POWER ISLAMIZATION: UNVEILING THE ISLAMIC POLITICS OF KIAI AS LEADERS OF THE INDONESIAN PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT
This paper aims to review the politics of Islam Kiai by explaining the historical social arguments and strategies pursued by the religious elite to keep playing a role in the lives of Muslims. The methodology of this study uses the social history school as a research method to see the social background in the Islamic political history of the Kiai and contains a critical aspect to analyze the dynamics of the Kiai's Islamic politics. Analysis of the data by reconstructing socio-political events involving traditionalists on the Indonesian political scene from the time of independence until the 2019 election. The main finding in this study is that the Islamic politics promoted by the Kiai are based on the Islamic teachings about social concern such as maslahah mursalah and kulliatul khoms which created the Kiai's movement concept, namely mabadi’ khoiru ummah (a path that shapes the best people) and syuun ijtimaiah (social concern). The Kiai’s involvement in politics is based on this foundation.

The significance of this study takes social history as a method by introducing a new approach in revealing the political and socio-cultural significance of the Kiai in his involvement in power-politics arena in Indonesia. So that it can fully demonstrate the values built by the Kiai towards Muslims in political education that leads to building awareness of the nation and state.

Keywords: Kiai, community leader, Islamic politics, social history
A. INTRODUCTIONS

The involvement of traditional ulama, known as Kiai, forming the Indonesian state to practical politics, is nothing new to this day. The Kiai is not just elites in religion. Moreover, its role has expanded to the social sphere, so this strengthens the position of the Kiai to touch and gain power. Kiai has considerable trust from the community to guide life to political affairs. This position explains the strategic condition of the Kiai in moving the people to certain choices. In this context, it is no longer denied the presence of Kiai as well as political elites.

In the political context, the Kiai does not only involve within the boundaries of political parties, even his existence also determines the political process and its results. The Kiai who is from the beginning of the implementation of elections in Indonesia until the reform era has been directly involved in the process, even on a practical level to the point of driving support. Countless Kiai has directly intervened in the campaigns of certain candidates and political parties. What should be questioned here is whether Kiai's position is exploited or a well-founded choice to gain the aspirations of certain candidates’ constituents as the party machine to gain support. The fall in the choice of party machinery against the Kiai is a natural thing to see that they are social elites that may contribute to direct the views and choices of people's lives. Kiai is there and presents directly amid his followers.

In many ways, the Kiai is seen by his followers as a proper authority to issue fatwas on the problems faced by his followers. As a

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3 Bush and Fealy.
6 Alexander R. Arifianto, ‘Practicing What It Preaches? Understanding the Contradictions between Pluralist Theology and Religious Intolerance within Indonesia’s Nahdlatul
leader, he is also seen as a cleric who is used as a reference by Muslims, especially in rural areas in terms of carrying out Islamic religious beliefs and practices.

Many studies assert that Kiai is charismatic leaders having full authority that goes beyond their role as religious leaders, Geertz claimed in his early research on Kiai (1960), Binder (1960), Jay (1969), Noer (1973) Wahid (1974), Horikoshi (1987; 1976), Dhofier (1980). With the authority they have, the followers obey Kiai’s leadership. Kiai’s special position cannot be separated from their background making them known as educated elite. They have the expertise to transform Islamic knowledge to their followers. Kiai is considered the only tutor, especially in Islamic boarding schools. Also, their wealth grants them a unique position as the "fortress" for the community when facing economic hardships.

Kiai as patrons in the society, their influence in Indonesian Islamic society, has deeply rooted. They are part of the elite in the social, political, and economic structure of the local community. People's dependence on Kiai is very strong. They are effective decision-makers on socio-political issues in Indonesia. As advocates of Islam, their influence is beyond the territorial boundaries of their residence and Islamic boarding schools (Pribadi, 2018). Besides, the psychological relationship between teacher-student is very touching and strong, and consequently, their views and instructions have a tremendous impact when taken into account by the Ulama’, Al-Jami’ah, 55.2 (2017), p. 241


Ahmad Hariyadi, Suwito Eko Pramono, and Heri Yanto, Charismatic Leadership of Kiai in Developing an Organizational Culture of Islamic Boarding School, The Journal of Educational Development JED, 18 January 2018, p. 23


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number of alumni in Islamic boarding schools who are spread throughout Indonesia 12.

