine a person's social environment. Knowledge, needs, goals, attitudes, and character of a person is strongly influenced by the social environment. The social class system creates economic, cultural and social boundaries and barriers which prevent association with other groups. Humans learn their culture from others in that group who already have that culture. Then people in certain social groups will be people who are in accordance with the culture of that group and they have difficulty entering other social environments. Social groups limit and determine children's learning environment (Maliki, 2008: 29).

In Darmaningtyas's criticism, it is also said that something that actually makes students' poverty and stupidity is not solely their own fault, but because of the social structure which is unfair from the

beginning, so it does not provide horizontal or vertical mobility. The poor and not smart groups are finally trapped in a vicious circle (poverty). Unfortunately, education that is supposed to make humans more humane and equitable actually legitimizes and even fosters these injustices. Furthermore, for these poor and not smart children, schools are not a good means of horizontal or vertical mobility, but an accumulation of disappointment as well as an arena for building collective awareness of social injustice in society. Because, at school they interact with fellow students who have the same fate. Children with better luck have been gathered separately in private schools with "recognized" status. Children who have a better fate are united separately in favorite public schools and private schools with the status of "equalized" (Darmaningtyas, 2009: 340–42).

Therefore, the superior schools / madrasas are expensive educational institutions and can only be savored by a handful of people with deep pockets and those who have the "Habibie" brain. Those (children) whose pockets are thin, are not supported by adequate financial support, mediocre intelligence, and weak motivation are increasingly left behind quality education. As a result, the national education agenda for improving the quality

of education through the National Education Standards will only be a figment, for the small community.

Zainuddin Maliki even showed a data (although it has been a long time) that justified these assumptions and views. The data was taken from cases in Indonesia in the 1990s. From the following data description, it can be seen that those who had a high income at that time also had better opportunities to access the education field. Based on 1992 Central Bureau of Statistics data, it was known that the level of family education participation with their income was less than Rp. 50,000 was 11%, while those who earned less than Rp. 50,000 - 100,000 was 19%, between 100,000 and 200,000 was 25%, and those with more than Rp. 200,000 was 42%. From this data it seems that there is a correlation between economics and education. The higher the level of income of their family heads the higher the level of their participation in education. Meanwhile, education is a prerequisite for better social status in society. Consequently, those who have low education are positioned by the people in the lower social strata (Maliki, 2008: 176).

The next problem that will arise is when the relationship between those who are fortunate (entering a superior school / madrasa) achieves a better social status,

with those who are not fortunate (going to a normal school and having no achievements). This is based on the pattern of relations that occur in the midst of society, in the view of conflict theory, mainly based on the process of exploitation, oppression, domination, and subordination. Thus those who are more fortunate and prosperous receive education and social status, tend to control, and even exploit, oppress, and dominate the disadvantaged (Maliki, 2008: 177).

If we look at the reality of Islamic education in Indonesia, according to M. Agus Nuryatno, it seems clear that education is limited to reproductive power, not yet productive force. This can be seen from the sharp difference between good and expensive schools (the majority are inhabited by children from the upper middle class) and schools that are mediocre and cheap (the majority are inhabited by the lower class). At present it is almost difficult to find good public schools, let alone the private sector, from elementary school or *madrasah diniyah* levels to campuses that charge inexpensive fees. In the past there were still good public schools that could be reached by ordinary people. Now the conditions are different. There are no excellent schools / madrasahs currently charging cheap fees. Even though these are

public schools. If a private school is expensive it can be understood because its sustainability depends more on student tuition fees. However, if state schools are expensive there must be something wrong because it is subsidized by the government (Nuryatno, 2008: 64–65).

The elitist superior school / madrasa condition, according to Mu'arif, (is none other) because democracy in the context of education has not been fully created. In fact, it can be said that education does not yet reflect the power of the people. If, for example, it is agreed that the democratic system leads to all the interests of the people, then the implementation of national education must truly reflect the needs of the people. However, in reality today, education is no longer in the interests of the people. By providing education that is too expensive, the ordinary people are actually "dying" because they are unable to bear the tuition. Many sad stories in the lives of ordinary people who are no longer able to bear the school tuition of their children. The suicide case of Suwarni's mother, a resident of Bekasi and Haryanto, a student from SD Muara Sanding IV Garut, became a blurred portrait of the history of national education (Mu'arif, 2008: 110–11).

