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Journal for the Study of Islamic History and Culture

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والكتب الصونداوية المطبوعة في مكة والقاهرة أوائل القرن العشرين

Ginanjari Sya'ban

Book Review

Jawa, Islam dan Nusantara:

Memposisikan Agama dalam Keragaman Budaya

Riwanto Tirto Sudarmo

مہمان نواز ملک



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Islam Nusantara Journal for the Study of Islamic History and Culture facilitates publication of article and book review on study of Islam, Muslim culture, social and politics in Southeast Asia (Nusantara) and beyond. It is published twice a year and written in Indonesia, English and Arabic. It aims to present academic insight of social and cultural complexity of Muslim world in Southeast Asia under the frame of dialectic between Islam and local culture or cultural realities.

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²Nur Syam, *Tarekat Petani: Fenomena Tarekat Syattariyah Lokal*, (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2013), p. 164.

³Syam, *Tarekat Petani*, p. 173.

⁴Ubaidillah Achmad dan Yuliyatun Tajuddin, *Suluk Kiai Cebolek Dalam Konflik Keberagamaan dan Kearifan Lokal*, (Jakarta: Prenada, 2014), p. 140.

⁵Nur Syam, *Tarekat Petani*, p. 99.

⁶M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, vol. 14 (Bandung: Lentera Hati, 2013), p. 167.

⁷Deny Hamdani, "Cultural System of Cirebonese People: Tradition of Maulidan in the Kanoman Kraton," *Indonesian Journal of Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (January-June 2012): p.12.

⁸Hamdani, "Cultural System of Cirebonese People," p. 14.

⁹Deny Hamdani, "Raison d'être of Islam Nusantara," *The Jakarta Post*, 06 Agustus 2015, p. 5.

¹⁰Azyumardi Azra, "Islam di "Negeri Bawah Angin" dalam Masa Perdagangan," *Studia Islamika* 3, no. 2 (1996): h. 191-221, review buku Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

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Jawa, Islam dan Nusantara:
Memposisikan Agama dalam Keragaman Budaya

Hamdani

Defending Islam Nusantara at the Frontline

**Experiment to shape moderatism among
Non-structural Nahdliyyin Community ¹**

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Abstract

Since the promulgation of Islam Nusantara in the 33rd congress of Nahdlatul Ulama, Islamic moderatism has been glorified by its advocates as the religious movement in dealing with social and political changes. This moderate ethos has been inculcated to most Indonesian Muslim by many elites, particularly to *nahdliyyin* (NU people), to distinguish with the radical and conservative trend of religiosity. This study examines the understanding of *wasatiyyah* among the youth of *nahdliyyin* which is organized in a new group called the 'Pejuang Islam Nusantara' (PIN, Defenders of Islam Nusantara). Triggered by the criticism and black campaign on Islam Nusantara, this community has a cultural mission to explain and respond the complexity of Islam Nusantara to public both online and offline. This study attempts to capture the worldview of religiosity and political standing point of young generation of nahdliyyin confronting with puritan Muslim and Islamist groups by the 2019 presidential election. While the campaign for Islam Nusantara as part of moderatism project of Central Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU) has been challenged by its opponents, the non-structural agents of nahdliyyin takes initiative to strengthen the campaign by cultural events and educative programs. This study focuses on the youth movement in applying and campaigning Islam Nusantara at grass-root level of the changing Indonesian Muslim constellation.

Keywords: Pejuang Islam Nusantara (PIN), moderatism, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), youth, Indonesian Islam.

¹ This topic was presented in the 2nd Biennale International Conference on Seeking the Middle Path of Al-Wasatiyya: Articulation of Moderate Islam, held in Radboud University, Nijmegen-Netherlands, 19-21 June 2019.

Abstrak

Sejak pendeklarasian Islam Nusantara secara resmi di Mukhtamar Nahdlatul Ulama ke 33, moderatisme Islam telah digaungkan oleh para penganjurnya sebagai gerakan keagamaan menghadapi perubahan tatanan sosial dan politik. Etos moderat yang telah ditanamkan kepada mayoritas Muslim Indonesia oleh para elit, terutama kepada kaum nahdliyyin, untuk membedakan kecenderungan keberagamaan yang radikal dan konservatif. Studi ini menggali pemahaman wasatiyah di kalangan pemuda nahdliyyin yang diorganisir dalam sebuah kelompok baru dengan nama 'Pejuang Islam Nusantara.' Dipicu oleh kritik dan *black campaign* Islam Nusantara, komunitas ini memiliki misi kultural untuk menjelaskan dan merespons kritik Islam Nusantara kepada publik baik secara online maupun offline. Studi ini berusaha meng-*capture worldview* sikap keberagamaan dan politik generasi muda nahdliyyin yang berhadapan dengan kelompok muslim radikal dan Islamis menjelang Pemilihan Presiden (Pilpres) 2019. Ketika kampanye Islam Nusantara yang merupakan proyek moderatisme PBNU mendapat tantangan dari para penentangannya, para aktor nahdliyyin non-struktural mengambil inisiatif untuk memperkuat kampanye dengan kegiatan-kegiatan kultural dan program-program edukatif. Studi ini fokus pada gerakan anak muda dalam menerapkan dan mengampanyekan Islam Nusantara pada tingkat akar rumput dalam situasi Muslim Indonesia yang sedang berubah.

Kata Kunci: Pejuang Islam Nusantara (PIN), moderatisme, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), pemuda, Islam Indonesia.

