

Islam and Local Wisdom: The Study of “*Islam Nusantara*” in the Cultural Perspective

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Abstract. *Islam Nusantara*, as a model of thinking, understanding, and practicing Islamic teachings based on three pillars: kalam (theology), fiqh (legal norms), and tasawuf (ethics and aesthetics) which are packaged through Indonesian culture. For this reason, the object of this study includes three important things, namely the thought, movement, and practice of the three religious pillars in relation to local wisdom. The data were obtained from two sources, namely referential and supplemented by field studies in the form of discussions with the NU regional administrators of Central Java, as a representation of religious organizations that carry *Islam Nusantara*. The results show that the Islamic model of *Islam Nusantara* is characterized by: (1) thinking (*fikrah*), namely a moderate way of thinking (*tawasuth*). That is, *Islam Nusantara* is in the middle of rowing between textualist interpretations and liberalist interpretations; (2) movement (*harakah*), namely the spirit of moving improvements towards the realization of religious moderation; and (3) activity (*amaliah*), aimed at glorifying tradition has been rooted for a long time in Indonesian society. Traditions that do not conflict with the principles of Islamic teachings.

1 Introduction

Religion on the one hand can influence its adherents to commit acts of violence, but on the other hand, religion can also bring peace [1]. The hypothesis used in this study is "peace will be present when religion is able to dialogue with local cultures, not disturb them". This local culture is known as local wisdom. Local wisdom is a collection of community knowledge that functions for how to manage the environment, both the physical environment and the social environment. In the construction of Indonesia, the relationship between religion and local wisdom shows a face that runs in opposite directions, namely being opposed or adjusted. When religion is opposed with local wisdom, it is easy to bring up narratives and acts of violence, while if dialogued allows harmony to emerge.

How is the relationship between religion and local wisdom explained from a cultural perspective? From a cultural perspective, the relationship between religion and local wisdom starts with what are the basic needs of human society itself? What is the strategy to fulfill this need? What knowledge is used as a guide to determine what is considered true, good, and appropriate to be adaptive behind various realities?

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2 Literature Review

Human society is seen from a socio-cultural perspective, have basic needs that must be met, namely biological needs, social needs, and integrative needs [2]. For that, they need guidelines in the form of knowledge about what is considered right and good. One of the sources of truth is local knowledge. Local knowledge is very functional because it relates to how to adapt to the community environment, especially a diverse society like Indonesia. In a diverse society, including the various religions that exist, the religious knowledge that is followed can lead to a rejection of local knowledge so that it becomes radical in nature. On the other hand, as the basis of the ideas taught in *Islam Nusantara* is not to oppose but to dialogue with the diversity of existing local teachings and knowledge.

To Understand the *Islam Nusantara* in general is the face of the embodiment of Islam in the archipelago [3]. In this case, there is diversity according to who the Islamic broadcasters are and how they are received. Islam that develops in West Sumatra, for example, will be different from Islam that develops generally in Java – even though both are faces of Islam in the archipelago. Meanwhile, in the sense of *Islam Nusantara* specifically as in this study, it is Islam which was initiated and then constructed by scholars who are in the socio-religious organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as it was initiated in 1935 at the Banjarmasin Congress, and then revived in 2018 at the NU Congress in Surabaya.

3 Research Method

This research focuses on how *Islam Nusantara* provides answers to the relationship between religion and the local knowledge of diverse communities. What is the underlying reason that in religious teachings, according to Nusantara Islam, they prefer to have a dialogue and then sort and choose what is considered appropriate for the Indonesian people? In what form of thought, action, and socialization to spread his understanding?

The purpose of this research question is to narrate the basic arguments from the perspective of religious understanding and the social realities of the diverse Indonesian people. The basis of the argument can then become the basic characteristic of the Islamic understanding of the archipelago in particular.

