

Conference Paper

Islam Nusantara: Religion Dialectic and Cultural for Pluralism-Democratic Society

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Abstract

Seeing the face of Islamic nowadays, Islam Nusantara is very needed, because its characteristic proposes solution in moderate ways, not right or left extreme, always balance, inclusive, tolerance, can live in harmonization with other religion followers and can accept the democracy well. Islam Nusantara is delivered through in friendly, harmonize and respectful way, so that it does not suppress the culture. Islam Nusantara is neither a new religion nor a new school, but Islam Nusantara is the face of Islam in Southeast Asia. The teachings of Islam are implemented in a society in which the mental and character are influenced by the structure of the islands. Islam Nusantara's characteristic can be formulated in operational form as the basic of life for the pluralism and nationality society so that it can be defined as a process of Islam Nusantara actualization through local wisdom. In level of practice, it can be done by inserting Islam Nusantara's values, not only in knowledge's source and structure, but also in society's morality. Those values are moderate, tolerance, balance and inclusive.

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1. Introduction

In the essence, plurality is the life reality itself, which cannot be avoided or denied. Because the pluralism is a certainty, so its existence must be acknowledged by every human [1]. But this acknowledgement grade is not as full as theoretic acknowledgement and some problems faced in reality. In politics, pluralism is rotation of authority. The spreading of authority means that broadly authority divided into authority structures among government officer, individualism and groups. Pluralism becomes also strong foundation for creating democracy. The characteristic of pluralism in democracy is required with chance of thinking independent, rewarding to minority groups, conflict and consensus can be solved in peaceful way and avoid violence, politics participation and there are trust and high obedience to constitution and democratic policies [2].

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As the nation which has diversity of ethnics, religions and extraordinary culture, Indonesia is often being a reference of observation how to democracy processes can be implemented. Touching of culture and religion diversity among society group which has been taking place for so long and appearing some conflicts and consensus happening. The democracy which is required by Robert Dahl, must create the pluralism characteristic that is conducive for a nation to get its gymnasium in Indonesia. In the essence, democracy contains inclusive values, meet all different sides through political conception called *human qua citizen* [3]. Indonesia, as a democracy country should develop those values, so that can be avoided from a predicate of democracy country only. The democracy inclusivity is the government by people. The emphasizing of "by people" here must be seen as a strong collective identity from democracy. Democracy needs solidarity and strong commitment from all people with high grade of multicultural tolerance. That is why to control every difference in democracy should always renew the values of mutual understanding, mutual trust and mutual commitment [4].

In religious life, pluralism is a faith that the truth is existing in every religion. There is not the one truth. That doctrine followers acknowledge and appreciate the difference exist, together in making cooperation [4]. Like Alwi Shihab stated that in pluralism, the important thing to be implemented is not only referring the fact of pluralism, but also involving actively in pluralism [3]. That involvement is shown through interactive way positively in plural environment, not claiming one ownership (monopoly) of the truth, and opening minded toward existing difference. For example, Islamic religion, since its arrival in Nusantara Indonesia, in spreading as the religion and cultural strength, has appeared its kindness. It means that Islamic religion spread with peaceful way, not force another person to enter it, appreciate the culture exists and develops, and also accommodate them into local culture and stay in its identity. In fact, the tolerance attracts the sympathies from society to enter Islamic religion in the moment. The values of gloriousness which has had by Indonesian society group are the assets and precious potency for the development and progression of Indonesia civilization [5].

The effort to enliven the Indonesian Muslim paradigm which stick to Nusantara culture finds its momentum, where Jam'iyah Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) held 33th Muk-tamar of Nahdlatul Ulama 2015, bringing the theme "To Strengthen Islam Nusantara for Indonesia and World Civilization". This concept is Indonesian Islamic characteristic which blend theological Islamic value with local tradition value, culture and Nusantara tradition. The concept describes the unity of Indonesian Muslims with the culture, the creation of society which is not opposing to Islamic syariah. Oman Fathurrahman (Professor of Philology UIN Syahid) said that Islam Nusantara is not normative Islamic,

but empirical and distinctive Islamic as the result of interaction, contextual, *indigenisasi*, translation, *vernakularisasi* between universal Islamic with social reality, culture and Indonesia literature. Islam Nusantara is not a new religion or doctrine, but it is a new Islamic face in Southeast Asia. The doctrine of Islamic is being implemented in middle of the society that the mental and characteristic are influenced by archipelago area structure.

Based on the finding of fact and thought construction, so the research questions on this paper are how the concept and characteristic of Islam Nusantara, how the relation or the common platform between Islam, pluralism and democracy, how the implementation of values of Islam Nusantara in life of pluralism society, nation and nationality. This study is very important to be done for constructing the source, knowledge structure and society morality which is reflected from spiritual and social behavior, full of kindness and always create the peacefulness for others. The article draws on literature in the discipline of Islam Nusantara. As this is a conceptual article, arguments are built on insights from extant theoretical and empirical work.

