

The dual purposes of a muslim cleric

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyse the double function of Kiai: a research of Kiai's engagement in political party. In detail, the questions of this research are focussed on (1) the orientation of Kiai's engagement in political party, (2) the implication of their engagement in political party towards their religious function, and (3) the perception of society towards their engagement in political party. This research uses qualitative approach using descriptive analysis. The data collection of this research are through interview, observation and documentation. The target of this research are Kyais engaging in political parties, the committees of three parties (PPP, PKB and PAN), academicians and influential non-party figures. This research choose Jember because this city is well known with its number of Santri and Kyais engage in political parties. The result of this research shows that the Kyais orientation towards their engagement in political parties is the spirit of amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar and Islamic dissemination. From the Islamic point of view, this is a part of worshiping but sometimes they misused their power in using Islamic Symbols in order to win the election for the sake of their own group and interest. The conclusion of this research reveals that the involvement of Kyais in political parties has negative impacts to his religious role for instance the decreasing intensity of teaching in pesantren, the narrowing space and the role of the Kiai as the bearer of universal Islamic teachings, the decreasing of public trust toward Kiai, and horizontal conflict. Horizontal conflicts occur due to the involvement of Kiai in political parties, because there is political communication gap between the Kyais and their ummah.

Keywords : Kiai dwifunction, political parties, conflict, religious

Introduction

Kiai is a title given to honour a man who has a n expertise in Islamic religion or a person who own an Islamic institution (Pesantren) and teach classical Islamic books to his students called *santri*. Even though most of Kyais live in village or rural area, they are considered as an elite group in the social and economic hierarchy among people in the village. That is why these Kyats has a strong influence and strong bargaining position in political realm (Dhofier 1982). Karim (1991) said that "...Our country in the old days, the role of Ulama is very great"... while in the community or area which has a strong *santri* culture, the role of ulama and Kiai is still strong nowadays. The degree of their role to the community are as followed, Kiai is a spiritual leader who has extensive religious knowledges. Most of Kiai has *Pesantren*, that is why they has strong to influence not only to the *santri* but also community in general because they are the role model for the society. As a role model, the society portrays Kiai as a figure who can solve any kind of problems, and that is why the society is most likely consult their difficulty of life and other social problems both private and family problems. As a politician, the relationship between Kiai and political realm in Indonesia has a long story and that is why there is flux and reflux in the long term period. Sociologically, in the Islamic society especially in the *santri* community, Kiai has a strong position as well as bargaining position. Kiai as a center of relation between Islam and Islamic society. In the Islamic perspective in the middle ages, Kiai is the highest "social hierarchy" in the society (Saletore in Kartodirdjo 1983). The Islamic society give the highest position to the Kiai because of his capability about Islamic knowledges.

The degree of political engagement of Kiai is different to each other, but in terms of Kiai involvement in the domestic political realm, their position is fluctuate and they are more in a weak bargaining

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position (Asfar 1996). This kind of condition is in line with the Islamic political power roadmap in Indonesia. According to Noer (1988), the history of Indonesia political power has always ups and downs, it was meeting its peak power in the beginning of Indonesian history and early independence and the new order era but it is declining in general.

Chilcote (1994) said, “*Politics is based on pluralism, equilibrium, bargaining and consensus*”. At the sociological level, Dahl (in Kantaprawira 2002) said, “Every time we deal with politics we find a special relationship between humans who live together; these relationships are given various designations such as “rules,” kewenangan”, or “power”. Politic is defined as an activity to survive and fight for power. The history has recorded that Kiai has always involved in it, so that the existence of Kiai in politics can be seen that Kiai is involved with the development of the country which has Islamic foundation, Kiai also has a strong influence for every political decision making process, involve in campaign activities and become a legislative candidate, etc. This research focus on the Kiai’s dwi-function both in religion and political engagement. Specifically, this problem supposed to be discussed regarding the orientation of Kiai in political realm, the implication of Kiai’s engagement in political parties to their religious role (as the leader of Pesantren and the role model for the society) as well as the society perception toward Kiai’s engagement in political parties.

Method

This research uses descriptive analysis method. This method describes about the dual function of Kyais especially their orientation in political parties, their implication to the religious social function and how is the society perception towards the engagement of these Kyais in political parties. This research also uses qualitative approach to analyse this case deeper.

