

The Role of Cultural Islamic Politics In Realizing Civil Society In Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This article reviews the role of cultural Islam in the national political stage. During the New Order, cultural Islam tended to withdraw from political activities because they did not want to be trapped in conditions that were colored by the hustle and bustle. Cultural Islam only took care of worship activities, especially in the pesantren environment. The struggle of cultural Islam is not only to maintain the sovereignty of the NKRI, but is also encouraged to display the image of Islam in the public space as a religion that loves peace and is full of tolerance and brings benefits to all mankind without regard to differences in ethnicity, religion, race, customs, and between groups.

INTRODUCTION

Muslims believe wholeheartedly that the Islamic religion revealed by Allah to Muhammad is the perfect religion. This point of perfection is stated textually in the holy book of the Koran, as stated in surah al-Maidah that "on this day I have perfected your religion for you, and have fulfilled My blessings on you, and have approved Islam as a religion for you. As a perfect religion, Islam is not only aimed at the benefit of one group, but involves the benefit of the entire universe. Islam does not only regulate one dimension of life, but regulates all aspects of life until the end of time arrives.

It is generally understood that the birth of Islam as a religion cannot be separated from the dimensions of space and time. Islam was introduced by Muhammad as a prophet and apostle who was territorially from Arabia. Thus, it is difficult to avoid the contact between Islam and Arab culture. The Arabness of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the Qur'an does not automatically generalize that everything related to Arabia is sacred, holy, and far from negative aspects. This is where wisdom is needed in distinguishing between Islam and Arabia. The substance of Islamic teachings is what should be glorified because it has transcended the boundaries of civilization, by avoiding attitudes that weaken each other based on categories of tribe, nation, and race (Allawi, 2009).

Islamic teachings emphasize that humans are given the gift of life by Allah with the aim of serving and worshiping Him for material interests in this world as well as seeking salvation in the afterlife. Islam is interpreted as an effort to surrender oneself totally to Allah in order to achieve a perfect human being in the sense of having a noble personality, so a Muslim always establishes a relationship with Him through ritual worship, while simultaneously interacting harmoniously with fellow human beings to achieve social piety (Sulaiman, 2021). This statement shows that Islam is a teaching that regulates various aspects of human life. The movement of human civilization will be meaningful for the continuity of humanity when Islam can be used as a normative foundation.

Islam as a monotheistic religion can be the basis of ethics and morals in the growth and development of a nation's civilization if Islam can be understood in relation to human civilization. Even the spirit and strength of Islam will create a noble civilization in a nation. In this case, Islamic civilization is actually a civilization that has a framework of guidelines based on the revelations revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The two main sources of Islamic teachings (the Qur'an and the Hadith) along with the development of the times and the expansion of the area of dissemination of Islam have given birth to a system of ideas that grew through the paths of Islamic thought (Hefner, 2022).

Islam as a religion and civilization also colors the journey of the Indonesian nation. Around the 7th century, people in the archipelago had come into contact with Islamic traders from West Asia and South Asia. This contact has given rise to new civilizations, especially in coastal areas. Entering the 13th century, Islam began to be institutionalized with the establishment of Islamic Kingdoms. The growth of these kingdoms received support from traders and preachers, because they saw the early kingdoms before Islam began to weaken because they had lost legitimacy from the community. The role of Islam as a

social and political force also contributed greatly to realizing Indonesia as a sovereign country both in physical and diplomatic struggles facing colonial countries from Western Europe and the Japanese military occupation.

Entering Modern Indonesia, especially during the New Order, the existence of Islam, especially groups that pursued the political path, faced a consensus, namely accepting Pancasila as the sole principle. This consensus made Indonesia not a secular state, nor a theocratic state. Therefore, the religiosity of Indonesian society and the religious thoughts that developed within it were always within this framework. Likewise, the teachings and thoughts of Islam in Indonesia must be understood by considering Pancasila as the principle. This condition implies that Islam during the New Order tended to be colored by Hinduistic, fatalistic, and conformist characteristics (Sebastian & Alkaff, 2024).