In fact, it will further cause social jealousy caused by the marginal position of

the poor by studying only in ordinary schools / madrasas (standard or even below standard). Of course those who study in superior schools / madrasas will feel superior, while the poor who occupy "ordinary" schools / madrasas will feel inferior. Thus, national education with its new agenda based on Law Number 20 Year 2003 will only create national education elitism (Mu'arif, 2008: 178).

This skepticism, according to Marxian theorists, reinforces the view that education is an instrument of capital owners. They are the ones who control the process of education recruitment, do the selection and allocation of roles, in addition to manipulating the public to authorize the privileges owned by the capital owners (Maliki, 2008: 176).

In addition, another consequence that can emerge is that the superior schools / madrasas will have a great opportunity to become commercialization sites. Because, the factor of economic sufficiency and academic ability that supports, according to Mu'arif, the superior school / madrasah education format has a great opportunity to become a business arena for capitalists. With the reason to improve the quality and professionalism by improving facilities that are too expensive, then education will be transformed into a place of "intellectual

business" (commercialization) which is quite lucrative. If education has become a place of commercialization, then the vision and social orientation have been lost, sinking with business interests that only look at between two choices, profit or loss (Mu'arif, 2008: 173).

It is also increasingly clear that the development of superior schools / madrasas can actually trigger the growth of social inequality in society. The growth of elitist education in these superior schools / madrasas can trigger conflict. As Marx said, as quoted by Zaenuddin Maliki, differences in means are not always the cause of class conflict (Maliki, 2008: 173). However, he confirms that the class gap / society class has a unique way that can cause conflict between classes because society systematically produces differences of opinion between people who have different places or positions in a social structure and more importantly in relation to the means of production. Damsar sees it as a necessity, because the structure has conflict when viewed from the perspective of the structural theory of conflict (Damsar, 2011: 55).

Then, when the upper class and lower class are in conflict, the revolution became its culmination. Furthermore, schools / madrasas will even become a business

arena that in the end, a humanist and egalitarian education will remain a dream for commoners. Human civilization will then only be filled by groups of people who have luck.

## **2. The Reconstruction of Critical and Egalitarian Superior School/ Madrasa Education**

As a further step in fixing elitist education policies in these superior schools / madrasas, various efforts can be made, one of which is to reconstruct the school / madrasah education into superior schools / madrasas that are critical, egalitarian, and can be participated by all communities. For this reason, according to Herbert Kliebard, the issue of conflict (and compromise) among communities rooted in differences in views about race, class and gender must also be taken into consideration in the development of education (Maliki, 2008: 193).

While in the view of M. Agus Nuryatno, based on criticism of reproductive theory which has several weaknesses, among others: *first*, the theory is not able to explain the fact why there are children from the lower class are able to move from class to middle or upper class when they grow up or conversely, *secondly*, this theory only explains the process of reproduction from one point of view, or monolithic, as if the teachers and students



are passive participants in the process, whereas the power relationship between the dominant and the subordinate group is asymmetrical. And, *thirdly*, it does not offer schools as a medium for sowing the critical awareness needed in an effort to criticize the existing social structure. Therefore, so that schools / madrasas do not become mere tools of social reproduction, the educational institution must be directed to produce a new and fair social system. How schools can play a role in shortening the gap in social class in society. There is no other choice to realize this except to make the school a productive force, not a reproductive force (Nuryatno, 2008: 63–64).

Furthermore, Zainuddin Maliki said that if a conflict theory is used as its perspective, then there needs to be curriculum reform in these superior schools / madrasas, so that the curriculum is designed to provide students with knowledge, subject matter that can foster classroom awareness; an awareness against oppression in the form of exploitation by dominant class. Educators must have a commitment to arouse and empower students, so that later they can enter the community as agents of empowerment and liberation of weak communities from the role of cultural and political domination of

strong communities. The planning strategy in education starts with defining policy priorities, reforming the curriculum, and conducting learning that emphasizes the ability to critically conduct discovery, research or inquiry (Maliki, 2008: 193).

