Conference Paper

Political Influence of Kiai on Santri's Voting Behavior at the 2019 Election

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Abstract.
It is undeniable that Kiai (the leader in the Islamic boarding school) and Santri (the students of the Islamic boarding school) have a long history in Indonesian political dynamics. Additionally, the number of Islamic boarding schools has significantly increased. This study aimed to explain how Kiai's voting behavior influenced the voting behaviour of Santris in the General Elections of 2019. The method used in this study was a descriptive qualitative method that involved observing a case study at the Wisma Wisnu Islamic Boarding School, Madiun. The data was analysed by using the sociological theory approach (The Columbia Study) and Rational Choice. The findings of this study showed that the voting behavior of Kiai in the Elections in 2019 involved rational choice. Kiai was able to assess the quality, competence, and integrity of the candidates through their vision, mission, and programs. Conversely, the voting behaviour of Santri in the election showed a sociological approach (The Colombia Study); they did not know the vision, mission, and programs of the electoral candidates because they were not involved during the campaign stage. The Santri only considered and made their choices based on the guidance of their Kiai and parents.

Keywords: Kiai (the leader in Islamic boarding school); Santri's (the students of the Islamic boarding school); Voting Behavior

1. Introduction

The General Elections in 2019 were the first election held simultaneously in Indonesia. It was the election to vote for the President and Vice President, the election of the House of people's representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, the election of the Assembly provincial (DPR) of the Provincial Region, the election of the Regional House of Representatives (DPR) of regencies/cities and the election of the Regional Representative Council. Unfortunately, many problems on the ground, such as the death of election organizers, especially at the level of polling stations, could not be avoided from happening.

It is pretty perplexing as to whom the voters (especially the novice) should vote because they got five ballots of eligible participants. In this case, it surely confused...
voters, including santri voters in pouring out their voting rights. Santri are fully bound to the rules set by the Kiai and the boarding school. This restricts them from participating in the socialization and the campaign for election participants. The lack of knowledge about the profile, vision, and mission of election participants affects the voting behavior of santri.

Meanwhile, Kiai is seen as the most charming and highly respected by the santri. The roles of Kiai alone are as a teacher, role model, and a parent to santri as long as they live and study in the boarding school. Kiai is a charismatic leader who masters in religious matters, is knowledgeable, and has a sense of ability to read his followers(1). In this case, the followers are not only the santri but also the people and the society who live around the boarding school.

Kiai certainly has a high bargaining power both socially and politically. This is surely a good chance for the election participants to seek voting support. The political interaction between Kiai and the politicians begins and affects the santri in determining their votes. Nowadays, boarding schools have such a vital role in holding elections because of the Kiai’s influence and the numbers of santri, so the election candidates can have support and votes from them. This is absolutely a new phenomenon happening in society and politics realm.

The interaction between Kiai and santri affects the daily life of the santri itself. They put high respect on the Kiai and are very obedient. They will follow what the Kiai says not only about personal matters but also about politics. The line sami’na wa attho’na which means “we listen and are obedient,” is very familiar to the santri. This obedience surely affects the santri’s voting behavior especially on the general election in 2019. It is questionable whether or not the santri are really obedient to the Kiai and have their own voting preference. However, the political influence of Kiai needs to be investigated further.

2. Method

This research is a qualitative descriptive using case study. The subjects and objects are described based on the fact found during the observation. The case study occurred in Wisma Wisnu Boarding School in Jerukgulung village, Balerejo district, Madiun regency. The researcher described how political direction influences santri’s voting behavior in the general election in 2019. This research’s description and elaboration were optimally analyzed using words instead of numbers. The primary data was taken from in-depth interviews, observations, and notes from related documents.
3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Informant Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>AKSA</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Kiai</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>HL</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Headmaster</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>EJ</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Santri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>IF</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Santri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>AH</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Santri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>UM</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Santri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Santri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>MY</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Santri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Santri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>RHI</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Santri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data above is a profile of the informants involved in this study. The informants consist of Kiai, Santri, Headmaster, and the teacher.

