

Nahdlatul Ulama National Politics Perspective of Minority In Meranti Islands District

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Abstract

This research deals with the sustainability of attitudes and behavior of discrimination in the majority group that afflicts ethnic Chinese and non-Muslim religious minorities in the Meranti Islands Regency. The accumulation of tragic events such as the burning and looting of shop houses belonging to ethnic Chinese by the community in 1999. The national effect of the 2017 Jakarta Pilkada politics and the 212 political movements against Basuki Cahaya Purnama's rejection because he was considered to have insulted the letter Al-Maidah verse 51, and the national movement The defense of the Tawhid flag gave rise to new concerns for the Chinese ethnic group and the non-Muslim community if looting events were repeated or conflicts in the name of religion. This research is descriptive qualitative with the following steps: collecting data through interviews and questionnaires, classifying data, analyzing, and concluding research results. The results of his research show that good Islamic teachings are teachings as taught by Abdurrahman Wahid as a representation of Nahdlatul Ulama which protects all human beings and guarantees equality in the life of the nation and state. The view of this minority group identifies that Islamic teachings are very influential based on the thinking of religious organizations. The views of this minority group need to be implemented by Nahdlatul Ulama residents to the community level regarding the importance of national politics regardless of ethnicity, ethnicity, culture, and religion in the Meranti Islands Regency.

Keywords: National Politics; Nahdlatul Ulama; Minorities.

Introduction

The diversity of tribes, ethnicities, cultures, and religions often experiences shocks due to identity conflicts, either in the name of ethnicity or religion in the Meranti Islands Regency. Problems between individuals due to ethnic or religious differences spread to collective issues such as bloody fights in the name of tribal sentiment. In 1999, the entire shophouse (Ruko) belonging to the Chinese was burned down. So they had to leave the city of Selatpanjang and find a safe place in the cities of Batam, Singapore, and Malaysia as well as the regencies that have ties of kinship with them. This conflict is due to the economic crisis that hit Indonesia and the economic gap between the ethnic Chinese and the indigenous population. If you look at national data, the poverty rate is 49 million people, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 1998 (Mulyanto & Pontoh, 2017). As a result of the economic crisis, small issues could trigger intertribal, ethnic conflicts and loot in Selatpanjang in 1999. Likewise, the bloody conflict looting occurred

in Jakarta on 13-15 May 1998 as a result of the Asian financial crisis and the Trisaksi tragedy riots that spread to ethnic sentiments. Chinese by carrying out acts of looting shops belonging to ethnic Chinese (Hutahaeen, 2014).

Entering the reform era with the entry of transnational ideology, it is not only a matter of ethnicity but also religion. In the 2017 regional head election (*pilkada*), transnational groups had a moment to stop Basuki Cahaya Purnama (*Ahok*) from becoming governor with a blasphemy case related to Q.S. Al-Maidah verse 51. The success of stopping Ahok's political career and imprisoning him, a transnational group that has aspirations of establishing an Islamic state, is increasingly enthusiastic about bringing up the issue of identity politics in the 2019 Presidential Election. Identity politics issues spread quickly to various regions and were very disturbing to the community (Putra, 2019).

The 2019 presidential election has divided Indonesian society into two claims, supporters of Jokowi-Ma'ruf are considered blasphemers of religion, and supporters of Prabowo-Sandiaga Uno as defenders of Islam. The perception is packaged very effectively and creates hostility towards groups that are considered blasphemers of religion. The case of burning the HTI flag which was claimed to be the flag of monotheism in Garut by a member of Banser spread throughout the archipelago. Reason thinks it is difficult to explain the difference between the monotheism flag and the HTI flag as an underground movement organization. The sentiment of hatred towards NU mass organizations and their Banom also spread in the Meranti Islands Regency. Extreme groups carry out insults, physical and psychological threats to the youth organizations of the Ansor Youth Movement (GP Ansor) occur massively in Selatpanjang (Ghozali & Junaidi, 2020). Of course, the psychological impact greatly affects non-Muslim groups in the district.