During the New Order, political Islam experienced quite heavy pressure. In an effort to narrow and weaken the political power of Islam, the New Order government tried to implement various tactics and strategies, both in a subtle and harsh manner. The subtle method was carried out by providing subsidies and various facilities to various religious associations (cultural Islamic groups) that were active in the fields of education, social, preaching and religion. Meanwhile, on the other hand, political Islamic groups, especially Islamic political parties, were subjected to harsh measures, by purging the bureaucracy of Islamic political power components, including purging within the Ministry of Religion (Azharhany, 2022).

The power of political Islam was increasingly under pressure after the 1971 general election. This pressure was marked by the New Order government's policy to merge Islamic political parties into one party. Due to this policy, the Nahdlatul Ulama Party, the Indonesian Muslim Party (Parmusi), the Islamic Tarbiyah Association (Perti), and the Indonesian Islamic Union Party (PSII) were merged into a spiritual material group known as the United Development Party (PPP). During its journey, the PPP continued to experience internal conflicts based on the factions that were the forerunners of the party's establishment (Rahawarin, 2023), so that the existence of the PPP was only a complement or political accessory in the New Order state system in order to show itself as a democratic government.

After the merger of Islamic political parties into one party, the political involvement of Muslims never again appeared in a quality form. The formation of the PPP was primarily intended to fulfill the requirements needed for a democratic state in which the interests of the people could be represented. In certain cases, the PPP did become the best representative for the interests of the Muslim community, although in most cases it did not. Only in political campaign situations was the PPP able to present itself as a representative of the community, but when the vote count was finished, this condition was inversely proportional to the number of votes (Haris, 1991). On the other hand, the existence of non-political Islamic organizations was in a happy condition. The support of the New Order government for every activity of cultural Islamic mass organizations was very maximum. At every Nahdlatul Ulama congress, the activity was attended by Soeharto as president along with related officials, and was broadcast widely

by television media (Nikmah, 2023). Support was not only given in the form of finance and security, but ABRI troops were involved in procuring public kitchens to serve the consumption of congress participants (Sofuan, 2023).

Entering the beginning of the reformation marked by the rise of Baharuddin Jusuf Habibie as President of the Republic of Indonesia, brought a breath of fresh air for the political activities of Muslims. The momentum of this change began when the New Order government in the 1990s carried out a policy of accommodation towards political Islam (Rosidi, 2022). This cannot be separated from the role of B.J. Habibie as a strong man after Soeharto. B.J. Habibie succeeded in attracting political Islam into the New Order political wagon through the institutions he formed, namely the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) and the Center for Information and Development Studies (CIDES) (Fatah, 2000). The reformation era is known as the era of the rise of political Islam, so discussing Islam in the reformation era is complex because of the emergence of a dichotomy between political Islam and cultural Islam, where both have the same role in realizing a civil society in the Republic of Indonesia. In this struggle, there were certain times when political Islam faced cultural Islam, but there were also certain times when the two were symbiotic.

The relationship between cultural Islam and political Islam in Indonesia after the fall of the New Order is interesting to study because both have the same role in realizing a civil society even though they sometimes adopt different strategies. This paper aims to (1) reconstruct the strategy of cultural Islam in realizing a civil society (2) the role of political Islam in creating the supremacy of *rahmatan lil alamin* (3) the role of cultural Islam in the political path.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Civil Society

The movement to build Indonesian civil society is the right choice to help this nation and state truly achieve its goals. The concept of "Indonesian Civil Society" is not new. The Indonesian people have long had and implemented it. This concept is the brainchild of the nation's founders, who comprised figures from various backgrounds who were representative of all elements of the nation. The term "Madani" in this concept was actually implemented 14 centuries ago in Medina, a city led by God's messenger, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The results were astonishing. In just 10 years, Medina's society transformed dramatically into a just, prosperous, and peaceful society. This success was widely recognized, and its effects can still be felt today (Effendy, 2001).