The existence of Kiai has by far granted them the role of non-formal leaders for the community. In national and governmental context, the roles and functions of Kiai are to fill the gap between weaknesses and strengths of the government, starting from the village and central levels. Therefore, it is not surprising that many government officials consult the Kiai or take advantage of using them during elections. In return, when the Kiai, the Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic organizations they lead experience difficulties in their operations, they will ask the officials to solve it. This relationship shows the presence of powers within the context of Kiai taking advantage of each other.

The incessant involvement of Kiai in political power, which continues until now, requires serious study to see the values that are built in this relationship, both to government officials and with Muslims in Indonesia. Through a social history approach, this research will explain how these values have lived among Indonesian Muslims from the pre-independence era until now.

B. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Kiai’s knowledge of power and politics is not new let alone contested. Classical books taught from generation to generation have become genealogy of knowledge and used in Islamic boarding schools as traditions, written by medieval scholars which were not merely books that contained issues of ritual worship. It has far touched on the comprehensive fields needed in human life, as well as political issues 13.

According to the history of Islam, the issue regarding power is embedded with significant thoughts and phenomena, laid up in detail and its universal nature, as depicted in the "Medina Charter" 14. Through this

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charter, the systematic incidents structuring a neatly structured model of government is displayed that empowers the society and the nation progress, and so much more what has shaped the political system of Rasulullah (May Peace Be Upon Him), during the Medina government which unveils the time and its modern place 15.

Barton (2014), mentions that the vast majority of all classical books about Kiai in carrying out religious practices affirm that the Prophet Muhammad was a religious leader as well as a political leader. His success in building Medina is viewed as an implicit call for Muslims to make a connection between religion and politics. This fact is not only accepted as a reality, it is even used as a teaching concept (fiqh) 16.

Looking at the source of the doctrine that is used as a reference for the Kiai for power, it is certain that Islamic politics must use religion-politics. Islamic politics aims to provide benefits in this world and in the hereafter, therefore the provisions used do not only refer to what was created by statesmen, philosophers and politicians but more importantly also use the provisions outlined in general by Allah. For this reason, it is necessary to refer to Islamic rules, even in state affairs 17. However, this alone is not finished to become the embodiment of a community regulation system that has different needs and of course cannot live on its own. If not regulated, there will be disputes that can lead to division and loss of peace. As a result, it is not calm and comfortable in carrying out worship 18. Therefore, "political science" is needed in contrast to "political fiqh". If "fiqh" is halal-haram, then "science" reaches out to "how to regulate and manage the public". Whereas in the Qur'an and Hadith it is never mentioned how the model of government is, whether it is a nation-state, kingdom, federal, republican and parliamentary. The existing texts

17 Zaman Stanizai, How Islamic Is an Islamic State? A Theoretical Debate on Islamic Political Order, 1 June 2020, p. 67

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only oblige Muslims to form a government without limiting the model, and also their obligation to obey the ruler\(^{19}\). Therefore, the concept of managing the state and government in Islamic teachings is not static, moreover it can always be negotiated with political needs \(^{20}\). NU in state politics will refer to the religious values it adheres to.

Abdurrahman Wahid firmly emphasizes that the state political actions of the NU Kiai are based on views formed by religious beliefs as performed by intellectuals in building the civilization of the people. It is not based on one "ideology". Unlike other Islamic groups, the NU Kiai flawlessly develop their scholarly traditions. Its perfection comes from the traditions of *tauhid, fiqh and tasawuf* \(^{21}\). These three traditions become three main things in considering the future of human relations with others, as well as in politics. In Islamic politics, the Kiai is mainly responsible (*tauhid*) for dealing with God’s work and carrying out the *fiqh* for the common welfare (*tasawuf*) \(^{22}\).

Based on these three traditions, there are teachings that give meaning and meaning to everyone who runs. In carrying out Islamic politics, the Kiai adhere to this tradition, the goal is to lead to *maslahah* (the common good), which is the core of every legal and policy determination in politics. This goal is better known as the concept of *maslahah mursalah*, once again which is the core of all *qoidah fiqh* sparks (rules in establishing law) \(^{23}\). The consideration in determining the *maslahah* is based on the *maqosid* of Islamic sharia known as the concept of *kulliyatul khoms*, in the form of *hifdz al din* (religious rights), *hifdz al nafs* (right to life), *hifdz al á ql* (right to thought), *Hifdz al nasl* (right of descent).), and *Hifdz al mâl* (rights of wealth processing) \(^{24}\). From there,

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\(^{19}\) Maimuoen, p. 110  
\(^{22}\) Bush and Fealy, p. 201  
Kiai Mahfud Siddiq's statement about *mabadi' khoiru ummah* (a path that shapes the best ummah) developed in the late 1930s. This concept concerns the socio-economic improvement of the people. Continuing to be reaffirmed by the kiai at the 26th congress in 1979 with the concept of *syuun ijtima‘iyah* (social care)\(^{25}\).