The explanation above shows that the political rights of minority groups have not been fully implemented properly. Pancasila ideology as the glue of diversity (Tutik, 2005), but not going well. The majority group which is divided in the diversity of ideology becomes a new problem for the nation and society in marginalized groups. Two problems always threaten the unity of the Republic of Indonesia, namely: first, groups of fighters for Islamic law with all its variants are currently trying their best to destroy the power of moderate Islam, Nahdlatul Ulama, who has the spirit of spreading peaceful Islam and upholds nationalism in the nation and state..(Farikh, 2016) Second, Islamic law fighters always try to cover up non-Muslim minority groups in political matters related to the legislative and executive election contestations at all levels of democratic parties by using God's verses as a justification for each campaign.

From the above background, the authors see that there has been no research that has examined the role of Islam as the majority religion in Meranti Islands Regency as a defender against minority groups. Researchers are interested in researching the national politics of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the perception of minority groups by raising the following issues: First, how do minority groups view NU organizations? Second, how is NU's contribution in building the spirit of diversity with minority groups in the Meranti Islands Regency?

This study uses a qualitative descriptive model, namely researching with the following steps: First, collecting research materials through interviews, questionnaires, and sources of scientific books and journals. Second, classify research sources. Third, conduct an analysis of research materials following the problems raised in this research. Fourth, conclude the research results.

Method

The type of research used by the writer is field research. The research has a goal, namely to answer all questions what will be achieved in the research (Danim 2007). This research data was collected using the method; observation, interviews, questionnaires, and document collection (Kurniawan 2018). After the data is collected, the researcher analyzes the data in the following ways; first, establish the research focus; secondly compiling research findings; the third is developing analytical questions for future research.

Results and Discussion

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and National Politics

The long history of NU's struggle and national politics can be traced back to when this organization was founded, namely rejecting Wahhabism, which was exclusive in understanding religion, which had rejected the diversity of views of the ulema of madzhab. In addition, accusations that are not based on culture and dismantle the graves of the family and companions of the Prophet show that the nature of Wahhabism is no longer following Islamic teachings which respect diversity and prioritize preaching with wisdom. The NU organization was born to save religious sites, respect diversity in the religious understanding of different schools of thought, and also respect religious differences as explained in Q.S. Al-Kafirrun [109]: 1-6 as follows:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ
عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

Say: "O unbelievers!"¹ (109:2) I do not worship those that you worship² (109:3) neither do you worship Him Whom I worship;³ (109:4) nor will I worship those whom you have worshipped; (109:5) nor are you going to worship Him Whom I worship.⁴ (109:6) To you is your religion, and to me, my religion." (Al-Qur'an, 2019).

The consistency of NU's struggle against national politics got stronger when Wahid Hasyim took a firm stance to change the first principle of Pancasila in the Jakarta Charter which contains an element of exclusivity in the life of the nation and state with the phrase "Belief in One Supreme God." (Goncing, 2015) Very complicated issues related to the relationship between state and religion and there was a tug of war of interest that almost caused a split during the formation of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). The solution offered by Wahid Hasyim can be accepted by all leaders of the founding fathers of interfaith nations. From here, NU's position is very clear in fighting for the design of the founding of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, namely: first, fighting for the understanding of Ahlusunnah Wal Jamaah as has been done by generations of Islam long before the emergence of Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia which was developed in social activities such as education either in Islamic boarding schools, general education or the Assembly. Ta'lim and economics. Second, the struggle against all forms of colonialism with a cultural approach to achieve independence (Goncing, 2015).

The desire to establish an Islamic state among the ulama at the beginning of the preparations for independence started from the fact that the colonialists represented the Kafirs. This attitude departed from the habit of the Japanese colonizers ordering the Indonesian population to bow to the gods of the Japanese nation. But after independence, the orientation of jihad was to defend the independence from the attacks of the Dutch who would seize independence. Fatwa that jihad to defend the state is an obligation by Hasyim Asy'ari, Wahab Hasbullah, Kiai Bisri Syansuri and Kiai Abbad Buntet (Farih, 2016). The reality of the struggle of the NU scholars is that fighting for the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and religion is an obligation.