The concept of Medina's successful development can still be studied in detail. Numerous documents demonstrating the concept and its implementation are still widely available. The Arabs' superiority in memorizing and preserving information from generation to generation was a strength and advantage, ensuring that these historical traces were not lost. Through these preserved historical documents, we can learn and conclude how to build a just, prosperous, and prosperous nation and state from the perspective of a holistic human being and society, always prioritizing religiosity, egalitarianism, democracy, togetherness, prioritizing justice, and mutual respect and appreciation for others.

The following description illustrates a civil society and the strategic pathways that must be traversed to realize it (Yunanto2018). According to Azyumardi Azra (1999), civil society has three basic characteristics that distinguish it from other societies, among others

1. Pluralism

Civil society recognizes the spirit of pluralism as an inevitable necessity. Pluralism is considered a natural part of life and aims to educate the people through constructive and dynamic differences. However, these differences must be based on an inclusive attitude and the ability to adapt to the surrounding environment, while maintaining authentic religious identities.

2. Tolerance

Civil society exhibits a high level of tolerance, both toward those within and outside of the same religion. Tolerance is defined as an attitude of listening to and respecting the opinions and views of others. This aligns with the goal of religion, which is not only to preserve its own religion but also to recognize the existence of other religions and grant them the right to coexist and respect one another.

3. Democracy

Civil society prioritizes democratic principles as an option for building and fighting for a more prosperous life for citizens and society. Democratic principles are not only about freedom and competition, but also about shared responsibility in building a just and equitable society.

METHODOLOGY

The process of writing this article uses a historical research method consisting of four stages. These stages are (1) Heuristics, namely looking for historical traces in the form of a series of events contained in written records in the form of books, newspapers, and online dailies. (2) Criticism, namely providing an assessment of these historical traces by comparing them with each other to find historical facts that are close to objective. (3) Interpretation, providing an interpretation of historical traces that have been assessed objectively and then connecting them with other historical traces so that a historical story is composed that is related to each other (causality). (4) Historiography, the activity of compiling historical stories through written reports in the form of articles to be presented to the public (Kuntowijoyo, 2003).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Islam and the Realization of Civil Society

Cultural Islam is defined as Islam that carries out struggles and movements outside of political channels (Majid, 2008). Cultural Islam in Gus Dur's view is interpreted as a group that tends to display the figure of Islam in everyday consciousness without being too associated with any institution (Musa, 2014). Cultural Islam believes that to advance Indonesian Islamic society, struggle does not always have to be through political channels. Advancing Indonesian Islamic society can be done through education, preaching, art, culture, and health. To see the role of cultural Islam in advancing Indonesian Islamic society within the

framework of civil society, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah can be used as examples.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was founded on January 31, 1926 in Surabaya on the initiative of K.H Wahab Chasbullah and K.H Hasyim Asy'ari. NU was founded as a *jami'iyah*, namely a religious and social organization. NU's articles of association state that adherence to the teachings of the *madzhab* is the main thing. It states that the aim of this organization is to adhere to one of the four Imams' *madzhab*s, namely Imam Muhammad bin Idris asy-Syafi'i, Imam Malik bin Anas, Imam Abu Hanifah an-Nu'man, or Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, and to do anything that will benefit the Islamic religion (Fealy, 2003).

At the beginning of its establishment, NU focused more on the socio-religious aspect. However, after conducting a study of the Sunni Islamic political struggle line, NU then took part in coloring the politics of government in the Republic of Indonesia. NU argued that the organization has a responsibility to save Islam and its adherents. For that, NU must try to maintain the peace and stability of society because it is seen as a condition for creating obedience and harmony of the people. Only in an orderly society can Allah's commandments be upheld, and Muslims can carry out their worship properly. This is necessary to achieve happiness in the world and salvation in the hereafter. Therefore, peace and obedience are inseparable links (Feillard, 1999).

In an effort to realize a civil society in Indonesia, NU as part of cultural Islam takes several steps. First, enlightening society to avoid radical behavior, especially through education. Students are directed to understand the principles of Islamic moderation, which are in accordance with the concept of *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah*. Education must be aimed at a humanist approach in the framework of educational andragogy. Through a humanist approach, the educational process is intended to create human emancipation (Cholid, 2021).