The direction and implementation of the maslahah provisions cannot be separated from attitudes that have to be considered, namely *tawasuth* (neutral manner) *tawazun* (equity), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *i’tidal* (fairness)\(^{26}\). In establishing peace for the nation and the world, it is crucial to understand the concept that was coined by Kiai Ahmad Siddiq at the 1987 NU National Conference, namely *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), *ukhuwah watoniyyah* (national brotherhood) and *ukhuwah basyariyyah* (human brotherhood)\(^{27}\).

These guidelines and methods are believed to be the principles in carrying out Islamic politics that are soft, peaceful, dignified and civilized. The aspiration determining the "representation" of Allah's will in the form of social welfare and religiosity complies with the concept echoed about *izzul Islam wal Muslimin* (Islamic and Muslim glory)\(^{28}\).

Currently, the Islamic politics promoted by these Kiai are still considered as a strategic force to safeguard democracy and create human civilization. The study of Al-Hamdi (2017) and Hidayaturrahman & Sudarman (2019), shows Indonesia as the largest Muslim country, has almost reached two decades of a wave of democratization since the fall of authoritarian authority regulations in 1998. Kiai argues that democratization in Indonesia leading to prosperity is very likely, but the government has a slow pace towards democracy. Political parties, one of the important democratic institutions, do not have a significant answer to maintaining a democratic system because they are the sole representatives for creating government leaders and policies. Therefore, Islamic politics still has a strategic role in building the fate and future of Indonesia.


\(^{27}\) Andrée Feillard, ‘Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia’, 2013, p 236

\(^{28}\) Abidin, 21
Especially Islamic boarding school as the real basis for Kiai to reign a democratic atmosphere\(^29\).

However, it does not rule out that Islamic politics will continue to shrink because the role of the Kiai is only used as vote panners, without maintaining the values that have long been the guidelines for previous Kiai in seeing the relationship between religion and state \(^30\). Although at present the power of the Kiai is still proven to be very calculated in general elections in Indonesia, for example the appearance of Kiai Ma'ruf Amin as vice president of the Republic of Indonesia \(^31\).

C. METHODOLOGY

This study uses the social history method to approach research issues or what Ferdinand Broudel calls structural history \(^32\). Development of the style of writing history and its analysis of historical phenomena using a structural approach, where humans as historical supporters are in the existing structures in the aspects of human life.

In principle, this study answers six main questions in history. The questions are what (what), when (when), where (where), who (who), why (why), and how (how), an event occurred. These questions are traced through the literature related to the focus of this research.

The focus of the research is directed at analyzing the study of the thoughts of the Kiai carried out by previous anthropologists by prioritizing the social background in the Kiai’s Islamic political history as well as containing critical aspects for analyzing the political dynamics of the Kiai’s Islam. This study was carried out by reconstructing the socio-political events involving traditionalist Kiai on the Indonesian political stage from before the independence period to the 2019 elections.

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In the framework of achieving research objectives, in this study the following methods are used:

1. Collection of resources (Heuristics). At this stage, activities are directed at the exploration, search, and collection of literary sources under study, both in the form of primary sources related to the Kiai's Islamic political footprint in Indonesia, as well as secondary sources related to the interpretation of political interactions carried out by the Kiai.

2. Verification and validation (source criticism and source validity). In each event, at least three literature sources were compared to ensure the authenticity, originality and integrity of the sources.

3. Interpretation (Analysis and Synthesis). Intended to unite some of the existing data, and grouped them by conceptual generalizations. In the process, objectively the data on the Kiai's Islamic political events are analyzed through the interpretation of the symbols used in the Kiai's Islamic political interactions. Interpretations are carried out using verified and validated literature sources.