Because of this problem, the initial goal which is almost the same as the context of the goal faced by Paulo Freire (ie to change the injustice that befell the subordinate classes, on the principle that education is a necessary condition, though not fully sufficient, to carry out social transformation). According to him there are several priorities that need to be conducted in reconstructing the superior schools / madrasah education, such as: democratization and access to school and democratization of school administration (Prihantoro, 2003: 142–43).

Furthermore, said Mu'arif, the agenda of democratization of education is not enough just to critically structurally surround its policies. Although the government policy is very decisive, but the most principle problem is in the education system. that includes paradigms, goals, curriculum, methods, strategies and so on related to the intentions of praxis. For this reason, the participation of all people must be clarified and positioned as an active subject. Namely the position of the subject

who is well aware of the importance of education. Thus the Indonesian people have transcended the phase of consciousness from naive (or perhaps magical) to critical-transformative. In addition, to be able to realize the democratization of education, the national education paradigm must have a people's vision. People's vision of education is the embodiment of the critical education paradigm (Mu'arif, 2008: 111–12).

The educational democratization agenda can be worked on through, first, government policies that support the implementation of national education. And, with the support of the policy, the second step, national education must immediately improve itself by carrying out a critical paradigm that is in line with the direction of democracy, not leaning towards feudalism, elitism, even capitalism, so that a lot of people cannot possess it (Mu'arif, 2008: 112–13).

In addition, education (both in schools / madrasas), said Abdul Munir Mulkhan, should be conducted for the interests of students, not teachers, authorities, managers, and owners. The view of education as a transfer of values, knowledge, and work skills, is not a wise and realistic view. This more reflects the romanticism of historical hegemony about the past and the generation of predecessors

who always seem better. History is seen as finished, frozen, and dead, against the facts about the continuation of social change as a law of history (Mulkhan, 2003: 214). Then, it is also necessary to carry out a radical critique and review of the concepts, intentions, objectives, and the process of implementing education that have existed so far. Through criticism like this, opportunities will open for the development of educational concepts and practices that are more in favor of students and the majority of farmers, who live in rural areas, and are poor (Mulkhan, 2003: 215).

The availability of all parties, especially the authorities, owners of educational institutions, managers, teachers and students, to make radical criticisms of the problem of education, is the first step to improve education for the people. The main purpose of this education then is the development of students' understanding and awareness of the empirical world they experience and their world in the future. The goal is the ability of students to meet their daily needs today, while they are undergoing education, and later in life by taking into account the needs of the community at large (Mulkhan, 2003: 215).

Therefore, education (in schools / madrasas) must seek to enrich the experience of students to be able to

understand, solve, and play an active role in their own world, not the world of teachers, authorities, and owners or managers of education. The learning process is developed according to the world of students and the world that is predicted to occur and be experienced later in the future.

In this case, Abdul Munir Mulkan argues, the government has its main function, through the Ministry of National Education (now: Kemendikbud), which should be developed to encourage and facilitate the opening of opportunities for citizens in carrying out educational roles more independently and creatively. In addition, religious institutions that have placed education as part of their main activities, must be more active in taking up the role of education, without having to wait for the good intentions of the government which is usually reluctant to relinquish power in this field (Mulkhan, 2003: 216).

Meanwhile, according to Darmaningtyas, the path that can be traversed to reconstruct (Islamic) education in superior schools or madrassas in order to become a means of social mobility towards a more prosperous, intelligent, and just life, the unjust national education policy clearly needs to be changed so that more fair and humane. The state must not only facilitate capable communities, but all communities

must be facilitated. The consequence of such a political attitude is that all policies that do not support the creation of a fair system must be sued and changed to be more just. The state must implement an affirmative action policy to accommodate these poor and not smart children. The way to do this is that the state allocates enough space for the poor and fools to be able to attend public schools / madrassas (Darmaningtyas, 2009: 245–346).