المخلص

منذ إعلان شعار «إسلام نوسانتارا» رسمياً في مؤتمر جمعية نهضة العلماء-٣٣، ظلت فكرة الوسطية الإسلامية أكثر تشجيعاً من قبل روادها من العلماء والمثقفين والمفكرين كالحركة الدينية لمواجهة تغيرات اجتماعية وسياسية في إندونيسيا. وكانت القيم الوسطية التي تم تغريسها عند أغلب المسلمين الإندونيسيين، وخصوصاً عند النهضيين، تستطيع أن تسطر حداً فاصلاً على الفكرة الإسلامية المحافظة والمتطرفة. سيقوم هذا البحث بتسليط الضوء على مفهوم فكرة الوسطية عند شباب النهضيين التي تم تنظيمها في مجموعة منظمة اسمها «مناضل إسلام نوسانتارا». وكانت ردود الأفعال الإندونيسيين على فكرة «إسلام نوسانتارا» مختلفة. هناك جهة تدعمها كما هناك جهة ترفضها. فبناءً على انتشار الإعلان الأسود والنقد الهدام وتشويه صورة «إسلام نوسانتارا» من قبل الجهة التي ترفضها، قامت منظمة «مناضل إسلام نوسانتارا» بتعريف فكرة «إسلام نوسانتارا» ونشرها على المجتمع العام لكي يحصل على المفهوم الصحيح عنها. وكانت حركتها بشكل أون لاين أو أوف لاين. وتحاول هذه الدراسة أيضاً بالتقاط صور من وجهة نظر شباب النهضيين وأيضاً موافقهم السياسية تجاه المتطرفين والإسلاميين السياسيين في أيام انتخاب الرئيس الإندونيسي عام 2019 الماضي. فحينما واجهت حركة إعلان «إسلام نوسانتارا»، التي تعد كمشروع وسطية الإسلام عند جمعية نهضة العلماء، عدة تحديات قاسية من قبل منتقديها ورافضيها، قام عدد من ناشطي الجمعية بعملية المبادرات لتقوية إعلان المشروع بالأنشطة الثقافية والبرامج التربوية. وتتمحور هذه الدراسة على حركة شباب النهضة في تنفيذ وتشجيع فكرة «إسلام نوسانتارا» على المستوى العام وسط تغيرات الأوضاع للمسلمين الإندونيسيين.

1. Introduction

The discourse among scholars on moderatism in Islam shows a diverse and complicated analysis which inevitably reflect various context and orientation. The discussion whether Muslims tend to be radical, moderate, liberal, militant, puritans would be different in the Western or European and Southeast Asia context. Khaled Abou El-Fadhl, for example, raised a challenging question: who in the West or the United States gets to decide what are to be considered fanatical, extremist, and militant as opposed to moderate, reasonable, and ultimately, acceptable Muslim beliefs? In his effort to explicate such a religious trend, he divides into two main inclinations of Muslim: moderates and puritans.² Meanwhile, among Asian scholars, the concept of moderate Islam has been confronted with the radical Islam rather than puritans. While radical Muslims have variously been characterized as opposition to religious or political pluralism, advocating or participating in violence in the name of Islam, supporting strict adherence to the Sharia, or combinations therein, the moderate group refers to mental attitude of the acceptance of pluralism and rejection of violence as a means of achieving religious goals.³

The concept of moderate for Muslims has also been debated among scholars and activists to emphasize elements of religious moderation which enable to be inserted. A serious dialogue between Irshad Manji and Mohammed Dajani has shown a different perspective on how Muslims should respond social and political changes. For Manji, moderate standing point is not adequate to embody positive changes in Islam. The moderate mentality has trapped into orthodoxy, dogma and fear of challenging their community. That's why, she has offered reformist concept rather than moderate, to describe pluralist and humanist aspirations in Islam.⁴ It has been argued by Dajani that the concept of "reform" implies a return to the past instead. The founder of *wasatiya* movement of moderate Islam believe that the concept of moderate is more appropriate to accommodate modern aspirations such as justifications for religious freedom, gender equality, and abolition of the death penalty. Moderatism, according to Dajani, facilitates rational analysis of religious texts and principles that enables Muslims to reach a just and righteous version of Islam.⁵

It is seemingly that moderatism in Islamic World lead to (at least) two dimensions: normative and empiric aspect. In terms of normative approach, many Muslim scholars interpret the sacred texts (Qur'an and hadith) and try to find the moderate indications of Islamic teachings. To some extent, reasoning is involved in this aspect to include important principles which become serious concern of Islamic teachings.⁶ Meanwhile, empiric aspect

2 Khalid Abou El-Fadhl, *Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from The Extremists*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), p. 1.

3 Fred R. Von der Mehden, "Approaches to moderate Islam in Asia: the dynamics among Islam, Muslim identity, Politics and society," in *NBR Panel at the international Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS)* 5, 2007, p.22.

4 Irshad Manji and Mohammed S. Dajani, "Is There a 'Moderate' Islam?" December 16, 2015 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/is-there-a-moderate-islam>

5 Manji and Dajani, "Is there a moderate Islam?"

6 Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: the Qur'anic Principle of Wasatiyyah*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 57.

of moderatism can be identified from the practice and trend of individuals or groups who believe in their own interpretation or religious perspective. Criteria and methodology to determine certain thought, practice and policy, play significant role in categorizing which is moderate, conservative, liberal, puritan or other inclinations. If the moderate is understood as the middle way, in what sense? Which the two pole? Which is left and right anyway? A social scientist even questioned about claiming a moderate position that it requires a point of comparison: moderate compared to what? It also needs sharing a similar standard of assessment.⁷

To assess whether Indonesian Muslims are moderate or not, for example, it requires criteria, timeframe and complete data in order that it is eligible and academically valid. Among scholars, instead of assessing Indonesian Muslims as moderate, they have found a symptom of conservative trend which is proven by several indications. As Greg Fealy argued that the changing trend of tolerant and inclusive groups turned to be more conservative and the growing militant groups such as Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and Holy Warriors Council of Indonesia (MMI) are some indications of the 'conservative turn'.⁸ I also found that there are some evidences of the strengthening conservative factions compared to liberal groups.⁹ In the current development of Indonesian Muslim movement, Fealy even identified a 'deepening conservatism' in the series of rally which were organized by the National Movement to Guard the MUI Fatwa (GNPF-MUI), a coalition of Islamist groups. Their aspiration was to pressure the Jokowi's administration and law enforcement authorities to prosecute Ahok and put him in jail by referring the MUI's fatwa which declared Ahok's statement as a blasphemy.¹⁰ This conclusion has been agreed by Sebastian and Nubowo arguing that moderate Islam is in steep decline while conservative Islam is on the rise.¹¹

However, as complicated as the concept of moderate, the concept of conservative should be attached carefully. Although many evidences of conservative trend have been presented by some scholars, some other scholars tend to treat the inclinations differently. As Zainal Abidin Bagir argued that the 'conservative turn' might not be fully appropriate to describe the current development of Indonesian Islam. He believes that what happened in surface is the more diverse face of Indonesian Islam compared to the restrained factions during the New Order period.¹² Martin van Bruinessen also found that the conservative turn does not mean that the voice of liberal-tolerant-exclusive agents disappear. They still express their liberal opinions in a very clear and outspoken, but their domination to lead the discourse has significantly declined and given an initiative to conservative and fundamentalist actors.¹³ In other words, the differentiation between conservative and moderate or liberal

7 Nathanael Sumaktyo, How 'moderate' are Indonesian Muslims? 27 March 2019. (accessed 24/06/2019) <https://www.newmandala.org/how-moderate-are-indonesian-muslims/>

8 Greg Fealy, "A Conservative Turn: Liberal Islamic Groups have prompted a backlash," *Inside Indonesia*, July-September 2006, p. 24.