Second, conditioning society to increasingly understand the meaning and significance of *ukhuwah wathaniyah*. The chaos of the life of the Indonesian people as a nation that bears the responsibility of unity and togetherness, needs to be put forward. NU appears to voice defense against cases that hit the internal circles of the nation's children. NU encourages society to appreciate pluralism in the midst of a life that continues to change. The concept of *ukhuwah wathaniyah* in pluralism needs to be grounded. Society must be given an understanding of plural life, not only in a theoretical dimension, but also by presenting the history of the life of a plural society that can live side by side peacefully (Maliki, 1999).

Third, empowering the economy of Muslims to free them from the poverty trap. Currently, Muslims, including Nahdliyin, are generally in rural areas. To free society from the shackles of poverty, educational institutions in the form of Islamic boarding schools fostered by NU must be at the forefront of providing education to the community, both knowledge-oriented and skills-oriented as provisions for utilizing and managing natural resources in order to meet the basic needs of the community. NU carries out economic movements as an action against capitalist economic practices and provides enlightenment to the community to free themselves from the attitude of *tajrid* life (Irawan, 2016).

The representation of the Cultural Islamic movement is also manifested in the Muhammadiyah organization. Muhammadiyah was founded by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta on November 18, 1912 (Setiawan, 2021). Through Muhammadiyah, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan spread Islamic modernism by upholding the basic principles, namely: opening the door of *ijtihad* and rejecting *taqlid*, returning to the Qur'an and Hadith, and promoting the purification of Islam, rejecting/eradicating superstition, heresy, and superstition. The main goal of Muhammadiyah is to straighten out all deviations that occur in Islamic preaching activities. Deviations that occur in Islamic teachings often tarnish the purity of Islamic teachings because there has been a mixture with local traditions that are actually contrary to Islamic *aqidah*. However, the process of straightening or purifying Islamic teachings carried out by Muhammadiyah did not take the path of violence, but by prioritizing preaching that seeks to provide awareness to the community. Muhammadiyah in carrying out its struggle has become an important trend setter of moderate Islam in Indonesia in building mercy (*rahmatan lil alamin*).

Muhammadiyah's actions are oriented towards the spirit of creating social order and presenting community-based education to produce advanced and educated human resources. Muhammadiyah tries to present Islam as a religious teaching that is not only static and oriented towards personal interests, but dynamic and positioned as a universal life system in regulating various aspects of life. In its formation, Muhammadiyah is oriented towards the social aspect of society as a reflection of Allah's command in the Qur'an, for example in Surah al-Imran verse 104 which is interpreted as and let there be among you a group of people who invite to goodness, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, they are the lucky ones. This verse among the Muhammadiyah elite is interpreted as Allah's command to Muslims to move in spreading the message of Islam in an organized manner as well as an affirmation in organizational life.

As an implementation of Surah al-Imran verse 104, in point 6 of the Muqaddimah of the Muhammadiyah Articles of Association it is announced, carrying out charitable efforts and struggles with organizational order, which contains the meaning of the importance of institutions as a real means of movement. As a positive impact of Muhammadiyah's presence as an organization that prioritizes the welfare of the people, there are now many institutions founded by Muhammadiyah in the form of social institutions, educational institutions and health institutions. Based on data released by Wikipedia, educational institutions consist of 4623 TK/TPQ, 2604 SD/MI, 1772 SMP/MTs, 1143 SMA/SMK/MA and 172 tertiary institutions. Social institutions consist of hospitals, maternal and child health centers, community health centers, medical centers and pharmacies. Meanwhile, institutions engaged in the social sector consist of Orphanages, Nursing Homes, Social Health Centers, Homes for the Elderly/Senior Citizens, Homes for the Blind, Compensation (Family, Elderly/Senior Citizens, Death), BPKM (Muhammadiyah Education and Skills Center), Rehabilitation for the Disabled, Special Schools, and Islamic Boarding Schools (<https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammadiyah>).