2. Islam, Pluralism and Democracy

The one of the requirement of creating the society of modern and democratic is creating society that respect the nations diversity. This diversity is a certainty. The pluralism society has own culture and diverse aspiration, but they have same rights to participate in social and politics life. Pluralism becomes strong foundation for creating democracy. The characteristic of pluralism in democracy is required with chance of thinking independent, rewarding to minority groups, conflict and consensus can be solved in peaceful way and avoid violence, politics participation and there are trust and high obedience to constitution and democratic policies.

In religious life, pluralism is rightly to be debated, well in theoretical conceptual or practice grade or reality of religion life. From point of view in theologic, there are many controversies and opinions intersecting. Example in Islamic, there are some verses in Al Qur'an state that pluralism and multiculturalism are legitimate, as Allah SWT said in Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2):62. On the other side, the verse of Al Qur'an states assertively that pluralism and multiculturalism is denied by themselves. The truth is only in Islamic and there is not the truth beyond it (Read Q.S. Ali Imron (3):19, 85).

Both verses above, according to each pro or contra about pluralism become theologic justification. In another word, there is the concrete base in Holy Scripture. That is why Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) ever stated a decision that pluralism, secularism,

multiculturalism and liberalism are illegitimate (Decision of Majelis Ulama Indonesia Nomor: 7/MunasVIII/MUI/11/2005) [6]. So until nowadays, the situation is still not abating and becoming people discourse, between pro and contra towards those doctrine. Opinions intersecting are not only for religion thinker on theoretical, conceptual and practice grade, but also for the people responds with different opinions. For the consequence, the position of pluralism is as legitimate as anti-pluralism [7]. So pluralism itself does not need to be debated, moreover forbidden. Pluralism is one result of recitation of holy texts even to Muhammad SAW prophet, like being explained before that Rasullullah has been implementing life in diversity. According to writer, Islamic is opening-minded religion, not covering itself and giving the freedom of thinking for its followers to always keep interactions among people without discriminating between one person to others, including inviting to dialogue seeking the essential truth well and cooperating with other religions in delivering peaceful, justice and involving actively in activity of humanity practices [8].

In fact, there are so many kindness of Islamic doctrine which reflects pluralism principles. If fasting deed can be transformed through empathy and sympathy behavior to actor, so it is also suggested for a Muslim to do kindness for his/her neighbor, without looking who they are, even to bad neighbor, having responsibility to always keep good relationship with the others, not hurt somebody else, *etc* [9]. Islamic is the great religion, so if a Muslims really wants to learn and implements it totally, the existence of Muslims is a grace for all

3. Islam Nusantara: Concept and Characteristic

Nusantara is the term used to describe Indonesian archipelago which stretch on tropical area from Sumatra island on the west to Papua island on the east. This is area which characterized with diversity of geographics, biologics, ethnics, languages, and cultures. The terminology of Nusantara, firstly appears in Java literature in age 14 AD, referred for a sequence of islands were existing under authority of Majapahit kingdom. The term Nusantara itself is plural noun from language of ancient Java: *nusa* (island) and *antara* (laid across). In holy scripture Negarakertagama written about year 1365 AD, Empu Prapanca—a writer and Buddhist monk—described the areas arranging Nusantara by including the biggest part of modern Indonesia areas (Sumatra, Java, Bali, archipelago of Small Sunda, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, a part of Maluku and West Papua), added other broad areas nowadays and become under authority of Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and South area of Philippines.

The term Islam Nusantara seems weird to heard, like as Islam of Saudi, Islam of America, Islam of Middle East, Islam of Java, etc. Is not Islam only one, built on one foundation "Al Qur'an and Sunnah"? It is exactly right that Islam is one and has one base Al Qur'an and Sunnah, but it does not only having nash-nash syariah base (Al Qur'an and Sunnah), but also having maqashid syariah reference (the aim of syariah). Maqashid syariah itself is learned from nash-nash syariah through istiqró' or inductive research [10]. The term Islam Nusantara has appeared pro and contra polemic. For jam'iyyah Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as the biggest of Islamic organization in Indonesia, Islam Nusantara refers to historical fact of Islam spreading in Nusantara through cultural approach, not through stiff and tough doctrine. Fact of Islam Nusantara is delivered by embracing, harmonizing, respecting and not muzzling the culture. From those bases, NU intends to maintain the character of Islam Nusantara as the friendly, peaceful, open-minded and tolerance Islam [11].