However, regarding the issue of the relationship between the state and religion, although scholars have a high enthusiasm for implementing Islamic law, the reality of Indonesian society is a consideration for the greater benefit. Apart from being textual, the state in the texts of the holy book of the Qur'an is not explained in detail and only provides the basic values of the concept of the state. And this has been fulfilled in the formulation of Pancasila which is in no way contrary to Islamic law. Therefore religion

and Pancasila cannot be contradicted with religion, because in Pancasila there are religious values such as divinity, humanity, justice, democracy, and unity (M. Syamsudin, Munthoha, Kartini Pramono, Muzhoffar Akhwan, 2011).

The five values in Pancasila are not contradictory and should not be contradicted with one another. Pancasila is not religion and religion is not Pancasila. However, because the values of Pancasila are taken from the essence of religion, the ideology of Pancasila can be accepted even though it cannot be on the same level as religion. because religion comes from God's revelation while ideology is the result of the human mind as the basis of the state, not as the belief of the Indonesian people (Asror, 2016). The existence of these differences can be understood that the ideology of the state was born due to the absence of a clear political and state system in each religion. the meeting between religious teachings is precisely on the values of goodness in it. And these good values need to be wrapped up in the form of ideology and the constitution to operationalize them in the form of social good values such as justice, humanity, protecting minorities and respecting the majority, respecting differences, deliberation, and always being united in diversity.

These values are a principle in living together as a nation and state in Indonesia. This can be realized if the state administration system can be accepted by all religious people and all levels of society. So Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) termed "Darussalam" a peaceful country, not Darul Islam or an Islamic state, let alone Darul Harb or a Kafir country (Sitompul, 1996). The use of the term is a form of nu's inclusivity thinking towards diversity. NU as the largest religious organization becomes the anchor of the Indonesian national state so that citizens of the nation consisting of various primordial ties, mainly inhabited by citizens of diverse religions, can live in harmony and strengthen each other as one nation (MD, 2012).

NU National Politics Perspective of Minority in Meranti Islands

Minority Groups in Meranti Islands District

Meranti Islands regency is unique in terms of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. This district is a division of the district of Bengkalis in 2009 (Meranti, 2020). As the youngest district, the Meranti Islands regency is the gateway for people from various surrounding regencies/ cities, namely Batam, Tanjung Balai Karimun, Dumai, Bengkalis and Siak. In addition, this district is also adjacent to or adjacent to neighboring countries such as Malaysia and Singapore. These two countries have become places for the people of the Meranti Archipelago to find work and do business both in the plantation and marine sectors (Meranti, 2020).

As the author mentioned above, the diversity of religions and ethnicities as well as culture, the people of the meranti archipelago are sometimes prone to conflicts, whether related to ethnic conflicts, or also religious conflicts. The story of the murder of a woman due to a “love triangle” that occurred between a police brigadier adil. S. Tambunan and a 24- year-old temporary employee Apri Adi Pratama with a woman was actually not solely due to the issue of a lover fighting over, but also motivated by ethnic differences between the brigadier just and tambunan from the Batak tribe, and Apri Adi Pratama from the original Malay Selatpanjang (Tempo, 2016). This riot was terrible. In 2016 thousands of residents of Selatpanjang, cliff tingg sub-district staged a demonstration at the police chief due to the persecution carried out by police friends from Adil.S. Tambunan who are both Bataknese. As a result, tribal emotions also grew hostility between the Malay and Batak tribes, although it did not necessarily spread to the hatred of the entire batak community who lived in Selat Panjang.