The researcher adjust the informants determination with various informations needed and refers to the competence of the informants in order to provide a valid informations about the study. This research needs and determines informants to support the study as followed:

1. The Kyais involved in political parties (as the key informant), in this case Kyais who has *Pondok Pesantren*, active in several political parties and become DPR RI members. In this study there were three Kiai namely KH. Yusuf Muhammad, the leader and owner of the Darus Sholah Jember Islamic boarding school and now a member of the National Awakening Faction (FKB DPR RI), KH. Lutfi Ahmad, the leader and owner of the Madinatul Ulum Jenggawah Islamic boarding school in Jember, is now a member of the DPR RI Reform Faction, and KH. Bahri Bakir, the leader and owner of the Bahrul Qolam Kalisat Jember Islamic boarding school, is now a member of the United Development Faction (FPP DPR RI). Masyarakat luas yang bisa memberikan informasi sesuai dengan kebutuhan penelitian ini.
2. The leader of the political parties consist of Kyais (PKB, PPP, and PAN)
3. Sociologist from Universitas Jember.
This research uses three data collection technique, as follows:
 - a. Participatory observation, is a technique to get a direct picture about the objective condition the Kiai involvement in the political parties.
 - b. In depth interview is an interview technique in the research. The researcher combines two interview models i.e structured interview and unstructured interview.
 - c. Documentation study is a documents tracing related to the Kiai’s *curriculum vitae* (education level and organisation experience).
 - d. This researcher uses descriptive qualitative data analysis.

The research location is in Jember Regency, East Java. The consideration of this location are as followed:

1. The social and religious society of Jember society who are majority are Islam and has high obedience toward Kiai.

2. A lot of Kiai involved in so many political parties and one of them has several groups who support them as constituent from the political party where the Kiai's is in.
3. The early survey shows that there is a tendency to be a social segmentation in the form of social groups based on several particular support toward Kiai.

The Research Result and Discussion

The same view was conveyed by Bustami Rahman, a sociologist from the Universitas Jember, in a meeting saying that the definition of Kiai was based on its role and function as a religious figure in the community rather than a political figure. Kiai function as religious people, such as giving advices and suggestions needed from a religious perspective and the function has long been carried out well and successfully. The view from another angle about Kiai was conveyed by KH. Wasil Sarbini that being a Kiai through the process, being called Kiai because of his piety and behavior could be used as a role model.

Some of the opinions of the informants above show that the world of Kiai is a world full of complexity, when viewed from different perspectives. Therefore it is very difficult to generalize. The terms Kiai, bindere, nun, ajengan and teacher are the names originally intended for traditional ulama on the island of Java, although the Kiai are now used, both traditional and modernist, in Java and outside Java. Looking at the world of Kiai from the point of view of the terminology used as such, requires us to divide the Kiai based on various benchmarks. Most of Kiai live in the village area. Kiai are part of elite groups in social, political and economic structures, because as a group Kiai have a strong influence on society. Most of them have enough rice fields, but do not work in the fields. Kiai are not farmers, but leaders and instructors, who have high positions in the community and to carry out their duties as instructors and advocates of Islam (preachers) well, need to understand political life. The profession of the Kiai as instructors and advocates of Islam produced influences that transcended the boundaries of regional territories where their pesantren were located (Dhofier 1994).

Kiai is an important figure in the middle of muslim society, especially Santri Community because Kiai as a reference in any kind of problem. The inherent role in the status of a Kiai is to educate students in their pesantren and protect all elements of society with all their problems. The community's trust in Kiai is measured by the Kiai's social behavior as an example for the community and the Kiai's ability in various issues, especially socio-religious problems.

Nyabis tradition

The Jember community is known as the santri community, so the relationship between the Kiai and the community is as Kiai and santri, which is full of manners in their daily behavior. There is an interesting and unique tradition until now and still carry out by Jember Society called "Nyabis". This tradition is a Jember society custom where the people usually come to the Kiai's home because they believe that they have some sort of extraordinary abilities. In Jember there are several elderly Kiai who are usually visited by the community, including KH. Khotib Umar (North Jember), KH. Achmad Muzakki Syah (Jember kota), KH. Zainal (East Jember), KH. Syamsul Huda (west Jember) KH. Mansyur Sholeh (south Jember).

The Nyabis tradition is a proof that the Kiai occupy a central position in Muslim society. Kiai are examples of ideal Muslims, who are endowed with the knowledge and grace of God. Kiai are patrons of Muslim society, and their behavior in dealing with society is characterized by paternalism. Paternalism is a type of privilege expressed in culturally accepted forms of generosity and the special goodness given by superior patrons to clients towards the wishes of patrons. The community views Kiai as spiritual, moral and religious guides and leaders who protect from disruptive threats.