In addition to moving in the social domain, Muhammadiyah also carries out intellectual movements. As a strategic group that brings together the educated middle class, Muhammadiyah has never stopped producing Muslim intellectuals, who have a very charming combination of academic and Islamic credentials. Empirically, this combination and credentials benefit Muhammadiyah because this organization has a strong base in the Muslim community, while Muhammadiyah figures also have the technical skills to voice Islamic agendas in the wider community, especially nationalist groups. This layer of Muhammadiyah Muslim intellectuals is formed in each generation with a very prominent role as seen through academic works both in the form of articles published in international scientific journals and books produced by various domestic and foreign publishers (Fanani, 2004)

Islamic Politics and the Supremacy of Rahmatan Lil Alamin

The famous Islamic thinker, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, elaborated carefully on Islamic Politics and Political Islam. Islamic politics is intended as an effort to uphold Islamic values in social life that is based on justice. This means that Islam appears as a struggle to uphold justice, defend the oppressed, respect reason and support the development of science. The struggle for Islamic politics can be pursued through political parties, or through the power of civil society. In contrast to Islamic politics, political Islam appears as a form of struggle by a group of people using Islamic symbols to fight for their interests in gaining power that only benefits their internal group (Hikam, 1999). Efforts to fight for Islamic values in the political path encouraged several Islamic figures to establish the National Awakening Party (PKB) on July 23, 1998. Since the general election was held in the reform era, PKB has always been in the top 5. As a modern party, PKB has a vision, namely:

1. Realizing the ideals of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia as stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution;
2. Realizing a just and prosperous society physically and mentally, materially and spiritually;
3. Realizing a democratic, open, clean and morally noble national political order.

Meanwhile, the PKB's mission is:

1. Economic Sector: upholding and developing a just and democratic people's economic life;
2. Legal Sector: striving to uphold and develop a civilized legal state, capable of protecting all people, upholding human rights, and social justice;
3. Socio-Cultural Sector: striving to build an advanced and modern culture while maintaining a good national identity in order to improve the dignity and honor of the nation;
4. Educational Sector: striving to improve the quality of human resources who are noble, independent, skilled, professional and critical of the surrounding social environment, striving to realize a national education system that is oriented towards the people, cheap and sustainable;

5. Defense Sector: building awareness of every citizen regarding the obligation to participate in national defense efforts; encouraging the realization of community self-defense against treatments that cause a sense of insecurity, whether from individuals or certain institutions in society (Tribunnewswiki/Magi, 2019).

Based on the vision and mission, PKB firmly stated that the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution is final. This preference is certainly different from other Islamic parties that continue to strive for the formalization of sharia in state law. With this fundamental political decision, PKB can focus on more concrete political efforts concerning awareness, education and community development towards more real prosperity and justice. Meanwhile, political efforts to fight for an Islamic state again, the formalization of sharia or including the Jakarta Charter in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution, not only threaten national disintegration, but are also more of a political cosmetic (Choiri, 2008).

As a party that upholds Islamic teachings as *rahmatan lil alamin*, PKB is a political means to fight for inclusive Islamic ideas. The posture of national Islam which is the spirit of PKB's struggle becomes the party's guideline in swinging its political steps, attitudes and policies which include alliance and coalition patterns, responses to strategic issues and policy products. PKB understands that Indonesian Muslim society has not fully realized the teachings of the Qur'an in upholding unity. If associated with the description (Putra, 2019b), the Islam displayed by PKB is an Islam that values freedom of expression, shows an attitude of tolerance, upholds respect for countless diversity.

In realizing a civil society, PKB always views and disseminates to the general public that the reality of Indonesian society which is diverse in various dimensions can be used as a means towards the unity of Islamic society and unity among fellow citizens through strong heart bond management so as to be able to give birth to a powerful force to stem the seeds of radicalism and terrorism that threaten religious, national and state life. An attitude of tolerance is a bridge that functions as a mediator between the diversity of Indonesian society. Without tolerance, the diversity that exists will become an obstacle towards the society that is aspired to, and will even lead to conflict that will destroy Islamic civilization in Indonesia.