In the previous year, 1998 to be precise, there was a conflict in the name of the largest ethnic group in the Meranti Islands Regency (at that time this district was still merged with the Bengkalis Regency). This is the result of national hatred in the reform era against ethnic Chinese. In the case that occurred in Jakarta, the looting of shop house (Ruko), and the rape of Chinese girls (Permana, 2018), also occurred in Selatpanjang. There are thousands of Chinese Citizen who were forced to flee to Batam, Tanjung Balai, Singapore and Malaysia due to the looting of shop house as their business places.

While conflicts in the name of religion occurred in 2018. This is the impact of identity politics. GP Ansor who was holding a one-country carnival (KSN) received rejection and persecution from groups on behalf of the defenders of ulama and religion. This group has alleged that GP Ansor has insulted Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS), abused the monotheism flag by burning it and also insulted Islamic teaching with the Nusantara Islam movement. The group which is a combination of the Indonesian Hizbut Tahrir (HTI) and the Islamic Defender Front (FPI) and sympathizers perpetrates persecution and prohibits all KSN activities carried out by GP Ansor, Meranti Island Regency (Ghozali & Junaidi, 2020). This group is tried to carry out the One Country Carnival (KSN) GP Ansor as a national agenda for all religions in the archipelago, but failed. However, some of the problems mentioned above have given birth to Islamic groups who are members of the FPI and HTI organizations rejecting GP Ansor activities which are consider politically charged with links to the 2019 presidential election.

From the explanation, that the meranti archipelago community, especiallay those in urban areas that are multi-ethnic, religious and cultural, often have misunderstandings that sometimes lead to conflict that harm all parties, especially those who belong to minority groups. When looking at population data based on religion;

Islam 177,812 (84,94%), Cristian 3,059 (1,46%), Catholic 212 (0,10%), Hindu 32 (0,02%), Buddhist 26,998 (12,90%), and Confucian 1,046 (0,50%), and others 178 (0,09%) (Meranti, 2020). These data shows that Islam is the majority religion in the Meranti Islands Regency. The largest tribes of adherents of Islam are Malay, Javanese, Padang, Bugis, and Banjar tribes. The second largest religion is Buddhism. The largest ethnic group of Buddhists is the Chinese ethnic. The third largest religion is Christianity. The major tribes that became adherents of Christianity were: Javanese, Chinese, and Batak. Confucianism is the fourth largest religion. Adherents of this religion are ethnic Chinese. While Hindus are ethnic descendants of India.

Islam as the majority religion of the Meranti archipelago community consists of two types, namely: first, the Islamic religion of the elderly groups as the majority Islamic group with the Shafi'i school of thought; both religions of Islam, youth groups are located in urban areas with a small percentage. When viewed from the culture in religion, the old Islamic group is actually more inclined to the Nahdlatul Ulama organization or NU. Meanwhile, youth Islamic groups are more identical to Muhammadiyah.

In religious practice, both NU and Muhammadiyah have the same method, namely moderation. However the life of religious activities of NU residents has been integrated in society causing NU to be more famous and closer to the community than Muhammadiyah. In addition, the political views of NU which are firm on the consensus of the state and nation, namely adhering to the ideology of Pancasila, the 1945 constitution, NKRI, and *Bineka Tunggal Ika*, have been imprinted in the subconscious in the view of minority groups. The recognize this view of religious life, which means looking at Abdurrahman Wahid's religious views which are consistent in defending minority groups (Ghozali, 2020b).

From the explanation above, in fact, minority groups really need a political protection from the majority group, not limited to the majority of the largest ethnic groups in the Meranti Islands Regency, but also the majority religious groups who have the same spirit in building religious concepts in realizing a harmonious society with different religious views. The group that has proven itself consistent in voicing this mission is NU. They try to build good relations with the NU residents both culturally and structurally, especially minority group in urban areas. Because when viewed from statistical data, the urban area in the city of Selatpanjang, Tebing Tinggi sub-district is a very heterogeneous area of religion, ethnicity, and culture. Moreover, business people in urban areas are large ethnic groups such as ethnic Chinese, Padang, Batak, and Malay.