The dynamics of Islamic in Indonesia and condition of Muslims in the world nowadays support PBNU in 33th Muktamar of Nahdlatul Ulama 2015, bringing the theme "To Strengthen Islam Nusantara for Indonesia and World Civilization". Today, the Islamic world in the Middle East is burned by the flames of violence that leads to bloodshed. Ironically, Islam is often used as a justification for the destructions. Because of it, the Islamic through peaceful way in this country as the most sufficient result for present. For further understanding, experience and proselytizing way of Islam Nusantara expert have given good impression. It can be presented through shining face and humble, tolerance but not inconsistent and peaceful. Islam Nusantara is a concept and Islamic practice in Nusantara Indonesia as the result of dialectical between text and syariah with the reality and local culture. Islam Nusantara is not a new religion or doctrine, but new face in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. Islamic doctrine implemented in the middle of society that their mental and characteristic are influenced by archipelago area structure. The Islamic practice is reflected in the behavior of moderate social cultural, keep balancing, tolerance, and inclusive [12]. These four behavior become pillars of the society to look for solutions in social problems appeared by liberalism, capitalism, socialism and religions radicalism.

The character of Islam Nusantara shows the existing of local wisdom in Nusantara which is not breaking Islamic law, but exactly synergizing Islamic doctrine with local tradition that mostly spreading in Indonesia area. The presence of Islam is not to damage or against tradition existing. On the other hand, Islam comes to enrich and Islamic tradition and culture exists in stages. The meeting of Islamic with Nusantara

tradition creates social system, education system and sultanate system. The tradition is called Islam Nusantara dissolving with the tradition and Nusantara culture [11].

Seeing the face of Islamic nowadays, Islam Nusantara is very needed, because its characteristic proposes solution in moderate ways, not right or left extreme, always balance, inclusive, tolerance, can live in harmonization with other religion followers and can accept the democracy well. Islam Nusantara model can be traced from the history of Islamic arrival to Nusantara area. This process is called *vernakularisasi* and followed by *pribumisasi*, so Islamic becomes embedded in Indonesia culture [13].

To be asserted in here is that Islam Nusantara is not anti-Arabian culture, but to protect Islam from arabization by understanding as contextual. Islam Nusantara is still standing on aqidah tauhid likes the essence of Islam education brought by Muhammad SAW prophet. Arabization is not Islam doctrine. Because of it, the presence of Islam Nusantara characteristic is not the respond from arabization effort or interference between Arab culture and Islam doctrine, but emphasizes how to important a harmony and contextualization to local culture as long as not against the essence of Islamic role [11]. The message of rahmatan lil alamin enliven the characteristic of Islam Nusantara, a face of Islamic describing moderate, tolerance, peaceful and appreciate the diversity. Islamic which is embracing, not hitting, guiding not insulting, using the heart not abusing. Islamic which is inciting to remorseful not defaming. Islamic which is giving the understanding, not to forcing.

4. Implementing of Values of Islam Nusantara

Based on the construction on the characteristic of Islam Nusantara in chapter before, so we can conclude the operational form as the life basic of pluralism society and in nation and nationality life. Those are the process of actualization the values of Islam Nusantara through local wisdom. In practice level is entering the values of Islam Nusantara into source and knowledge structure and society morality. Those values are moderate, tolerance, balance and inclusive.

- (i) Life in Pluralism Society; acknowledge human characteristic who likes gathering and make a group based on binder elements; develop tolerance to each group; social intercourse among groups on respectful, assertive for party that fight against religion;
- (ii) National and Nationality Life; the country must be defended because it has been become an agreement of all nation elements; always loyal and obedient to the

country's regulations, as long as they do not contradictive with the religions; not doing the coup to legal government; remind the government in good ways if they make mistakes.

The world is ours; this life we live together, and all the human problems are the problems of all of us. All issues of Godliness and religion, as well as diversity are our problem as human beings. "Togetherness" will be eternal, create peaceful, and creativity if it is bounded by love, sympathy, respectful and trust to each other [4].

5. Conclusions

Islam Nusantara refers to the fact of Islam spreading history in Indonesian archipelago through cultural approach, not through stiff and tough doctrine. Fact of Islam Nusantara is delivered through in friendly, harmonize and respectful way, so that it does not suppress the Indonesian culture. Islam Nusantara is neither a new religion nor a new school, but Islam Nusantara is the face of Islam in Southeast Asia. The teachings of Islam are implemented in a society in which the mental and character are influenced by the structure of the islands. Islamic practices are reflected in the socio-cultural behavior of moderate, keeping the balance, tolerance and inclusive. The four attitudes are the basis of society to find solutions to the social problems posed by liberalism, capitalism, socialism and religious radicalism. Islam Nusantara's characteristic can be formulated in operational form as the basic of life for the pluralism and nationality society so that it can be defined as a process of Islam Nusantara actualization through local wisdom. In level of practice, it can be done by inserting Islam Nusantara's values, not only in knowledge's source and structure, but also in society's morality. Those values are moderate, tolerance, balance and inclusive.

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