The Kiai are non-formal leaders while acting as spiritual leaders, and their position is very close to the lower classes of society in the villages. The clerics as leaders of the community have worshippers,

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communities and masses who are bound by close communal relations and paternalistic cultural ties. Their advice will always be heard, followed and carried out by the congregation, the community and the masses they lead. Kiai with their superior knowledge in Islam are often seen as people who can always understand the majesty of God and the secrets of nature, thus they are considered to have an unreachable position, especially by most ordinary people. The social reality as described above shows that Kiai is a perfect figure in the santri community point of view, whatever Kiai said is only said *sam'an watho'atan (sendiko dawuh)*.

The history of Kiai's involvement in the political parties

The Kiai in Jember has a long historical experience in the political activities so as the most Kiai in Indonesia. In general, it was not entirely a long experience of the political dynamics of the Kiai in Jember leading to good relational nodes. The Jember Kiai are marginalized by the government's political policies such as the inclusion of political rights to be able to take part in the regional government structure, it can be said that the contact or relationship between Kiai Jember vis-a-vis politics is not constant, but tends to fluctuate. As for the ups and downs in the development of Kiai Jember's political activities, it can be seen as follows, in general, the Jember Kiai tend to be silent and do not display vulgarly their political aspirations, unless there are truly principal issues.

The involvement of Kiai Jember in interacting with politics continues. The nation's socio-political map after the physical revolution is still marked by a variety of terrible physical clashes between the people against the exponents of Dutch colonialism and its allies, especially Britain, to re-occupy the homeland. In this kind of socio-political conditions, the Kiai involved themselves in the front line in fighting against the Dutch army and its accomplice (NICA) because the Jember Kiai, especially the Kiai under the community organization "Nahdhatul Ulama" followed "Jihad Resolution" (Jihad fi Sabilillah) issued by the PBNU on October 21-22 1945 against the British-Dutch allies (Feillard 1999) who were immediately welcomed by their supporters in the regions, including the Kiai Jember who mobilized their santri to participate in fighting against the British-Dutch allies. When the resolution was stated that fighting against the Dutch and their allies (NICA) was "fardlu in ain", it was obligatory for every Muslim to do, and sin for those who left him (Anam 1999).

Talking about the Kiai in Jember cannot be separated from the pesantren and some of the existing religious organizations, namely Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Indonesian Muslims, Sarikat Islam (SI) and so on. The Kiai channel their political aspirations through Masyumi. There are many Kiai Jember who devote their time and energy to gathering people to remain in the path of Masyumi as the medium of their struggle. In general, the political activities of Kiai Jember in the post-revolutionary physical era were moderate and accommodating, but the symptoms of conflict between political factions and conflicts of interest in the Masjumi began to grow in the late 1950s. The declaration of various parties at the central level was then followed by regions throughout the archipelago including in Jember Regency. The birth of various parties based on Islamic mass certainly cannot leave the involvement of Kiai. There are some Kiai who are active in political parties, even their political careers are successful and become members of the Indonesian Parliament, namely KH. Yusuf Muhammad, Caregiver of the Darus Sholah Jember Islamic Boarding School became a member of the DPR RI FKB (Ormas background from NU), KH. Lutfi Ahmad, caretaker of the Madinatul Ulum Cangkring Jember Islamic boarding school, members of the Reformation Faction, origin of the PAN party (Ormas SI background) and KH. Bahri Bakir, Caregiver of the Bahrul Qolam Kalisat Jember Islamic Boarding School, FPP member of the Republic of Indonesia (originating from CSOs) and many Kiai involved in political parties in Jember district.

Kiai's theological politic

The teachings of Islam as understood by the Kiai divide life into two parts which are integrally interconnected, and both are related to human existence. The two fields or aspects of life above are called worldly life (now) and the life of ukhrowi, a form of life "later after death" (PP Muhammadiyah

1971, PBNU 1986). Based on this understanding, the existence of human life in the world (now) is always oriented to life after death. If the life of the world is seen as a temporary form of life and recognizes change, then the life form after death is seen as an eternal life and knows no change. Because afterlife is a form of "future" life, then it is itself transcendent and abstract. Thought or compilation of religious concepts as understood by Kiai about the first field is a reference to his social behavior including politics, power and leadership. The conceptualization of the relationship of political behaviour with aspects of the Godhead in Islamic history is known as the science of kalam or the science of tauhid.