4. Presentation of data. The model used descriptively reconstructs the political footprint of the Kiai Islam in Indonesia.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The fight against colonization to achieve independence is an irrefutable fact of the political role of the Kiai. The enthusiasm and drive for this role cannot be separated from the Islamic spirit which is the main background of the Kiai in Islamic missions. These struggles continue to amplify the roles they hold during the post-independence, New Order and Reform era.

The activities of the Kiai continued when Soekarno proclaimed Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945, but that did not mean that foreign interference had stopped from interfering in controlling Indonesia. This was addressed by the Kiai led by Kiai Hasyim Asyari by issuing a fatwa "jihad resolution" on 22 October 1945 which stated that jihad (war) against the legal invaders was fardlu ain (obligations imposed on each

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individual) 34. This determination was further emphasized by the Kiai in the 16th congress in Purwokerto in 1946, wherein the congress the status of Indonesia's territory was raised to darul harbi (territories of war) which resulted in the call for jihad (war) for all Muslims 35.

At the beginning of independence, the political position of Islam had not shown any significant involvement in the political constellation in Indonesia because only 15 of the 136 Central Indonesian National Committees (KNIP) were representatives of Islam. Therefore, Islamic leaders called on the public to establish a political party by holding the Indonesian Muslim Community Congress in Yogyakarta, on November 7-8, 1945. This congress succeeded in forming the Masyumi Party (Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia) as the only political platform for Muslims 36.

The Islamic organizations adhering to the Masyumi members only lasted six years due to differences in point of view because Masyumi was largely controlled by the modernist group – its representation in the parliament and the disputes over appropriateness for the minister of religion at that time led the Kiai who were members of the NU organization to leave Masyumi in 1952. This resignation showed how NU Kiai did what was right referred to as "political necessity". This involvement in politics further convinced the Kiai that it offered the most effective means to fight for NU's religious and social independence. Power, authority and resources can be obtained through political means and traditional religious institutions. The Kiai then declared NU a political party. The appearance of NU as a political party participating in the 1955 election contestation cannot be underestimated. Evidence of the amount of support for the NU Kiai places NU as the political party who later won the third election after PNI and Masyumi 37.

Before the election, Masyumi became the ruling party three times, namely at the time of Prime Minister Muhammad Natsir (1950-1951), Prime Minister Sukiman (1951-1952) and Prime Minister Burhanuddin

34 Ahmad Mansur Suryanegara, Menemukan Sejarah Wacana Pergerakan Islam Di Indonesia (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), 158
35 Bustami, Resolusi Jihad: Perjuangan Ulama Dari Menegakkan Agama Hingga Negara, p. 143
Harahap (1955-1956). However, in the 1955 elections, PNI was the winner succeeding *Masyumi* as the ruling party (Esposito, 1984). In the following years, the representation of the Kiai battle in the government received a larger portion as ministers during the second term of Sostroamidjojo cabinet (1956-1957) until it was finally replaced by the New Order 38.

In 1956, when the Constituent Assembly held a session, regarding the formulation of the basic philosophy of the state using *Pancasila* and Islam, all Islamic-based parties supporting Islam were used as the basis of state ideology. But their vote was only 48 percent, while 52 percent supported *Pancasila*. Each group could obtain 2/3 of the votes for ratification of the constitution 39 40.

The rivalry among political parties in the democratic parliament ceased when a Presidential Decree was issued on July 5, 1959 which brought Indonesia to a guided democracy. This has caused political parties to change their strategy in their struggle, as did the NU and *Masyumi*.

The *Masyumi* movement which became a forum for modernist Muslim groups, prioritized a confrontational attitude towards the government, whereas the traditional Kiai chose a cooperative path. At that time, the Kiai, especially those who were members of NU, was claimed to be pragmatic and opportunistic. However, this was denied as part of the NU principles which have always been adhered to in formulating the idea of *maslahah mursalah*. Such cooperative attitude was shown by the NU Kiai during the Alim Ulama Conference held in Cipanas which was led by the Minister of Religion, Kiai Masykur and attended by NU Kiai and Perti deciding that Soekarno and the ruling state officials as *waliyul amri can addhoru*, as a legitimate ruler because his power must be obeyed by the Muslims 41.