To answer questions in accordance with the research objectives, the method used is to study the ideas of NU figures, which are scattered in many journal documents and books, and are complemented by discussing these findings with the Central Java NU organizational management, represented by the chairman and members of the NU Lakpesdam NU (Institute for Research and Empowerment Nahdlatul Ulama) From the discussion (Focus Group Discussion), then analyzed qualitatively interpretive.

What is the result of the *Islam Nusantara* dialogue on diversity and local knowledge, is the essence of this research. To answer this question, the method adopted in this study is to collect the thoughts of the initiators of *Islam Nusantara*, the majority of whom are in the NU organization (Nahdlatul Ulama), both documented in the distribution of documents (referential) and in direct dialogue with the Central Java NU administrators. The collection of referential and dialogue results was then analyzed qualitatively and interpretively [4].

4 Result and Discussion

4.1 Basic Thought (*al fikrah*) of *Islam Nusantara*

Islam Nusantara in this special sense has characteristics in relation to religious rules and teachings in the scope of vertical and horizontal relations. In the vertical scope, it is related to the obligations of Muslims to Allah as formulated in: *aqidah* (pillars of faith), pillars of Islam (sharia), and *tasawuf* (ethics). While the horizontal scope includes the relationship of citizens to the state (nation state), inter-religious relations, and internal religious relations.

The vertical relationship (worship) in relation to the construction of faith, follows Almaturidi understanding. In the field of sharia, especially following Imam Syafi'ie, while in the field of Sufism he follows Imam Ghozali. While the horizontal relationship (*muamalah*) is related to

the state, *Islam Nusantara* considers that the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) based on Pancasila contains five precepts as formulated on June 1, 1945, as well as the 45 Constitution, which is final, in the sense that it does not need to be changed again. Islam in the context of the state according to the format of "*Islam Nusantara*" construction of Nadhlatul Ulama, is more focused on a substantive approach, not a formalistic one. The view of the universality of Islam in the context of the state offered by "*Islam Nusantara*" is based on seven principles.

The seven principles, First, is *al-shura* (consultation). That is, the principle of deliberation is a principle ordered by the Koran and therefore becomes a principle of political ethics. Second, the principles of *al musawa* (equality) and *al ikha* (brotherhood), which means equality and brotherhood. On this principle, humans are the same, what is different or what makes the difference is the quality of their piety. Third, is the principle of al-adallah (justice) which means: honesty, fairness, and integrity, namely justice that must be upheld without discrimination, full of honesty, sincerity and integrity. The fourth is *al hurriyyah* (freedom) which means embracing freedom. Freedom in relation to social life must be regulated by laws and regulations so that one person's freedom does not violate the freedom of others. The fifth is the principle of *al-amanah* (trust). In the context of state power, trust is a people's mandate which has a high social contract value. The sixth is the principle of *al-salam* (peace) or peace as stated in the Koran. The goal is al tasamuh (tolerant), namely the principle of mutual respect between fellow citizens. This principle applies universally, not only to matters of a profane nature, but also to matters of a sacred nature, such as tolerance and respect for other religions. Departing from these seven principles, NU scholars refer to Indonesia as Darus-salam (a country in peace) not *darul-harb* (a country in a state of war).

The relationship between followers of various religions, in the view of the Islamic scholars of the Archipelago, they are described as brothers. Brothers who are in the three levels of possibility. First, *ukhuwah bashoriyah* (brethren of fellow human beings), two fellow Indonesian citizens, and third, fellow Muslims. The concept of brother is focused on friends so that friendship is formed. This is different, thirdly seeing other people of different religions are called opponents, then what appears is that the person is called a competitor or enemy. When categorizing them as enemies, the languages used tend to be bad (negative) like 'kafir'. This is where *Islam Nusantara* prefers the term non-Muslim brother. Why? In the many explanations given by NU administrators as conveyed through FGD (Focus Group Discussion), each adherent of that religion has a belief and every belief for its adherents is true. In other words, Islam is true for Muslims, but such truth is not necessarily forced to be recognized by followers of other religions. Further explanation is that a Christian is welcome to declare that Christian teaching is true for him. And so on for adherents of other religions such as Hinduism for Hindus and Buddhism for Buddhists. In scientific studies, truth is relative (relatively absolute). The basis of its footing is the verses of the Koran such as "*La ikraha fi din*" (there is no compulsion in religion) (QS. Al Baqarah: 256) and every believer is welcome in accordance with the teachings of their respective religions. "*Lakum dinukum waliyadin*" (QS al Kafirun: 6) [5].