In the new student admission system, it is necessary to apply a new policy that not only uses a single system in the form of an entrance examination test, but also bases on the socio-economic abilities of prospective students. The state in this case is obliged to encourage the community so that those who are economically capable are better able to choose private schools, so that more space is available in schools or public madrassas for the poor. And, this affirmative action is not only for primary and secondary school levels, but also public tertiary education. Because, without an affirmative action policy, it is difficult to imagine children who are poor and not smart will receive higher education, because the existing system does not give them the slightest opportunity. Yet if they are facilitated, it is very likely their intelligence will increase sharply. Because, their lack of intelligence

is more caused by the lack of facilities that support it (Darmaningtyas, 2009: 345–46).

With the various discussions above, the efforts to reconstruct superior school / madrasah education must do the following: *first*, in the development of superior schools / madrasas must take into account the issues of conflict (and compromise) among communities that have different views on race, class, and gender. *Second*, redesigning curricula in the superior schools / madrasas with a curriculum that is able to provide knowledge and subject matter that can foster class consciousness, awareness against oppression and eliminate exploitation of the dominant class. Educators must have a commitment to arouse and empower students, so that later they can get into the community as agents of empowerment and liberation of weak communities from the cultural and political dominance of strong communities.

Third, prioritizing democratization and access to school and democratizing school administration. Fourth, the development of education in leading schools / madrasas must be directed at the people's vision which is the embodiment of the critical education paradigm. Fifth, radically criticizing education issues by developing students' understanding and awareness of the empirical world they experience and their

world in the future. Sixth, making superior schools / madrasas as productive forces, not reproductive forces. And, seventh, the government should implement affirmative action policies to accommodate poor and not smart children in these excellent schools / madrasas.

## E. CONCLUSION

From the results of studies on elitist education policies in these schools / madrasas, some conclusions can be obtained as follows: *first*, elitist education policies emerge in the superior schools / madrasas due to several things including these schools / madrasas get special treatment from the government by receiving the amount of block-grant subsidy that has a large amount, at the same time they are also given the freedom to collect school fees from parents. Because, the freedom to collect school fees then causes a lot of problems, especially related to the amount of the cost that is much different from schools.

Therefore, it then triggers the emergence of elitist education in the superior schools / madrasas. In addition, other causes are due to their lucky relationship (being able to enter a superior school / madrasa) to achieve a better social status, with those who are not fortunate (to

enter a normal school and have no achievements). This is based on the pattern of relations that occur in the midst of society, in the view of conflict theory, mainly based on the process of exploitation, oppression, domination, and subordination. Thus those who are more fortunate, prosperous, have better education and obtain social status, tend to control, and even exploit, oppress, and dominate the disadvantaged.

In addition, another reason is that the school / madrasa is not a good means of horizontal or vertical mobility, but rather is an accumulation of disappointment as well as an arena of building collective awareness of social injustice in society. And, lastly education at the international standard leading school / madrasa has become limited to reproductive power, not yet productive force.

*Secondly*, seeing indications of elitist education policies in these superior schools / madrasas that are strong and can have a negative impact on the future of this nation, especially among the lower middle class people, it is necessary to make some steps in reconstruction to improve the education of the superior schools / madrasas so that they can be participated equally by the entire community and can educate all the children of the nation. The steps are as follows:

taking into account the issues of conflict (and compromise) among communities that are rooted in differences in views about race, class and gender in the development of superior schools / madrasas; redesigning curricula in the superior schools / madrasas with curricula that are able to provide knowledge and subject matter that can foster class consciousness, raising awareness against oppression and exploitation of the dominant class; prioritizing democratization and access to school and democratize school administration; directing the development of education in leading schools / madrasas towards the people's vision which is the embodiment of the critical education paradigm; radically criticizing education issues by developing students' understanding and awareness of the empirical world they experience and their world in the future; making superior schools / madrasas as productive forces, not reproductive forces, and finally, in this field of education, the government should implement affirmative action policies to accommodate poor and not smart children in the superior international standard schools / madrasas.

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