9 Deny Hamdani, "Conservatives Surpass Liberals, *The Jakarta Post*, 2 January 2008, p.5.

10 Bigger than Ahok: explaining the 2 December mass rally, December 7, 2016. <https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/bigger-than-ahok-explaining-jakartas-2-december-mass-rally/>

11 Leonard C. Sebastian, Andar Nubowo, "The 'Conservative Turn' in Indonesian Islam: Implications for the 2019 Presidential Elections," *Asie Visions*, No. 106, March 2019. <https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/notes-de-lifri/asie-visions/conservative-turn-indonesian-islam-implications-2019>

12 Zainal Abidin Bagir, "Membaca Beragam Wajah Islam Indonesia," in Martin van Bruinessen (ed), *Conservative Turn: Islam Indonesia Dalam Ancaman Fundamentalisme*, (Bandung: Mizan, 2014), p.13.

13 Martin van Bruinessen, "Introduction: Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam and the

in representing the face of Indonesian Islam does not help in many ways.¹⁴

Although Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is basically tend to be conservative community¹⁵ and was labelled by Nakamura¹⁶ in certain period of the Suharto's regime as radical traditionalist, some scholars recently identified NU (also Muhammadiyah) as part of moderate Muslim group which accepts progressive ideas and shows its serious concern to promote moderatism in religious aspects and political manoeuvre.¹⁷ The current assertion of Nahlatul Ulama has been shown by the new concept of moderatism which has been framed with 'Islam Nusantara'. Unlike the distinction of theological and political aspect of moderatism which is identified by Najib Burhani¹⁸, the moderatism of Islam Nusantara could refer to both theological and political orientation. It is not only based on theological references, but also political movement to fight against intolerant, hardliners, terrorists and radical agenda which have mushroomed since the collapse of New Order regime.

It is interesting that moderate-Islam-affiliated concept of Islam Nusantara has been responded differently among Indonesian Muslims. Those who accept and promote it argued that Islam which has been developed in nusantara (Indonesia archipelago) has peaceful reputation and accommodate local culture in harmony relations without any pretension to eradicate cultural realities. This framework, according to its advocates, is important to present Islamic face in a friendly and inclusive appearance, but at the same time it does not lose its core identity. Meanwhile, some Indonesian Muslims still do not understand the complexity of Islam and culture. They tend to reject the idea of Islam Nusantara by what they presume as the localizing Islam, reductionist Islam and misleading Islam. Some preachers showed their resistance of Islam Nusantara in their sermon, like Mamah Dedeh, Felix Siauw, and some other coservatives. Those who gather in Islamic institution, for example the MUI of West Sumatera, even rejects the idea of Islam Nusantara in a very outspoken tone.

In the hurly-burly controversy of Islam Nusantara, a community of cultural nahdliyyin has taken an initiative to consolidate their network and organize them into a forum which is later on called Pejuang Islam Nusantara (PIN, Defender of Islam Nusantara). In the spirit of against the ideas of Islamist and puritan groups, this youth organization determines to campaign moderate Islam under the banner of Islam Nusantara to repel the radical, intolerant and hardliner groups. This youth community has a zeal to promote the moderate

Conservative Turn of the Early Twenty First Century," in Martin van Bruinessen (ed), *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the Conservative Turn*, (Singapore: ISEAS, 2013), p. 4.

14 Bagir, p. 13.

15 Greg Fealy and Greg Barton, *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute-Monash University, 1996), p. xiii.

16 Mitsua Nakamura, "The Radical Traditionalism of the Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia: A Personal Account of the 26th National Congress, June 1979, Semarang," in Greg Fealy and Greg Barton, *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute-Monash University, 1996), p.86.

17 Masdar Hilmy, "Whither Indonesia's Islamic Moderatism? A Reexamination on the Moderate Vision of Muhammadiyah and NU," *Journal Of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 07, Number 01, June 2013, p. 37; Giora Eliraz, "Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama: A Tolerant, Inclusive Message to the Arab Middle East," *Middle East Institute*, October 14, 2016. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/indonesias-nahdlatul-ulama-tolerant-inclusive-message-arabmiddle-east>; Ahmad Zainul Hamdi, "Radicalizing Indonesian moderate islam from within: The NU-FPI relationship in Bangkalan, Madura," *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Volume 07, Number 01, (June 2013).

18 Najib Burhani, "Al-Tawassut wa-l I'tidal: The NU and Moderatism in Indonesian Islam," *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 40, 2012, p. 564-581.

principle by advocacy and cultural movement such as seminar, training, workshop, religious learning (popularly known as *pengajian*) and other activities. They determine to spread Nahdlatul Ulama's teachings through social media network which has been so noisy since the contestation of presidential election in 2014. The role of the youth movement of cultural nahdliyyin is important to study not only to reveal the understanding of moderatism among traditional Muslims, but also to investigate the contestation of religious authority and political interest among element of civil society in the changing contemporary Indonesia.

II. Profile of PIN (Pejuang Islam Nusantara/Defender of Islam Nusantara [archipelago])

In the early of February 2019, I attended the national meeting for leaders (Rapimnas) of PIN in Jakarta. It was attended by representative of 28 provinces throughout Indonesia. They have previously been in touch through social media (facebook) and discussed many issues in the new media dealing with the attack and criticism to the concept of Islam Nusantara. This offline meeting has been facilitated by Yeni Wahid (Abdurrahman Wahid's daughter) and supported by Said Aqil Siradj, the chairperson of the Central Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU). Although Wahid did not show up, Siradj delivered encouraging and contemplating speech to the audience by explaining the complexity of Islam Nusantara. In an interactive dialogue, there have been many reports from participants how Islam Nusantara has been misunderstood and censured by people without any efforts to clarify and verify it. Some participants also concern about the aggressive movement of hard-line puritan groups who attempt to destroy the people cultures which are assumed as contradict with Islamic teachings. At the same time, Islamist groups who campaign for the concept of Islamic state (*khilafah* system) have been perceived by most participants as a real threat to their national ideology.¹⁹ I wrote this concern in an article of 'The Jakarta Post' as their concern on 'the new wave of religious puritanism and Islamism'.²⁰

In the growing trend of post-truth era, the meeting also revealed various kinds of disinformation of public on Islam Nusantara which has led to negative image of the Nahdlatul Ulama and its figures. To some extent, it turns to a black campaign and verbal attack to many NU's practices, policies and its *kyais* (religious leaders). In social media, for example, *Kyai* Said Aqil Siradj has been called as a Shiite, a minority strand of Islam rejected by the mainstream Muslim in Indonesia, or a "liberal thinker", which earns similar stigma. *Kyai* Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus) has been said to despise Islam and an Islamist figure raised doubts of the status of *kyai* of Yahya Cholil Staquf. These are all highly respected clerics on a national level, particularly within the NU, and lead reputable *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). Negative campaigns against them through various hoaxes and misleading opinions have been taken personally by nahdliyyin at the grass-root level. To certain level, this concern has consolidated many youth people to voice and defend their respected figures which is later on organized in a community named: Pejuang Islam Nusantara (PIN, Defender of Archipelago Islam).