3.2. Influence of Kiai on Santri's

According to several interviewees’ interviews, it is confirmed that the daily interactions between Kiai and santri at the Wisma Wisnu Islamic Boarding School do not run rigidly but dynamically. As mentioned in the book *ta’ limulmuta’ lim*, santri must do *ta’ zim* (respect) to the teachers (Kiai). This is a sacred teaching that all students in boarding school must follow. Besides, there is another line *sami’ nawaatho’ na* (we listen and we obey) which requires students to be obedient to their Kiai.

This respect is not only limited to students in Islamic boarding schools but remains valid until students graduate from there and keep this mindset for their whole life. This sacredness influences their voting behavior in determining their political direction, except the 2019 general election.

In Javanese, teacher (guru-red) stands for the word *digugulanditiru*, which means people who are trusted and followed. It is like an obligation for students to follow and believe in everything that the Kiai orders as the teacher. The official capacity of Kiai as a teacher as well as acting as a parent, while the santri as students as well as students will certainly create a sense of obedience to the Kiai as a charismatic figure. Where this obedience is personally a follower to his master, santri are followers of the Kiai, so the
santri will not dare to refuse the Kiai’s orders, as revealed in the interview with the santri above. The order here is included in determining the political choices of the students themselves.

The influence of the Kiai on the santri tends to run like a paternalistic relationship. Paternalistic relationship is a relationship between father and son. A son is given freedom yet rules still bind them. For instance, Kiai in Wisma Wisnu Boarding School gave a general overview to the santri about the candidate of legislative member and the presidential and vice-presidential candidate in general election in 2019. This description was lectured right before the santri vote in the election. Even though the santri are given to choose whoever they want to vote, they are not courageous enough to refuse their Kiai’s dawuh (order). That is because they believe that Kiai’s dawuh is sacred and if they ignore it, disaster may happen to them.

In another point of view, paternalism is defined as a social system in the family where the male line determine everything. Kiai is a man with high charisma, and he is respected not only by the people in the scope of the Islamic boarding school but also by his santri, followers, and the society. Partenalistic culture puts men then women as the first priority. Male santri became the main focus in determining political direction. Moreover, female santri (santriwati) who live in different boarding schools and Bu Nyai (Kiai’s wife) do not get direct order from the Kiai to determine their votes. For some reason, they follow their parents’ advice to vote for the candidate in the election. Furthermore, they strongly affirmed that they would surely follow their Kiai’s order if they are told to.

A paternalistic culture tends to create a family environment within the organization(2) therefore, a patron always positions himself as a parent who is always right while his clients are considered as children who always have to be nurtured and guided. Clients in Islamic boarding schools refer to santri (both males and females). Therefore, they must always be guided, taught, and directed in various aspects, including determining voting behavior in the general election in 2019.

3.3. Voting Behavior

Election Commission Regulation (PKPU) Number 32 of 2018 states that there are 19 (nineteen) stages of general elections in total. Nonetheless, not all stages are open to the public, including Kiai. There are specific stages which the involved participants are not from public society. For instance, the registration stage is only for the political parties that will be the election candidates. The stages that Kiai may take part in are as the following picture:
In general, there are three stages of elections followed by a Kiai: socialization, campaigning and voting. The campaign stage is used to evaluate a candidate. This will also be a differentiator with students in their involvement in the election stage. The santri are only involved in voting, while the Kiai is more involved especially in the campaigns carried out by the candidates. The candidates usually meet Kiai in person and get him involved in public meetings, conclaves, and face-to-face meetings. Sometimes, Kiai also becomes the spokesman of certain candidates during their campaign. Thus, a Kiai certainly has a more rational assessment of the candidates. By understanding the candidates’ vision and mission, Kiai gains more information and can consider the assessment indicators for voting. A good vision and mission that has been proven or implemented through the realization of the work program will certainly be re-elected by the Kiai.