4.2 Movement (*harakah*) *Islam Nusantara*

There are three pillars (institutions) of how *Islam Nusantara* is understood, mobilized, and implemented, and socialized. The three pillars are: (1) Islamic boarding schools with the understanding of *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah*; (2) NU's organization; and (3) nahdliyin communities spread across many areas, especially in Indonesia, especially in the pockets of santri.

Islamic boarding schools teach the Islamic teachings of *Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah* intensively based on three guidelines: the Qur'an - Al Hadith - the classical books. Through the Pesantren Education system, the teacher-student relationship; kiai and santri, runs in a sustainable manner so as to give birth to a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings in accordance with the understanding of *Nusantara Islam* which was constructed and ratified by NU organizations at all levels.

The NU Executive Board structurally makes guidelines and instructions for the organizational structure below, including the underbouw (NU Regional Management (provincial level) - NU Branch Management (city/district level) - NU Branch Managers (sub-

district level) - NU Branch Management (kelurahan/village level). What is contained in the guidelines related to the teachings of *Islam Nusantara*, generally comes from the results of *bahsul masail*, a kind of religious discussion whose participants are scholars within NU (generally non-structural). They are usually also caregivers of Islamic boarding schools.

The *nahdliyin* (*jamiyah*) community is the community members, especially in the pockets of the *santri*. Each community, especially from the NU branch level to the branch level, has religious study groups, such as the *manaqiban* group, *yasinan* group, and *tahlilan* group. Through such activity groups, the products of the teachings of *Islam Nusantara* are disseminated repeatedly and continuously so that a religious cultural community is built.

4.3 Aktivites (*Amaliah*) *Islam Nusantara*

Religious teachings, both related to basic obligations (worship) and daily religious actions categorized as *muamalah*, are routinely carried out and carried out as characteristics of the *amaliah* of NU citizens who are in the same breath with the teachings of *Nusantara Islam*. All such religious activities, their attributes are easily recognizable, either through associations (*jamiyah*), such as *manaqiban*, *yasinan*, *tahlilan* activities. The whole thing runs and is carried out in every rite of the life cycle, starting from the rite of pregnancy, the rite of birth, the rite of circumcision, the rite of marriage, and the rite of death. This is the face of knowledge, patterns of action, and the results of actions that are intertwined and even manifest as the local wisdom of the NU community.

The tangible evidence of such religious activities is easy to identify. If you have heard chants behind loudspeakers in the prayer room, in the mosque, and even in people's homes about *tahlilan*, *barzanji*, *sholawatan*, *yasinan*, and the like - then that is the basic characteristic of NU's religion which is actually the face of *Islam Nusantara Islam*.

Conclusion

The diversity behind people's religious expressions, between being radical as practiced by Muslim minorities in Indonesia and being friendly to the social environment as understood behind the teachings of *Islam Nusantara* driven by the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) organization, can be found in their daily lives. Religious activities that have the opposite pattern can be witnessed through narratives on social media, newspapers, and television. Of course, each person has a different view: support or hate.

The basic question is how is the religious idealization of the diverse Indonesian society? The answer from this study is: religious understanding initiated and carried out by the religious social organization NU. The various positive values can be considered and contemplated. Henceforth, our task is to criticize and fill in the gaps, not to refuse just because of interests outside the realm of religion and the plurality of Indonesian society itself.

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