The black campaign against Islam Nusantara has been initially voiced by opponents with misleading assumptions which is spread in internet and social media. Islam Nusantara

19 This is based on my observation and interview with participant of meeting in Jakarta, 1 February 2019.

20 Deny Hamdani, "Defending Islam Nusantara," *The Jakarta Post*, 8 March 2019.

is arbitrarily imagined as the doctrine of syncretic Islam which is generated by anti-Arab mindset and applies an exaggerated localism in ritual aspects such as no need to pilgrimage to Mecca, no need to direct their *shalat* to *ka'ba*, ablution with the *air kembang* (floral water as practiced by Javanese rituals), allowing the *pesugihan* (local voodoo) and interacting with *tuyul* (local ghost), keen on burning incense in rituals and presumed as the continuation of liberal agenda (with negative understanding). These overlapping assumptions can be found in the media network of conservative and hardliner groups such as panjimas. com, jurnalislam.com. and FPI network media. For example, the statement written by the FPI Leader under the title of “@DPP_FPI: Jemaat Islam Nusantara (JIN) Paham Sesat & Menyesatkan Bukan Ajaran Islam. Tolak, Lawan dan Luruskan!” (Community of Islam Nusantara, JIN. It contains misleading doctrine. It is not part of Islamic teaching. Reject, Oppose and Correct it!), the leader of FPI Rizieq Shihab condemned the presumably doctrine of Islam Nusantara.²¹ Those opposition and resistance to Islam Nusantara has been identified by observer with a variety of actors and their statements from transnational and conservative Muslim groups.²²

The personal verbal attacks to some figures of Nahdlatul Ulama have also sporadically loaded conversation in social media. One of verbal attacks of the opponents was delivered by Pandu Wijaya in twitter when he commented Gus Mus (Ahmad Mustofa Bisri)’s twit on political movement of the GNPf MUI (Gerakan Nasional Pengawal Fatwa MUI/ National Movement to Guard the MUI Fatwa) which planned to stage Friday prayer on the Jakarta’s main road in 2 December 2016. This political movement which involved a huge mass was intended to pressure Jokowi’s administration to prosecute Ahok for his statement that was presumably blasphemy. Once Gus Mus said, in his twitter account @gusmusgusmu, that it is a great *bid’ah* (religious innovation) and hope it will not be executed. This statement was responded harshly by Wijaya in his twitter account @panduwijaya: “*Bid’ah ndasmu!*” (I don’t care with your bid’ah judgement). He previously said to argue that there was no asphalt road in the dessert. The first *wahyu* (revelation) concerning *shalat Jum’at* (Friday prayer) is also revealed when the Prophet Muhammad migrated to Madinah.²³ The words “*bid’ah ndasmu*” or specifically “*ndasmu*” (lit. your head) in Javanese term is not appropriate to be said by different level of communicators, let alone, Gus Mus is known as a respectable figure. The problem of ethics becomes an issue in this case.

It is interesting that Gus Mus responded the rude statement wisely. Like some people who said rudely to Gus Mus in social media, Gus Mus has forgiven them and did not take it personal. “I have already forgiven (all of them) via twitter and facebook”, wrote Gus Mus.²⁴ In a religious message, he said that if there is someone who insult or despise you, do not get mad easily. Who knows he is really driven by God to test our patience.²⁵ He

21 @DPP_FPI : Jemaat Islam Nusantara (JIN) Paham Sesat & Menyesatkan Bukan Ajaran Islam | Tolak, Lawan, dan Luruskan! <http://chirpstory.com/li/272922>

22 Ahmad Najib Burhani, *Islam Nusantara as Promising Response to Religious Intolerance and Radicalism*, in Trends in Southeast Asia, ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2018, no. 21, p. 18.

23 Cerita Kearifan Ulama Saat Dihina di Medsos, dari Gus Mus hingga Ma'ruf Amin, Monday, 28 November 2016, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3356210/cerita-kearifan-ulama-saat-dihina-di-medsos-dari-gus-mus-hingamaruf-amin/4>

24 Bertemu, Begini Nasihat Gus Mus kepada 3 Pemuda Penghinanya, Sunday, 27 November 2016, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/823520/bertemu-begini-nasihat-gus-mus-kepada-3-pemuda-penghinanya>

25 Cerita Kearifan Ulama...

“his mistake probably because his “special words” used in public space. Let alone he is still young”.²⁶ To the man who has manipulated his words, Gus Mus also treated him in a wise way. He even appreciated more than people thought ever. For example, when Zaenal (who manipulated Gus Mus messages in social media) visited his house to ask for apologize, Gus Mus did not only forgive him, but also gave him *sangu* (a mount of money) to Zaenal. The money was submitted in an anvelope and was given to Zaenal when he asked for permission to go home. “This is for ‘*ibnu sabil*’ (those who travel and running out his money) and you will need it”, insisted Gus Mus when Zaenal looked confused and reluctant to accept.²⁷

Started from conversation in social media among traditional Muslim youth, the community of PIN is founded in 13 July 2018. These youth felt that since the 33rd congress of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Jombang, 2015, there is no sufficient socialization concerning Islam Nusantara and no forum which facilitates and explains the concept in public. As a result, Islam Nusantara has been misunderstood by many Muslims and has been fiercely criticized by its opponents. That’s why, this cultural nahdliyyin perceives that it is important to organize people who has the same concern to respond any criticism and attack the idea and advocates the Islam Nusantara. The initial conversation involved approximately 50 people who interacted through What’sApp group. It discussed the name and structure which will become cultural movement to defend Islam Nusantara. Although most participant did not know each other, the process of creating the name and electing organizers could run smoothly. It was decided that they use Pejuang Islam Nusantara (PIN) instead of other proposals such as Penggerak or Patriot. It was also elected the core organizer, chairperson and secretary, who are responsible for the running of this new group. Abdul Kholiq is elected as chairperson, while Darto Saifudin as his secretary.