This complexity often becomes a big potential for conflict in the Meranti Islands Regency.

NU Defends the Rights of Minorities

The political development of minority groups began to gain a place after the NU cadre, Gus Dur, became the 4th president of the Republic of Indonesia. If you see his leadership period is very short, but he has contributed to the establishment of Human Rights (HAM). Several policies have contributed to the defense of minority groups such as the recognition of the Confucian Religion as part of religions recognized by the state and making the Lunar New Year a part of the National holiday.

Gus Dur's decision received mixed responses from non-Muslim communities in the Meranti Islands Regency, some said it was the right decision, some considered it inappropriate in respecting human rights. Here are the answers from the respondents:

Table 1. The Answers from The Respondents

No	NU's Alignment to Minority Groups	Percentage
1	Respecting Human Rights Equality	96, 8%
2	Lack of respect for human rights	3,2%
3	No respect for human rights	0%
Total		

This answer comes from non-Muslims totaling 100 people consisting of: 80.6% Protestant Christians, 16.1% Catholic Christians, and 3.3% Buddhist, Hindu, and Confucian religions. This data shows that the contribution of Nahdlatul Ulama to the protection of minorities has been recognized by all levels of society. Of course, the presence of NU is very important to build national values with other people to realize the Darussalam state as the ideals desired by NU (A. Wahid, 2019). According to Gus Dur, the ideal of realizing a Darussalam state is the embodiment of a constitution that has been mutually agreed upon by the founding fathers of the nation, and these values have also been put into practice long before the state of Indonesia was formed. Indonesia is a mirror of togetherness that was built by the Sriwijaya kingdom, continued by the Majapahit kingdom, and continued by the Islamic kingdoms. The movement of religious adherents from one religion to another in the dynamics of life in society is natural and not through violence. These good values are the main attraction for embracing other religions voluntarily, without any coercion (Sitompul, 1996).

This explanation shows that the perception of the minority community towards NU's national politics in the Meranti Islands district has enormous implications in elevating their status to be equal to the majority group at the level of social, political,

cultural, legal, and religious life. They have the same degree as part of the principles of the NU organization which sees all humans as having the same position in humanity and nationality. That's why defending the rights of minority groups is an obligation regardless of the risk that befalls the NU mass organization.

NU's Defense of Minority Groups for the Teachings of Islam

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The respondents' understanding of religious teachings related to defending the weak and respecting religious freedom and obtaining their rights and obligations turned out to be in line with the teachings of the religion they professed. This can be seen from the answers of the respondents as follows:

Table 2. The Respondents' Understanding Of Religious Teachings

No	The Answers of The Respondents	Prosentase
1	The religions teach love	100%
2	Only certain religion teaches love	0%
3	The religions don't teach love	0%

These answers show that violence in the name of any religion is not allowed in all religions. Islam as the majority is often studied in this case. Various cases that occur in the community in the name of religion often trigger psychological violence such as threats and physical through shop burnings, looting as has happened in Selatpanjang, Meranti Islands Regency that hit ethnic Chinese in 1999 is the effect of national riots on the Chinese. in Jakarta as a result of the multidimensional crisis during the Soeharto era, resulting in a massive peak of unemployment in 1998 (Permana, 2018).

A problem is a form of conflict leading to a bigger problem. If we look at it in real terms, economic competition and power are the sources of the rise of modernist Islamic groups to actualize themselves as Muslims who are *kaffah* in all their lives. They build businesses with symbols that are considered Islamic in the form of Companies, Shops, and economic resources. Through this power, they also enter into political parties and

color the behavior of political parties to achieve the desired goal, namely the application of sharia in all aspects of life, including in regional regulations that are currently emerging through mass organizations such as FPI, HTI, MMI, MIUMI (Rambe et al., 2019).