The reconceptualization of the role of politics in the Islamic struggle is to place politics as one of the tools in achieving goals and tools in realizing the ideals of Islamic life in social and political life. KH. Bahri Bakir (FPP member of the Republic of Indonesia) explained his view that politics is one of the tools not the goal, if it is used as a goal it means boxing oneself but if it is used as a tool it means a life process only. KH. Lutfi Ahmad (member of the Republic of Indonesia Parliament from the Reformation Faction) empirically explained that as a Muslim it must be consistent that this religion is not harassed or mocked by other people or that other people's laws dominate the Indonesian state, because after all a Muslim will not accept if the Islamic religion is contaminated by politics inspired by non-Islamic politics. A different explanation was conveyed by Gus Yus, that the concept was ideally erroneous but the scholars stated in his studies that the nation state was something that could be justified".

The opinion KH. Najmuddin (Chairperson of the Syrian Council of the DPC PKB Jember) that politics can actually seek as many friends as possible, can accommodate all levels of society, whether it is an enemy then in a way that does not deviate from the religious lines there are rules. KH. Sahilun A. Nasir (head of the Jember branch of the Indonesian Ulema Council) responded to the involvement of Kiai in political parties, that in fact there were several Kiai active in the party in Jember. The various opinions above can be understood sociologically, there are two big views about the relationship between Islam and politics. The first group saw politics as an integral part of adri gama. Din (religion) has a very close relationship with siyasah (politics). Islam is believed to cover all life including politics. Muslims who believe in this view argue that the involvement of Kiai (Muslims) in political parties is a necessity, to uphold the Islamic political system, and even establish an Islamic state. The second group was of the view that Siyasah was indeed part of the religion, but between the two there were very essential character differences. Religion is divine, derived from revelation, sacred and holy while siyasa is concerned with profane life, worldly life which sometimes involves manipulative tricks. Therefore, the Kiai should not engage in politics. Kiai if involved in political parties can lose their Kyaian integrity, lose their muru'ah, lose their pride as Kiai, in other words Kiai must take distance from politics.

Politic orientation of Kiai's involvement in political parties

The involvement of Kiai in political parties contains many questions, especially concerning the orientation of Kiai to enter political parties. In general, the involvement of Kiai into political parties has a relationship with 4 factors, namely power, interests, wisdom and political culture (Budiardjo 1998). The orientation of the Kiai in political parties is Islamic da'wah with the spirit of *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*, preaching in Islam is worth worship. So this orientation needs to be explained in more detail and operationally in the face of political reality that is counterproductive to political ethics, especially the political conscience of Kiai. The description needs to be done so that the political rhetoric conveyed by Kiai is both during the campaign period and various political forums before the public, where Kiai always carry religious symbols as political legitimacy. The carrying of these symbols is to arouse people's emotions to remain faithful in supporting the Kiai. The carrying of these religious symbols made blind fanatics to the Kiai and they assumed that defending their legal political scholars was obligatory and worth jihad.

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Religion cleric in struggle power

The wishes of some people so that the regent of Jember was a Kiai became faded after KH. Yusuf Muhammad lost the regent election in 2000. The experience of the Kiai in Jember is interesting to study in depth, because the people of Jember are known as the santri community. The defeat of the Kiai received various responses both pro and contra. Some opinions explain that a Kiai who is identical to a religious entity and becomes a symbol of cultural power in the santri community, cannot be accepted politically by various groups, because in politics many variants must be resolved politically. Things that cannot be denied in the political world in Indonesia, moral strength is inferior to the power of capital, commonly referred to as money politics. Besides that there is another factor, namely the communication problem of the negotiators from the Kiai team. Another and very decisive factor is the existence of a social dichotomy between Ulama and Umara, both of these statuses have different social roles.

Ulama acted as educators in their pesantren, protecting all elements of society with their Syi'ar Islam, in other words as scholars who were identical with a full image of holiness. The image of a holy Kiai entering and fighting in the political world to become a regent is a difficult thing for the Kiai to do, even though fighting in the political world needs a strategy and needs capital while umara (Regent) is acting as executive leader namely the regional government in charge of several Heads Section (Kabag) and several sub-district heads in the area. Thus a regent must have the managerial ability of government, whereas in Kiai this is not the case. The social image that is built is a corrupt bureaucrat and so on. So with different status, giving birth to different roles requires different abilities. If a Kiai has a dual status as a Regent, then there will be a role conflict.

Direct role conflict often occurs when someone is expected at the same time the obligations of two or more roles that he holds. Fulfilment of obligations from certain roles often results in neglecting others. Role conflict describes a situation where individuals are faced with opposing expectations of various roles that exist in society. The number of roles that must be carried out by an individual directly reflects the many interests of the person concerned. Kiai who fight in the struggle for power bring the interests of the community in general or the interests of their groups, in this case their political constituents, or even just for their personal ambitions, even though the Kiai's authority is the biggest source of public trust.