Member of PIN has continuously increased and well-registered by the organizer. Since the opened recruitment through social media until February 2019, the member of PIN has reached 2,272. The users of social media know the PIN certainly from the article, short opinion, and comments of members which post or share the ideas on Islam Nusantara. From these activities, the number of member has increased from time to time. The increasing number, fortunately, has been managed by the administration staff (*admin*) with a good system. Those who are interested to be member of PIN can fill the form and the organizer will probe and verify his/her identity. Every member who has been approved by the admin will be granted a unique number based on the order of registration. By this system, all member has been well-documented and the admin has a good database which contains detail information about the member. It is also known that the membership has extensive spread throughout Indonesia which represents 28 branches in a province base.

At least there are five identities of account in Facebook which attempt to promote Islam Nusantara through social media. They use the label of Islam Nusantara with a slight different words but having the same vision and agenda. They are (1) Pejuang Islam Nusantara, (2) Keluarga Besar PIN-Pejuang Islam Nusantara, (3) PIN-Pejuang Islam Nusantara, (4) PIN-233 (Pejuang Islam Nusantara) and the last one is (5) Brigade Islam Nusantara (BIN). It

26 Kontroversi salat Jumat di jalan demo 2 Desember, Gus Mus, dan permintaan maaf, 25 November 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/trensosial-38101093>

27 Tak Cuma Maaf, Gus Mus Juga Beri Sangu ke Pembuat Video Fitnah, Thursday, 11 April 2019, <https://www.dream.co.id/news/tak-cuma-memaafkan-gus-mus-sangoni-pembuat-video-fitnah-190410v.html>

is interesting that such groups of facebook constitute online movement whose members mostly having no offline interaction. When I met activists of PIN in Jakarta for example, most of them admitted that they have never met other member before. It was the first time they met and talked each other in a forum where they can express their intent to understand deeply and promote Islam Nusantara. It is also interesting that one of members can manage by himself, for example, PIN-233 (Pejuang Islam Nusantara) which is administered by Sumarsam, a member of PIN from South Sumatera. According to organiser of PIN, Sumarsam has never gathered offline in several meetings, but he is very active to respond many issues dealing with Islam Nusantara in Facebook.

Based on its deed establishment, PIN has several purposes and ideology which, to some extent, has similarity with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)'s vision. In its constitution, PIN determines to protect the ideology of '*ahlussunnah wal jama'ah*', apply its doctrine and fight against radical views. Those targets are intended to embody a just society which is aimed to achieve the *maslahat* (public good), people welfare and blessing for all (*rahmatan lil alamin*). It is also intended to increase nation's advance and human dignity. PIN's worldview is based on the *qur'an*, *sunnah* (Prophet's traditions), *ijma* (consensus) and *qiyas* (analogy). PIN's theology is based on the Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah by referring to Imam Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari and Imam Abu Mansur Al-Maturidi's thoughts, while in the Islamic jurisprudence, this organization is affiliated with one of the four mainstream Islamic school of thoughts (Hanafi, Maliki, Syafi'i and Hambali). In the tasawuf aspect, it follows Imam al-Junaidi Al-Baghdadi and Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali. In terms of political ideology, PIN is based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.²⁸

To implement those visions, PIN breaks them down into a variety of programs such as: religious movement, education, social, and economic programs. Those programs will be executed by a variety of divisions which are known as *bidang*. There are twelve divisions which are responsible for their respective duty such as *kaderisasi* (cadre), public relations, *dakwah* (propagation), social and political, arts-culture-history, information-technology, business, education, health, sports and youth, law, *srikandi* (women's affairs). Program of education and religious training, for example, can be executed by 'bidang kaderisasi' by conducting seminar, workshop, outbound and the like. These activities aim to produce qualified and militant cadre who understand Islamic teachings and nationalism. This program does not only recruit new activists, but also increase and strengthen their competence in spreading Islam Nusantara. It has also a strong correlation with the '*bidang dakwah*' (propagation) which has mission to convey the content of Islam Nusantara to public, both online and offline. The online program of *dakwah* creates content and responsible for its distribution, while the offline program concerns on regular preaching in mosques, schools, *majelis taklim* (learning forum) and also produces printed materials (book).²⁹

Since the proclivity of organisers and followers of PIN is still "green" and inclines to be a seminal organization, this youth movement can not be fully compared with some established organizations such as GP Anshor (Youth Movement of Anshor [helpers] of Nahdlatul Ulama's youth wing) and Pemuda Muhammadiyah (Youth wing of Muhammadiyah

28 Akta Pendirian Pejuang Islam Nusantara (Decree of establishment of Pejuang Islam Nusantara), 04 February 2019.

29 Program Kerja Ketua Umum (Platform of Chairman), Masa Khidmat (Term of Office) 2019-2024.

organization). However, it has similarities and differences with associations of those youth groups. The GP Anshor and PIN, for example, has the same agenda in interpreting the Nahdlatul Ulama's mission. While the PIN is not part of Nahdlatul Ulama's formal body, the GP Anshor is part of structural organ which is called Banom (Badan Otonom/autonomous organ) of Nahdlatul Ulama. In other words, the PIN is cultural movement, while the GP Anshor is a structural-affiliated movement. Since Islam Nusantara has become an important mission in the religious movement of Nahdlatul Ulama, it has been interpreted by the GP Anshor in the platform of organization and become the main inspiration of the youth organization to respond social and political issues.³⁰ "We keep voicing Islam with *rahmatan lil alamin's* character (a mercy to all creation) or in the NU's term, it is called Islam Nusantara, the friendly Islam and accepting difference and diversity, said Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, the chairman of GP Anshor.³¹

As the GP Anshor, Pemuda Muhammadiyah is youth organization which has structural link with its parent organization. While the GP Anshor is affiliated to Nahdlatul Ulama, Pemuda Muhammadiyah constitutes one of youth wing organizations of Muhammadiyah. Both NU and Muhammadiyah are the biggest Muslim organization in Indonesia. The mission of Pemuda Muhammadiyah, based on its platform, is becoming a pioneer, executor and enhancer of the Muhammadiyah struggle.³² While the NU promotes 'Islam Nusantara', Muhammadiyah propagates 'Islam Berkemajuan' (Progressive Islam). It has been an organizational mission that Pemuda Muhammadiyah takes part in supporting the religious movement of Islam Berkemajuan. As told by the chairman of Pemuda Muhammadiyah, Dahnil Anzar Simanjuntak (2014-2018), Muhammadiyah's worldview believes that Islam Berkemajuan produces and reflects enlightenment which theologically constitutes an observation of transcendental, liberation, emancipation and humanization values as written in the Qur'an 3:104 and 110 (which become inspiration of the Muhammadiyah's birth). For Muhammadiyah, Islam is a progressive religion bringing to embody enlightened people's life.³³