The cultural diversity that exists in Indonesia in PKB's view is part of the inevitability of *sunnatullah* that cannot be denied. Islam respects and acknowledges the diversity shown by the faces of tribes, religions, races, customs, and traditions which are accompanied by different actions. Seeing these differences, PKB always emphasizes to prioritize *maslahah* through intercultural communication, mainstreaming humanity between fellow human beings and spreading the teachings of compassion between fellow human beings.

As an effort to create security within the country, PKB continues to campaign for the importance of deradicalization. One of these efforts is through mainstreaming moderate Islam. The characteristics of moderate Islam are upholding justice, maintaining balance, and being tolerant and respectful of others (Edy, 2006). Moderate Islam is the acceptance and respect for differences,

being open to others, and being willing to develop cooperation with different groups (Hasnu & Syam, 2021). To realize moderate Islam, PKB collaborates with educational institutions, especially Islamic boarding schools to carry out friendly da'wah movements as a commitment to affirming the civilization of Islam as a religion of rahmatan lil alamin, while at the same time upholding the civilization of Indonesia as a multicultural country that must uphold the spirit of unity, justice, and common welfare. Thus, it is clear that PKB in its struggle is trying to realize transcendental humanism as humans who all come from one God.

Cultural Islam in the Political Path

Entering the reform era, the tap of democracy has been opened properly. This can be seen from the main focus of democracy, the expansion of people's rights to the state, access to government, and freedom of aspiration and upholding humanitarian values, as citizens involved in governance. So that the public is given a broad opportunity to participate in the decision-making stage. Community involvement in decision-making should be a consideration for the government if it wants to make a policy.

The reform era has brought this nation to a very interesting new level of political experience. A political hope that is not only a consequence of the demands of the ideals of reform. However, the insistence on the importance of change or reform has now become a political will and initiative fought for by the people themselves. This has a strong indication that the people no longer choose based on party considerations alone. In fact, the people as citizens have used their political independence to assess who is a worthy leader to be considered because they can be trusted to bring about future change. The emergence of free political participation of the people and not bound by anything is an advancement in the practice of democracy in Indonesia.

The increasing participation of the community to be actively involved in political processes has encouraged various groups to join the struggle in the political path as their commitment to realizing a civil society. The increasingly cool democratic climate in the reform era provides an opportunity for anyone, including clerics and intellectuals to choose and be chosen in a general election, either as an executive candidate or a legislative candidate. This can be seen in the composition of legislative members which include NU elites. The involvement of clerics and intellectuals from NU circles when viewed from the perspective of is their effort to shape character through strengthening integrity in order to achieve a government condition that sides with the community (Yusuf, 2022).

The involvement of NU elites in the political path still refers to the ideology of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah. This ideology is a political philosophy or fiqh principle that is often referred to by NU clerics and politicians in dealing with problems. The fiqh principle in question is

1. Dar'ul mafasid muqaddamun 'ala jalbi al-mashalih (avoiding damage/harm is prioritized over achieving goodness/benefit).
2. Idza ta'aradha masfadatani ru'ya 'azhamuha dhararan bi-irtikaabi akhaffahima (if faced with two problems that both contain danger, then choose one of the two that is less dangerous/smaller).

3. Ad'dararu la yuzalu bi ad-dirar (a danger should not be eliminated by something that can cause another danger (Fealy, 2012).

The three political principles were then explained in more detail in the results of the NU Congress decision in 1989, namely:

1. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama means the involvement of citizens in the life of the nation and state as a whole in accordance with Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.
2. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama is politics that has a national perspective and leads to national integration with steps that always uphold unity to achieve common ideals, namely the realization of a just and prosperous society, both physically and spiritually, and is carried out as an act of worship towards happiness in the world and the life hereafter.
3. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama is the development of true and democratic values of independence, educating the nation's maturity to realize rights, obligations and responsibilities to achieve common good.
4. For Nahdlatul Ulama, politics must be carried out with morals, ethics and culture that believe in the One Almighty God, have just and civilized humanity, uphold the unity of Indonesia, be democratic led by the wisdom of deliberation/representation, and have social justice for all Indonesian people.
5. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama must be carried out with honesty of conscience and religious morals, constitutionally, fairly in accordance with agreed regulations and norms, and can develop a mechanism of deliberation in solving common problems.
6. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama is carried out to strengthen national consensus, and is carried out in accordance with akhlakul karimah as the practice of the teachings of Islam Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah.
7. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama, under any pretext, must not be carried out by sacrificing common interests and dividing unity.
8. Differences of opinion among the political aspirations of Nahdlatul Ulama members must continue to take place in an atmosphere of brotherhood, humility and mutual respect for one another, so that in politics, unity and oneness are maintained within the Nahdlatul Ulama environment.
9. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama demands reciprocal social communication in national development to create a climate that allows for the development of more independent social organizations and is able to carry out its function as a means for society to unite, channel aspirations and participate in development (Fathoni, 2018).

This political philosophy was then implemented for the NU elite in the national political arena. This is a response to the challenges faced by NU as a pioneer of moderate Islam in the Republic of Indonesia. This challenge is the emergence of the penetration of transnational Islamic ideology that has manifested itself in mass organizations that use the name of Islam in their struggle, but their actions are marked by violence that is contrary to Islamic teachings. These radical mass organizations are trying to change Pancasila as the

ideology of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and are trying to apply Islamic formalism in national and state life.

One of the parties that is more dominantly inhabited by the NU elite in its political struggle is the PKB. PKB always echoes the importance of national brotherhood without any barriers between the nation's children. For PKB, this country must stand tall to reject all forms of discrimination and social inequality. This was proven when Abdurrahman Wahid as the main figure of PKB revoked Presidential Instruction Number 14 of 1967 because it was contrary to the 1945 Constitution. The Presidential Instruction had held the Chinese ethnic group hostage for years because they could not celebrate major holidays such as Chinese New Year and Cap Go Meh or worship openly. After revoking it, Gus Dur issued Presidential Decree No. 6 of 2000 which guaranteed that Chinese citizens could carry out their religious activities, beliefs, and customs openly (<https://m.medcom.id/nasional/politik/3NOBdgXK-pkb-komitmen-mewujudkan-politik-kebangsaan>)

The most valuable result of the struggle of NU scholars and intellectuals, especially among Muslims, is the issuance of the Pesantren Law. The ratification of the Pesantren and Religious Education Bill as a DPR initiative bill gives new hope in efforts to empower pesantren which have so far received less attention from the state like other educational institutions (Niam, 2018). The ratification of the Pesantren Law is the most beautiful gift for all students in the country. Everyone realizes that pesantren are the center of Islamic civilization in Indonesia which is always loyal to the nation and state. Therefore, it has become a separate obligation for PKB as a political party born from the womb of NU to fight for the existence of pesantren constitutionally. PKB's struggle is also based on a direct mandate from the kiai to the general chairman of PKB (Gus AMI) regarding the importance of state recognition of the position of pesantren (Wahid, 2019).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The emergence of cultural Islamic circles in the national political arena cannot be separated from the condition of the Indonesian nation after entering the reform era. Reformation has been misunderstood by some parties, by utilizing the momentum of the reform to convey their political desires, even though it is contrary to the principles of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution as the foundation of the state. The misinterpreted reformation has raised concerns among cultural Islamic circles about the fate of the Indonesian nation in the future. The occurrence of violent actions carried out by a group of mass organizations in the name of Islam is considered to weaken the spirit of nationalism and give rise to negative assessments of Islam as a religion that is *rahmatan lil alamin*. The struggle of cultural Islam to uphold the dignity of the Indonesian nation and the Islamic religion is carried out through social actions in society, for example preaching and educational activities both in public schools and in Islamic boarding schools. In addition, it is also carried out through political channels by achieving public office both in executive and legislative institutions in the hope of realizing political practices that prioritize national, state, and religious interests.

FURTHER STUDY

Research on the Islamic movement in Indonesia, especially Cultural Islam and Political Islam, still offers opportunities for research by presenting comparative studies on the views of both regarding democracy in the public sphere.

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