38 Fealy, 67
41 Andree Feillard, *NU Vis a Vis Negara; Pencarian Isi, Bentuk Dan Makna* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 1999), p. 122
A title was awarded in order to allow sharia court, like the case in Sumatra, which has a higher position than the customary court. Such title granting was reiterated during the 20th Congress of Nu, in Surabaya in 1954. President Soekarno also used this decision to legitimize the Darul Islam (DI) movement which was still strong by then. People may usually perceive or misinterpret this step as a form of flirt between the NU Kiai and the authorities for pragmatic purposes. A number of figures beheld this move as NU’s political setback. Soekarno set his political policies like the basic character of the political behavior of the NU Kiai. Politically speaking, NU was perceived as being controlled by the authorities and in turn visibly seen as a weak opposition force that should instead have an impact on the country.

This step once realized, would recognize the legitimate authority called the Sunni Islamic political paradigm which acknowledges brutal leaders rather than chaotic politics owing to a lack of a leader. This view is reflected in the Kiai’s Islamic politics which envisions achieving the benefit of the maslahat ummah rather than prompting a confrontational character that can sacrifice the benefit the maslahat ummah. It is important to emphasize that such a paradigm is applied based on the values developed in the tradition of Islamic fiqh boarding school. It is perceived that fatwa adopted a harsh policy for the Kiai about colonialists by issuing the "jihad resolution" which is thought to threaten the religious practice of Muslims, their lives and the Indonesian as a nation in general.

Masyumi is usually condoning a controversial stance against the authorities, who were later accused of treason because certain party figures were involved in the fight for the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI). Masyumi was finally dissolved by

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Soekarno in 1960. The dissolution of Masyumi made NU the only political representation of Muslims in the political competition dominated by the Soekarno-PKI-Army (AD) camp. This is the momentum for the NU as the biggest Islamic force against communism. Then, the Kiai drove NU organization to establish subsidiary organizations in almost all professional fields, competing with the PKI movement in building its organizational wing, as part of the arrangement of the Islamic political base. The Kiai's Islamic political dominance was evident in the DPR-GR composition where NU had 36 seats and simultaneously held strategic ministerial positions in the government and the Supreme Advisory Council (DPA).

When Sukarno fell and was replaced by Suharto in the so-called New Order era, the NU Kiai was treated with suspicion. This was due to the active participation of NU Kiai in the power of Guided Democracy, even though the PKI “eradication” force formed by the NU wing organization, Ansor, was active in East Java. Tensions between the New Order and the Muslim community, particularly a number of NU Kiai, escalated in the elections held by the New Order government in 1971. Certain intimidation from the government side was noticed against potential voters through the Golkar political party by utilizing the Armed Forces of the New Order government. This tension continued and frustrated the Islamic parties, especially NU, when the government decided to fuse parties on the grounds of simplifying the political system. Thus, the NU Kiai could not refuse when their party was forced to fuse with other Islamic parties into the United Development Party (PPP) in 1973. This fusion was a form of weakening the civilian party and fully controlling the government under the pretext of stability.

This fusion reminds me of the Masyumi movement. However, the Kiai from NU though had a significant bargaining power as seen from the number of votes obtained in the 1955 and 1971 elections which is the highest among other Islamic parties, so the dominance of the NU Kiai at

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47 Selamet Efendi Yusuf, Dinamika Kaum Santri (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1983), p. 112
48 Fealy, p. 78
49 Bruinessen, p. 34

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the beginning of the establishment of the PPP was still strong, including their political views. Kiai Bisyri Syamsuri, who at that time was PBNU's Rais Am, was appointed as Chairman of the PPP Syuro Council. At that time, the Kiai movement was more opposed to the government. This caused PPP and NU to be eliminated from the government circles. There was even a purge of PPP and NU people in the government, including those in the structure of the Ministry of Religion 50.

The PPP has been suspected of having had confrontations with the government several times. After conducting a “walkout” in 1978, PPP experienced considerable government interference. The NU Kiai eventually acknowledged the defeat by the PPP leader, Naro because they unilaterally prepared a list of candidates for the 1982 election in which the portion of NU members was drastically reduced, and most of the important NU members were placed at the bottom of the list, so they could not possibly be elected. Despite the strong protests, the list proposed by Naro is the one recognized by the government.