Compared to producers of NU-affiliated-internet content such as nu.or.id, islami.co and alif.id, the PIN community has a different way of operating with those media. While the NU media produces contents, the PIN tends to be consumer and promotor of the Islamic-based contents from those websites and other selected sources. In its social media network, PIN activists have merely produced or reproduced a quote, news, short video, short article and cartoon rather than long articles and indepth reports. As the group disbursing ideas of Islam Nusantara to public, this community attempts to convey the sophisticated concept into a simpler-but-effective campaign to its network to be shared as extensive as possible. 'Spirit of Jihad by social media' has been echoed by its activists through a variety of topics such as tolerance, unity and peace, the importance of tradition, inter-faith collaboration, nationalism, Pancasila (Five Principle), pro-government messages, anti-radicalism, anti-

30 M. Didit Saleh, Jauharul Anwar and Andi Rahman Alamsyah, "Ansor di Mata Berbagai Pihak", in Andi Rahman Alamsyah and Bayu A. Yulianto (eds), *Gerakan Pemuda Ansor dari Era Kolonial Hingga Pascareformasi*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Obor, 2018), p. 218-9.

31 Ketua GP Anshor: NU akan Terus Sebarkan Islam Nusantara, <https://m.republika.co.id>

32 Program Kerja Pemuda Muhammadiyah 2014-2018, Monday, 10 June 2019, <http://muhammadiyahsolo.com/20190610/program-kerja-pemuda-muhammadiyah-2014-2018-238>

33 Presentation of chairman of Pemuda Muhammadiyah in the Kegiatan Baitul Arqom Pengurus Ormawa dan UKM UMS (Student Unit in the University of Muhammadiyah Surakarta), Friday, 3 March 2017.

FPI (Frot Pembela Islam/Islamic Defending Front).

While the command line of PIN is not as strong as the established youth organizations, this community seemingly does not fully rely on the internal structure. Their posting in social media (particularly facebook) has proven that their main mission is to spread religious-based contents with “certain ideology” rather than strengthening its formal organization. Nevertheless, some reports show that offline activities (kopdar/offline meeting or social activities) in some branches show the existence of their organization. The driving structure comes from its “parent organization” instead, i.e. Nahdlatul Ulama. The parent-son relations, culturally prevails in what the PBNU or *kiai*’s elite have promulgated, whose agenda would be immediately welcomed by its structural and non-structural network. Among NU’s elite, the promotion of Islam Nusantara has been understood as cultural strategy to respond global challenges by a variety of cultural-based programs.³⁴ Like an orchestra which is led by the PBNU, the cultural movement to introduce and develop Islam Nusantara has generated a wide network of nahdliyyin or traditional Muslim accross the country and beyond. The existence of PIN in campaigning for Islam Nusantara messages is certainly part of the big orchestra.

III. Moderatism for Defenders of Islam Nusantara (PIN)

It is interesting to note that relations between cultural nahdliyyin with structural nahdliyyin is seemingly like son or daughter to his/her father. The concept of cultural nahdliyyin in this case means those who are emotionally and culturally attached to the religious system which is practiced by nahdliyyin agents. Nahdliyyin means those who acknowledge and practice religious traditions of Nahdlatul Ulama as part of their daily religiosity, such as *tahlil* (collective prayer usually after people’s death), *qunut* (special praying in second raka’at of subuh prayer), *maulid nabi* (commemorating Prophet’s birth), *istigotsah* (collective prayer), *barzanji* (reading biography of Muhammad prophet) and other traditional habits. While structural nahdliyyin means those who actively involve in the structure of PBNU (Central Board of Nahdlatul Ulama) from *cabang* (branch) level to *pusat* (central). In many cases, what has been stipulated or decided by the structural nahdliyyin, NU’s elite in this case, will be followed and practiced voluntarily by cultural nahdliyyin. Organizational policies will be executed from *pusat* (central), *cabang* (branch), until *ranting* (sub-branch) throughout Indonesia, plus special branches abroad.

It is the same with the policy to promote Islam Nusantara which has been formally promulgated since the 33th NU’s congress in Jombang, East Java in August 2015. Most *nahdliyyin* has welcomed, tried to understand and promoted this new concept to public both online and offline. Some people have exchanged the concept of Islam Nusantara with Islam *rahmatan lil ‘alamin* (blessing for all creatures), Islam *wasathiyah* (moderate) and Islam *kebangsaan* (nasionalist-religious Muslim). Although there was no formal guideline of Islam Nusantara from the PBNU, most of them can understand and explain the complexity of the concept to other people because it is nothing but the NU’s framework itself. One of cultural factions of *nahdliyyin*, which declared themselves with Pejuang Islam Nusantara (PIN), actively takes part in the promotion of Islam Nusantara, particularly by using social

34 Taufik Bilfagih, “Islam Nusantara: Strategi Kebudayaan NU di Tengah Tantangan Global,” *Jurnal Aqlam: Jurnal of Islam and Plurality*, Vol. 2, No. 1, December 2016.

media and sometimes conventional media. According to its chairperson, Abdul Khalik, PIN struggles with NU's ulama from Dumay (Dunia Maya/online world) until Duta (Dunia Nyata, real world/offline).³⁵

As part of moderate Muslim community, PIN also confirms its commitment to be moderate youth organization which highlights the importance of tolerance, local wisdom, anti-radicalism and the Sunni ideology. As said by Paox Iben, one of PIN's counsellor, this cultural nahdliyyin organization was born as the concern to the emergence of intolerance to religious adherents, particularly dealing with the strengthening transnational movement which tries to eliminate local culture of Islam in Indonesia archipelago. For Iben, those culture have traditional and moderate character. In this respect, PIN surely promotes moderate Islam which is based on local wisdom of nusantara society in accordance with the doctrine of *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah (aswaja)*. Islam Nusantara in this context, could be treated as a new cover of 'Aswaja ideology'.³⁶ The religious doctrine becomes a guideline which should be protected from those who try to confuse or devastate it. Iben also emphasizes that moderatism in PIN's framework relates to the efforts to dispel radical movement which undermines the pillar of nation-building and divide Muslim community.³⁷