Some indicators commonly used by voters to assess a candidate are quality, competence and integrity. These indicators are ones of the factors of voting behavior approach(3) This statement is in line with the results of research conducted by the researcher, it shows that a Kiai really assesses the quality and competence of candidates through the vision and mission as well as their integrity through work programs that have been implemented.

The following is a table of voting political parties in the village of Jerukgulung, Balerejo District where the address of the Wisma Wisnu Islamic Boarding School was established.
TABLE 2: The table of votes gained by political parties in Jerukgulung Village - Balerejo District - Madiun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration number of party</th>
<th>Political Party(ies)</th>
<th>Vote(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kebangkitan Bangsa Party (PKB)</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gerakan Indonesia Raya Party (Gerindra)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan Party (PDIP)</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Golongan Karya Party (Golkar)</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nasional Demokrat Party (Nasdem)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gerakan Perubahan Indonesia Party (Garuda)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Beringin Karya Party (Berkarya)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Keadilan Sejahtera Party (PKS)</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Persatuan Indonesia Party (Perindo)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Persatuan dan Pembangunan Party (PPP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Solidaritas Indonesia Party (PSI)</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Hati Nurani Rakyat Party (Hanura)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Demokrat Party (PD)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Bulan Bintang Party (PBB)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia Party (PKPI)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: taken from DA-1 DA-1 General Election Commission (KPU) of Madiun, 2019

The table above proved that it was not guaranteed a Kiai would be pro with Islamic party immediately. However, he would certainly observe and examine the nationalist-based party carefully before finally going pro with it. Kiai strongly influences the politics in Mataraman region since the people in society are strongly connected to each other because of belief similarity (they worship the same thereligion)(4) Therefore, Mataraman region is pro with Partai Demokrasi Indonesia/PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party) dan Golongan Karya Party.

The stages of holding the General Election consist of 19 (nineteen stages), starting from the socialization stage as the first stage until the last stage, such as taking the oath of office and inaugurating the President and Vice President. In accordance with the results of this research, it is found that the santri were only involved in voting. They are not allowed to get involved in other stages including the campaign. In fact, this campaign stage is very important stage to know the vision and mission brought by the candidate.

The campaign is the only stage for voters to know the vision, mission, program, and/or self-image of candidates in the election. By getting involved in the campaign, voters are
expected to use their votes correctly. Unfortunately, since the santri did not take part in the campaign, it surely affected their voting behavior.

By facing this situation, students are easily influenced by anyone in making choices, including the Kiai. Since they are not knowledgeable about politics, they probably made irrational votes sometimes. On the other hand, santri must obey and follow the Kiai’s dawuh (order). This phenomenon then showed the voting behavior of the santri based on a sociological approach (the Colombia study).

4. Conclusion

The relationship between Kiai and santri is sacred. Every santri must ta’zim (respected) to the teacher (Kiai) and always cling onto sami’na wa atho’na to the Kiai’s order. Kiai-santri relationship tends to be paternalistic, which means the freedom given to the children by the father yet they should be fully obedient. They must follow the rules set by the place where they live. This kind of relationship happens to the santri in boarding school. The Kiai in Wisma Wisnu boarding school used the benefit of this relationship to influence the voting behavior of the santri in the general election in 2019.

The voting behavior of Kiai in the general election in 2019 showed a rational choice approach. Kiai was able to assess the quality and competence of candidates by seeing the vision, mission, and integrity through their work programs that had been implemented previously. Besides, Kiai determined their vote by considering the result of probability that political parties would likely achieve. Other factors that influence the vote behavior of Kiai are the similarity in belief/religion, organization, ethnicity, family tradition, and region. Meanwhile, the vote behavior of santri showed a sociological approach (the Columbia study). For they were involved in the campaign, the santri could not figure out the vision, mission, and work programs brought by the election candidates. Therefore, their only consideration in determining the vote was based on the Kiai’s order or parents’. This voting behavior of santri showed a sociological behavior model.

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References