Myriads of political problems encouraged the NU Kiai to reconsider their people: empowerment and the religion of the people. So that at the 26th Congress in 1979, the Kiai agreed to re-think how the socio-economic life of the people they are responsible for, especially those affiliated with NU. In the congress, the concept of syuun ijtimaiyah was born. A year before the discourse on syuun ijtimaiyah was raised, a number of NU Kiai had formed the Islamic boarding schools and P3M (Community Development Institute). The Kiai who are coordinated in this association carry out their social functions in community empowerment. So, in large and important Islamic boarding schools located in important regions, the Kiai formed an agency called the "Development Bureau" that functioned as the basis for the activities of the TPM (Community Development Workers). This is where conceptual and organizational work is carried out for the implementation of the village development program. Here, the Kiai also collaborated with representatives from non-religious institutions (LP3ES, LSP and so on) as sponsors 51.

The NU Kiai informed the lower class people during the 27th Congress held in 1984 strongly prompting the resolution which sparked

50 Bruinessen, p. 86
the ‘khittah nahdiya’ movement announcing the ‘single principle of Pancasila’ as the base of the national constitution, not based on religion but which cannot be used to replace the position of religion”. Also, it unequivocally rejects the ideals of establishing an Islamic state that the government has eyed and which clearly demonstrates NU’s loyalty to the government. This was a turning point indicating the relationship between the NU Kiai and the state authorities 52. Such a relationship was enhanced in order to rid of the government suspicion, including ABRI, towards NU Kiai. Government officials were invited by influential Kiai in East Java to visit their Islamic boarding schools. Likewise, a number of influential Kiai were invited to attend Golkar recitation events or to come to the Palace.

The close collaboration between NU Kiai and the government caused an embodiment of PPP. Consequently, the results of the 1987 PPP election experienced a dramatic decline in vote acquisition. Kiai Abdurrahman Wahid was also in a confusing position when the government appointed him as a representative of Golkar in MPR. His nomination was merely symbolic because the MPR only existed for five years. No one rejected the nomination of Kiai Abdurrahman Wahid, but it was difficult for him to work closely with the NU since they reject the political practices given his position as Chairman of the PBNU as a result of Situbondo Congress. This fact reopened the debate about the "NU khittah". The debate continues as a result of dynamic politics. Even though Gus Dur was willing to become a member of the MPR, his attitude was still critical towards the government, criticizing the Kedung Ombo reservoir project in Central Java 53 54.

The debate continued on the 28th NU Congress in 1989. The Kiai and some political figures who were against the decree issued during the Situbondo Congress about the neutrality of NU, which was initially favorable to the government, decided to oppose and cancel the Congress. When Siddiq-Wahid was re-elected, it perpetuates previous decisions on the depoliticization of NU by the strict separation between NU and PPP which was hugely favored by President Soeharto, who was present at the

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52 Bruinessen, p. 98
53 Bruinessen, p. 85
54 Greg Barton, Biografi Gus Dur (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2002), 21

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Congress showing more generosity towards NU and leaving an impression as a leader who is culturally close to NU Kiai.\footnote{Bruinessen, p. 91}

The political reforms in 1998 opened the door for the Kiai to participate in political practices and processes. Their support for political parties’ formation allowing them to engage in politics showed a significant indication of Kiai being involved in politics. From there the National Awakening Party (PKB) was born which was fully supported by NU by involving NU Kiai at the central level known as the Team five, including Kiai Ma'ruf Amin (Rois Syuriah PBNU), Kiai Dawam Anwar (Katib Amm PBNU), H. Rozi Munir (Chairman of PBNU), Kiai Said Aqil (Deputy Katib), and H. Ahmad Bagja (Secretary-General of PBNU). Apart from that, there was also an assistance team consisting of all NU organization branches. The foundation of PKB automatically attracted many Kiai to be involved in politics whether those who were previously active in NU management or those who were only religious leaders at the Islamic boarding schools, from the central level to the regional level.\footnote{Effendi Choiri, *PKB, Politik Jalan Tengah NU, Eksperimentasi Pemikiran Islam Inklusif Dan Gerakan Kebangsaan Pasca Kembali Ke Khitttah 1926* (Jakarta: Pustaka Ciganjur, 2002), p 127}

The 1999 general election proved that the role of Kiai, both those who ran for the legislature candidate and those who simply supported, had significant votes of PKB ranking it fourth after PDI, Golkar Party and PPP.