The ability of these groups to collect mass and collect infaq, sadaqah, and zakat is enormous, even beating Islamic mass organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU. But on the other hand, for NU, the Islamic group that spreads transnational ideology is not merely an economic problem due to the defeat of the conglomerates, but there is a very unacceptable agenda, namely to continue the ideals of Darul Islam and the Indonesian Islamic Army or DI/TII who want the establishment of an Indonesian state. both nationally what FPI wants with the Shari'ah NKRI and internationally what HTI wants (Ghozali, 2020a).

For NU, Islam and Indonesia are like body and soul which are summarized in three *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), namely the Islamic brotherhood, the brotherhood of the nation, and the brotherhood of mankind. (Siradj, 2015). That's why political issues are a matter of togetherness towards a consensus that has been mutually agreed upon. While Islam is a matter of human relationship to God which is spiritual (A. Wahid, 2011). When Islam is led to become part of practical politics, the teachings of Islam itself become narrow. Because the teachings of Islam revealed by Allah are a religion whose teachings are universal across all ages. Therefore, improving a country is not by changing the existing system, but improving officeholders who are honest, trustworthy, fair, and work for the interests of the nation and state, not for personal or group interests.

Future Nahdlatul Ulama Hopes

NU organizations are the most well-known religious organizations by non-Muslim communities in the Meranti Islands Regency with 83, 9% and Muhammadiyah 16,1%. The large popularity of NU organizations by non-Muslims is due to their involvement in religious and social activities involving NU and other religious organizations, the conflict between the Rohingya and Muslims in Thailand, the one-country parade, or KSN GP Ansor, and recitation activities that often invite prominent figures. religious and non-Muslim communities to attend and other social benefits (Khosairi, 2021).

Although non-Muslims have different opinions about the steps taken by Gus Dur, representatives of NU's political teachings (51.6%), and those who do not know (45.2%), and 3.4% think they do not represent NU. This answer is reasonable because their background does not allow them to study Islam and its mass organizations in detail, so 45.2% said they did not know. It could be that this group knew Gus Dur better than the

nu itself. Gus Dur is better known for his policies when he was president of the Republic of Indonesia, which left an imprint on giving benefits to minority groups.

However, when the authors submit a suggestion or opinion for NU in the Meranti Islands Regency, they have almost the same answer, namely being able to uphold the pillars of diversity and always do good to fellow human beings. The views of minorities in the Meranti Islands Regency are in line with Franz Magnissuseno's opinion that Gus Dur has an open heart for all minorities, the oppressed, victims of human rights violations. Minorities feel safe with him. Hence, they feel very honored (Magnis-Suseno, 2020).

Gus Dur did not always represent NU's national politics. Many NU figures do not agree with his political steps. However, NU and Gus Dur, have the same embryonic birth, which is that they come from traditional Islamic boarding schools that highly uphold human values. So the difference is not in the substance but the technique of delivery. Cultural heritages born from adherents of different religions are considered great cultural heritages that need to be preserved and cared for. Such an attitude is the *da'wah* of the Islamic boarding school scholars in maintaining the feelings of every adherent of other religions in Indonesia (Siradj, 2015).

Conclusion

The concept of NU's national politics has indeed become an interesting thing for people who are religious minorities in the Meranti Islands district. The presence of the NU mass organization during the Meranti Islands community brings peace and is considered an older brother who has succeeded in raising the level to be more respectable with the political policies made by Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur when he became the 4th President of the Republic of Indonesia. Gus Dur's political move as a representation of NU clerics proves that NU clerics have implemented national politics in the form of spreading the values of compassion and defending the human rights of minorities.

NU's national political thinking is very suitable to be developed more deeply and needs to be implemented by its organizations at the provincial and district/city levels. In addition, Autonomous Bodies (Banom) under the auspices of NU such as GP Ansor, Fatayat, Muslimat, ISNU, IPNU, and IPPNU as well as others. NU appears to provide examples of how to live as a nation and state while still being guided by the organization's articles of association and the views of the Islamic religion *Ahlusunnah wal Jama'ah*.

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