The implication of Kiai involvement in political party

The involvement of Kiai in political parties turned out to have various implications, on the one hand for the chosen party. Kiai become a voter (Vote getter) because the Kiai generally have a mass, so they can win the party in the General Election (PEMILU). Likewise, if the Kiai is successful in his political career, then materially is sufficient. This phenomenon is generally known to many new rich people because of their success in their political careers or perhaps the Kiai can convey his political ideas directly to Senayan. On the other hand the involvement of Kiai has a negative and substantial impact because it relates to the status and main role as a Kiai, such as (1) the decreasing intensity of Kiai in pesantren, as educational institutions, pesantren can be seen as a special environment. Kiai as a teacher and pesantren leader and owner, therefore Kiai as the holder of absolute power in the pesantren environment. In other words, the Kiai and its aides are the only power hierarchy that is explicitly recognized in the pesantren environment (Zaini 1994).

Dhofier (1994) found that in the Pesantren Tradition (Study of the Kiai View) that Kiai is the most essential element of a pesantren, it is only natural that growth depends solely on the personal abilities of the Kiya, so it can be concluded that the involvement of Kiai in political parties has implications on the role of the main Kiai as a boarding school caregiver. Kiai as the owner and caregiver in the *pesantren* became a central figure and the community housed their sons and daughters in a *pesantren* because they believed in the character of the Kiai, so that their children would be educated by the Kiai. When the Kiai was no longer active in his *pesantren*, not a few people attracted his trust in the kai by

transferring their children to other *pesantren*, (2) horizontal conflicts. The main factor in the horizontal conflict is Kiai's political behavior as a political elite in communicating with his mass. Kiai who always bring religion as a political justification will trigger an emotional mass. The community thinks that what the Kiai said is always right and must be fought for. Defending the legal clerics is obligatory and worth jihad, because of jihad, the stakes are lives, they believe that they die defending the Kiai who are worth jihad, the law is martyrdom, (death is guaranteed by heaven). Regarding the function of religion brought by the Kiai in politics, it should be necessary to see the reason that religion is used in politics. At the political ethics level, religion needs to be brought into politics, because in that context religion is indeed necessary to guide political behavior and morals. The emergence of conflict in politics when people use symbols and religious terms in politics. The use of religious symbols in politics, can be in the form of symbols, verses of the Qur'an, or the hadith of the Prophet, for political purposes.

Community perception of Kiai's involvement in politics

The involvement of Kiai in political parties turned out to receive mixed responses from the public, the responses were positive and also negative. Party activists consider Kiai's involvement to be a positive thing, because the position of Kiai in the party is a vote getter in winning elections and other political events. Non-participant societies see that Kiai's political aspirations can actually be channeled through their cadres or trusted people in political parties, because if the Kiai are directly involved in political parties there are some things that the principle of the Kiai abandons, including the protection of all elements of society, according with the teachings he brought, namely Islam rahmatan lil'alamin because in politics there is only the phrase "our group (minna) or their class (deceased)", the occurrence of social segmentation due to the involvement of Kiai in the party will definitely change the people's image towards the Kiai itself . The image of Kiai in the eyes of society is far more noble than politicians. Therefore not a few Kiai who were active in the party were opposed by the people, so those who were initially very friendly towards the Kiai even looked directly at their Kiai who were not brave, now totally changed, especially in a different party with the Kiai. An expensive social risk and cost must be paid by Kiai. Community trust will be lost to the Kiai when the Kiai always take it.

The religious personality possessed by religious leaders, such as being fair, honest, obedient to the teachings and always acting trustworthy to God is a powerful tool in guiding community activities. The characteristics of religious leaders are usually highly admired and imitated by the community (Kahmad 2000) and will disappear by themselves, because the public's perception of politicians is negative and even a source of social chaos over the years. The community expects that a Kiai can solve practical religious problems in accordance with the depth of knowledge that he has chosen. The higher the books taught, the more he will be admired. They are also expected to be able to show their leadership, trust in themselves and their abilities, therefore many people come to ask for advice and guidance in many ways. They are also expected to be humble in respecting all people, without seeing the high and low level of their social class, wealth and education and being able to protect the entire element of society without political barriers, because that is where the core teachings of Islam are Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin.

Conclusion

The researcher concluded that the involvement of Kiai in political parties had an influence on the role of the clerics in religious life. Role conflicts occur in which the main roles as religious leaders can be neglected. From the view of Islam, the role of the Kiai is seen as da'wah, and may be considered positive, but also negative when it is considered as related to abusing powerness.

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