The Kiai’s decision to preserve and keep Gus Dur as President of the Republic of Indonesia replacing President Habibi was simply a political decision that involved all the Kiai members at the parliament. This support though came from the central axis prompted by Amin Rais through parties’ coalition based on Muslim voters. Through an election involving MPR members, Gus Dur won the most votes ahead of Megawati.\footnote{Muhammad Sobari, *Gus Dur Di Istana Rakyat* (Jakarta: LKBN Antara, 2000), p. 46} When President Gus Dur resigned on July 21, 2001 as a result of the Bulogate and Brunaigate inquiry, the Kiai who were in PKB and those who were outside the political arena tried to thwart the Special Session by mobilizing a mass demonstration in Jakarta in front of the parliament and DPR/MPR (Parliament and People's Consultative Assembly of the

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\textsuperscript{55} Bruinessen, p. 91
\textsuperscript{56} Effendi Choiri, *PKB, Politik Jalan Tengah NU, Eksperimentasi Pemikiran Islam Inklusif Dan Gerakan Kebangsaan Pasca Kembali Ke Khitttah 1926* (Jakarta: Pustaka Ciganjur, 2002), p 127
\textsuperscript{57} Muhammad Sobari, *Gus Dur Di Istana Rakyat* (Jakarta: LKBN Antara, 2000), p. 46
Republic of Indonesia) building. Some troops who were ready to shed their lives came in order to defend Gus Dur from his presidency.

The support strength of Kiai during the 2004 presidential election, split into two because two candidates strongly represented NU at that time, and with two vice president candidates, namely Kiai Hasyim Muzadi and Kiai Salahudin Wahid. Kiai Hasyim’s position, who at that time Chairman of the PBNU, was massively criticized by Gus Dur camp and the Langitan axis, known as Kiai *khos* when Gus Dur announcing them during the Special Session (SS) regarding the presidential election of the transition regime in 1999. The Kiai members are: Kiai Abdullah Faqih (Langitan, Tuban), Kiai Abdullah Abbas (Buntet, Cirebon), Kiai Abdurrahman Khudlori (Tegalrejo, Magelang) and other East Java Kiai, like Kiai Mas Subadar (Pasuruan) Kiai Sholeh Qosim, Kiai Khotib Umar (Jember), Kiai Idris Hamid (Pasuruan), Kiai Anwar Iskandar (Kediri), Kiai Hamid Abdul Manan (Pamekasan), Kiai Nurul Huda and Kiai Munif Jazuli (Ploso), Kiai Nawawi Abdul Jalil (Sidogiri), Kiai Ja’far Yusuf (Sampang), Kiai Abdullah Ubaid (Langitan), and Kiai Lutfi abdul Hadi (Malang). The problem is not only about Kiai Hasyim but also concerning the fatwa forbidding women to become president.

The other groups supporting Kiai Hasyim's candidacy encouraged the emergence of Lirboyo axis including: Kiai Idris Marzuqi and Kiai Abdullah Kafabih (Lirboyo), Kiai Masduqi Mahfudz (Malang), Kiai Ali Masyhuri (Sidoarjo), Kiai Zainuddin Jazuli (Ploso), Kiai Abd. Ghofur (Lamongan), Kiai Hasyim Syaharga (Banyuwangi), Kiai Bashori Alwi (Malang), Kiai Mansur Sholeh (Jember), Kiai Zubair (Bangkalan), Kiai Muaffa Asyari (Pamekasan), Kiai Subadar (Pasuruan), Kiai Miftahul Ahyar (Surabaya) and others listed in the Medina Charter Document supporting the Kiai for the nomination of Megawati-Hasyim Muzadi (Noeh, 2014: 106-18). During the second round of the 2004 presidential election, the Langitan axis affirmed their neutrality because their candidate

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failed. The Kiai let the community to decide whether to support the pairs Mega-Hasyim or SBY-Kalla 60.

Then, the PKB camp split which prompted the creation of a new party from among the NU Kiai, namely the Ulama National Awakening Party (PKNU) in 2006. Initially, during the 2nd Congress in 2005, another incident occurred when some members of Kiai from the Langitan group including Gus Solah and Kiai Yusuf Hasyim, Tebuireng considered PKB as illegitimate. An election was held during the Congress which designated Gus Dur as Chairman of the Syuro Council and Muhaimin as General Chair of PKB 61. As a result, the peak of that incident occurred on March 31, 2007, where 17 Kiai from the Langitan axis declared the foundation of PKNU in front of the people and the Kiai at the Langitan Islamic Boarding School 62. PKNU participated during the 2009 elections even though it did not obtain the vote threshold during the central legislative elections. The PKNU no longer participated during the 2014 elections.