Moderatism among PIN's activists can be referred to three things: the Qur'an as the main sacred text, the preaching method of Walisongo (lit. Nine saints) and the practice of Prophet Muhammad. The secretary of PIN, Darto Saefudin, elaborated this understanding to me saying that he believes the Qur'an 2:143 (Al-Baqarah) underlines the moderate position of Muslim which he interpreted as proposition not to trap into *tatharruf* or extreme predisposition in many things, including people's religiosity. Saefudin emphasizes that moderate position enables us to be accommodative to social and cultural realities as exemplified by the early propagators of Islam in Nusantara which are popularly known as Walisongo. By this moderate stance, they successfully Islamized people of nusantara without eradicating local culture, even they taught us to amalgam religious teachings with local traditions without any pretension to eliminate the fundamental aspect of Islamic values. This kind of moderatism, according to Saefudin, is certainly parallel with the *akhlakul karimah* (noble deed) which is exemplified by Prophet Muhammad and has a strong correlation with the concept of Prophet's blessing (*syuhada*) to Muslim's deed as mentioned in the Qur'an 2: 143 above.³⁸

As the Nahdlatul Ulama's ideology, moderatism of PIN is also based on the aswaja's doctrine which is elaborated with distinct features. According to Iben, decision to dignify the doctrine of *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah (aswaja)* can not be separated from the position of PIN's activists as the guardian and the enforcing agents of NU's ethos. He argues that the concept of *aswaja* has strong relations with the concept of '*ummattan wasathan*' which is mentioned in the Qur'an 2:143. The *aswaja* as the salvation way as mentioned in the prophet saying is the community's way who stands in the middle between those who are trapped into *ghuluw* (excessive in many things) and those who underestimate Islamic

35 Interview Abdul Khaliq in Jakarta, March 2019.

36 M. Kholid Syeirazi, *Wasathiyah Islam: Anatomi, Narasi dan Kontestasi Gerakan Islam*, (Jakarta: alifid, 2020), p. 216.

37 Interview Paox Iben via WhatsApp, 25 May 2019.

38 Interview Darto Saefudin via WhatsApp, 29 May 2019.

teachings. That's why moderatism, in this case, is the standing point of balancing actor which is inevitably dynamic between hard and soft, left and right, but it does not mean that we have to always be in the middle. Iben says, "sometimes, we have to be hard (vigorous) to the very soft attitude of people, however, we also need to be soft (flexible) to the very hard thing (idea, person, institution etc)".

It is interesting that moderatism among PIN's activists is also related to the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for all creatures/universe) as expressed by Iben. He believes that Islam is universal religion and will be relevant until the end of the day, however, it is also sensible that every ethnic/community has their own character and problem which is different from one another and changes overtime. That's why, Islam does not contravene all good traditions throughout the world. Even for certain things which are assumed by certain people as contradict with Islamic teaching, Islam taught us to respect them instead. Because it is not merely about truth, but it is also about human relations and the vision of Islam to maintain harmony and coexistence. The concept of *rahmatan lil alamin* is also explained by Saefudin with a slightly different emphasize. He argues that the word *rahmat* (blessing/gracious) contains essential and also universal character. That's why it should not be enforced, no matter what, no matter how. The enforcement which is undertaken on the pretext of religious doctrine will only undermine the value of *rahmat* itself. According to Saefudin, the enforcement triggers a superiority complex which will deteriorate the situation. It does not only contravene the concept of *rahmat*, but also the national ideology of Pancasila and the 1945 constitution.

Since moderate Islam has become the character of PIN's movement, radicalism which is spread by Islamist and puritan groups becomes the target of PIN's mission to be overcome. Among PIN's activists, religion-based radicalism is very dangerous and politically weaken the unity of Indonesian society. They are presumed by PIN's agents as having no respect to diversity whereas Indonesia is plural country where people come from different ethnic, culture, political ideology and religious belief. According to Iben, the radical movement has constructed public opinion through social media that Indonesian Muslims are oppressed by government, the ruling regime has no sovereignty, frequently uses Islamic teachings to their own political interests, spreads hatred to their enemy and rejects the existence of community beyond their own group. Saefudin adds that radical agents conduct theological terror by hijacking Islam, bringing citizens into conflict and infiltrating government institutions to be used for their political agenda. They have also created tactical organs as strategy of dividing cell with various forms and names, imposing their religious interpretations and formalization of their ideology. For Saefudin, this radical group basically does not only subvert to the ruling government, but also against the Almighty God for the imposition of religious teachings.

IV. Reassertion of Sufi's Way of Thinking

Although moderatism which is understood and analysed by scholars in different ways, concept of moderatism in Indonesia has been forged into its distinct features. According to Masdar Helmy, the concept of moderatism in the context of Indonesian Islam has several characteristics: 1) non-violent ideology in propagating Islam; 2) adopting the modern way of life with its all derivatives, including science and technology, democracy, human rights and the like; 3) the use of rational way of thinking; 4) contextual approach in understanding

Islam, and; 5) the use of *ijtihad* (intellectual exercises to make a legal opinion in case of the absence of explicit justification from the Qur'an.³⁹ It is interesting that some activists of PIN presume moderatism with a certain emphasize that they have commitment to apply tolerance, respecting local wisdom, anti radicalism and pro-ahlussunnah wal jama'ah. Their reference in propagating Islam does not only come from the Qur'an and prophet sayings, but also from the examples of Walisongo (lit. Nine Saints, early Muslim propagators in nusantara). Aspect of locality becomes distinct characteristic of defenders of Islam Nusantara.

In many reports, the role of Walisongo in Islamizing Indonesia archipelago has left several legacies of cultural framework and methodology. While puritan framework tends to purify Islamic teachings from any religious innovations and non-Islamic culture, walisongo framework is beyond such a formalist approach. It can be examined with the traditions which have been practiced by *nahdliyyin* community or those who affiliate with traditional practices such as *tahlil* (gathering to pray for the death), *istigotsah* (communal feast), *maulid* (prophet's birth celebration) and some other rituals. Among puritan groups, those practices have been considered as no reference in Islamic tradition and it should be no reason for Muslims to accept them. On the other hand, walisongo's framework and the subsequent sufi/preachers do not regard such traditional practices contravene Islamic teachings. For agents of walisongo, the accommodation of local traditions is the strategy of culture to spread Islam and forge the religion into a distinct Islam. This framework is later on claimed by *nahdliyyin* agents as the paradigm of Islam Nusantara. It has also created the methodology of reasoning which distinguish with the other stream whose ideology attempt to make a distance with local culture.