The following referendum to elect the Head of Region in 2015 strengthened the public appearance of Kiai to participate in the political arena. A number of Kiai or Nyai who participated in the election contested, including Gus Yasin, son of Kiai Maimun Zubair, paired with Ganjar Pranowo as Deputy Governor of Central Java, Kiai Fathul Huda (Tuban), Nyai Kartika Hidayati (Lamongan), Kiai Moch. Qosim (Gresik), Kiai Syaefuddin (Sidoarjo), Kiai Hamid Wahid and Kiai Fadil Muzakki (Situbondo), Kiai Busyro Karim and Nyai Dewi Khalifah (Sumenep), and in Jember Regency, Kiai Arief Muqiet who paired with Faidah 63.

The strength of Islamic identity on the Indonesian political scene 64 has recently attracted political observers and academics. Mass

60 Noeh, p. 92
62 Tim ELVEKA Institute, *Indonesia Negeri Kiai: KH. A. Sofyan Miftahul Arifin Bukan Kiai Kampung* (Surabaya: ELVEKA Institute, 2008), p. 21

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mobilization embedded with Islamic attributes demonstrated in several actions to defend Islam in the 2017 gubernatorial election in Jakarta and the 2019 presidential election. On the other hand, a moderate group of traditional Islam prompted another movement in response to holding more political events following the ideology from secular nationalists. Reminiscing back to historical records, these factions are convincing as non-perennial historical incidental facts. Based on incidents occurred after independence, this phenomenon is an indication demonstrating a significant transformation.

The Islamic identity exhibited in various areas in Indonesia including Jakarta, indicates the Islamic formalism activities that are used for certain purposes. "This is purely politics, not based on a religious spirit," said Kiai Ma'ruf Amin, Jokowi's running mate in the 2019 presidential election. A number of Kiai are also worried about it fearing that religion was used as a symbol to hide political interests by digging up the justification of arguments.

During the 2019 presidential election, Rois Amm PBNU, as a result of the 33rd Congress in 2015, Kiai Makruf Amin ran for Jokowi's representative. According to KPU decision on May 22, 2019, the pair Jokowi-Ma'ruf won the election as President and Vice President respectively in the next coming term. Observers commented on their victory as lucky pairs because Kiai Ma'ruf Amin was able to unite the NU voters in the 2019 presidential election.

E. CONCLUSIONS

Considering the values that are used as a foothold as well as the teachings formulated by the kiai in Islamic politics in Indonesia, it is not surprising that kiai's involvement in politics in Indonesia is deeply rooted.

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67 Jefferson Citation Nubowo, Andar; Ng, The Three Streams Facing Indonesian Muslims: Pulls of Politics (Singapore, 2019), p. 69
Especially if it is drawn to the pattern of struggle of the kiai in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries not only appear as a voice-raiser in practical politics, but more than that can formulate principles that refer to religiosity, philosophy and statesmanship as we can see from the triggers of kiai responding to the dynamics of politics in Indonesia.

On the other hand, the role of politics is nothing more than a vote getter. This is the anxiety of many people, especially supporters and sympathizers. In such cases, most kiai are only utilized by party machines or successful teams of candidates—although there can be contracts or reciprocal material gains through government program projects. Kiai's role is limited to vote getter has uprooted the roots of kiai subtansi as a guide of the ummah and monitor in the formulation of strategic principles carried by the party and candidate pairs in the election. The most prominent impact felt by the grassroots is the struggle for influence between kiai, thus dividing the community.

This phenomenon caused uncertainty for the community about their choice. For those who were used holding rational thinking about the ideal function of the institutions that constitute the structure of society, they would consider Kiai as role models, spiritual teachers and teachers. In contrast, those who hold superficial mindset, would experience problems not only for themselves but also for the increasingly murky political competition, especially if supported by social media.

This study is to rethink and evaluate the involvement of Kiai in the political arena. The religious vision or religious politics that has become a tradition should be used as guidance in the Kiai's involvement in practical politics as has been echoed by his predecessors. In addition, this study provides a complete picture of the political Islam of the Kiai, which is tinged more or less by clashes between the NU Kiai themselves. This needs to be a concern for the Kiai circles in order to maintain the unity of the people and to focus more on the goals in Islamic politics, namely the benefit of the ummah and countering all efforts that can divide the unity of the nation.
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