I presume that flexibility of those who accommodate local culture, or presumed by puritans as "non-Islamic culture" and tolerate cultural innovations, comes from the esoteric way of sufi. While puritans emphasize the importance of form and authenticity, the sufi's way of thinking prioritizes the essential aspect of culture. That's why, when walisongo found that nusantara society has an established culture which has been formed by the interaction between their own "original" culture with foreign culture, they did not confront them with Islam. They let indigenous culture remains live, but sometimes, they used the existing culture as media to propagate Islam or modified them into something "more Islamic". For example, the performance of wayang, which has root in the "original" Javanese culture, has been used by Walisongo as media of dakwah and modified the story with more Islamic messages. Sunan Kalijaga is the popular actor in making how the local culture is used to convey religious messages. The practice of *tahlil* (gathering to pray for the death) is also a prove of sufi's way of thinking in accommodating local culture although it has no reference in Islamic tradition. There are many examples of traditions in nusantara, particularly in Java, which indicate the remaining indigenous culture under the influence of Islam.

By the mind set of maintaining locality, Indonesian Muslims have very rich cultural treasure which becomes a proof of intensive dialogue between Islam and indigenous culture. Azyumardi Azra once labelled the Indonesian Islam as 'flowering Islam', due to plentiful traditions which fulfil the daily life of Indonesian Muslims. My research also shows many rituals among Indonesian society have become media to support each other

39 Masdar Helmy, p. 28.

in cooperative relations and have a deep root in nusantara society. In the ritual things, people are driven by the principle of voluntarism and social solidarity to pursue their modest happiness and satisfaction.⁴⁰ An interesting research about Islam and local culture among Sundanese ethnic in Cikondang community shows that integration between Islam and Sundanese culture has lasted in a very smooth way. The rituals which become pillar of *masyarakat adat* (customary-based community) remains, but they have experienced dynamic interpretations. In the traditions of *Wuku Tahun* (local New Year celebration), people do *gotong royong* (*mutual assistance*), praying together, preparing many foods and places for rituals.⁴¹ My research in the community of Kraton Kanoman in Cirebon also shows how indigenous culture has become precious “living thing” in the middle of dry modernity life. Through *muludan* tradition, people conduct important rituals in the complex of palace (the legacy of Cirebon Kingdom) such as *slametan* (ritual meal with Arabic prayers), *pelal alit* (preliminary celebration), “*panjang jimat*” (allegorical festival), *asyrakalan* (recitation of the book of maulid) and the *gamelan sekaten* (traditional ensemble music of Java which is played to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad).⁴²

Apart from Sufi way of thinking, nahdliyyin agents are driven by Sunni’s theological perspective which encourages stability, prioritizes harmony and avoid conflict. According to Andree Feillard⁴³, the inclination of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)’s middle path is also determined by the Javanese way of thinking which has similarity with Sunni’s mindset and become dominant culture in the Nahdlatul Ulama. Fealy also argues that the middle way in political stance is not so hazardous compared to opposing and confronting the ruling regime.⁴⁴ That’s why, most response or reactions of Nahdlatul Ulama to the criticism or attack tend to prioritize dialogue, *tabayun* (verification) and intellectual discourse. The option of youth *nahdliyyin* in the PIN to spread peaceful messages, educative information and a serious debate in the social media, I think, can be put in the context of adherents of stability, harmony and avoiding conflict framework as Sunni and Javanese culture. It becomes an important factor to distinguish between NU and hardliner Muslims. According to scholars and observers, the Sunni’s theology and Sunni’s Fiqh/Ushul Fiqh has become important reference in putting highest priority of protecting Islam and its adherents as the *maslahat* aspect (public good). That’s why, for example, when Gus Dur was toppled by the House of Representative in 2001, he did not mobilize his loyal followers and his Banser (Guardian of Nahdlatul Ulama) to defend him or against the political decision with violence.

40 Tim Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI, *Ensiklopedi Islam Nusantara (Edisi Budaya)*, (Jakarta: Direktur PTKIS-Dirjen Pendis-Kementerian Agama RI, 2018), p. 337.

41 Deni Miharja, “Tradisi Wuku Taun sebagai bentuk integrasi agama Islam dengan budaya sunda pada masyarakat adat Cikondang,” *el Harakah*, Vol.15 No.1/2013, p.65-79.

42 Deny Hamdani, “Cultural System of Cirebonese People: Tradition of Muludan in the Kanoman Kraton,” *Indonesian Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 4, No. 1, (January-June 2012), p. 11-22.

43 Andree Feillard, *NU vis-a-vis negara: Pencarian isi, bentuk dan makna*, (Yogyakarta: LKIS,1999), p. 413.

44 Greg Fealy, *Ijtihad Politik Ulama: Sejarah NU 1952-1967*, (Yogyakarta: Lkis, 2009), p. 349.

IV. Conclusion

The use of moderatism to analyze the concept of Islam Nusantara might be problematic in terms of the contested concept among scholars, particularly dealing with project of the Washington and Western agents to fight against terrorism and radicalism. However, nusantara agents have reinterpreted the concept based on their context and purpose. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)'s agents, for example, has explored the theological references to find the concept of middle path both from the Qur'an and hadith. As traditional group which accomodates established realities, Nahdlatul Ulama's framework dignifies local culture as important part in expressing their religiousity as long as, they claim, it does not contravene Islamic teachings. This is what differ from puritan Muslims who tend to keep a distance from what they belive as non-Islamic traditions.

The promotion of Islam Nusantara by defenders of Islam Nusantara (PIN) is mostly conducted by young nahdliyyin in social media in the middle of myriad hoaxes and black campaign to NU's kyai and attack to NU's traditions. The activists of PIN play important role to fulfil religious and political discourse in supporting the PBNU's agenda to promote Islam Nusantara. Although they do not have official explanation about Islam Nusantara, they attempt to produce and reproduce the spreading explanation of Islam Nusantara through NU's affiliated media and authoritative nahdliyyin agents. Conversation and debate in social media among them show their serious defend to the existence of Islam Nusantara which they believe, it has been misunderstood by many people.

The advocates of Islam Nusantara inevitably involve in the contestation of religious authority and political realm through religious and cultural discourse to reaffirm the *wasatiyah* Islam and sufi's paradigm. Their movement is targeted to hardliner puritan and Islamist groups in Indonesia (throughout the world by using social media) who frequently attack the Nahdlatul Ulama's policies and practices. Nevertheless, due to the commitment of being moderate group, Nahdlatul Ulama agents prioritize dialogue approach and intellectual exercise rather than violence approach.

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