

Religio-politics of Islamic Group in the Contestation of 2019 Indonesian Presidential Election

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Abstract

In spite of the fact that Islamic identity politics is not a new theme in Indonesia, this phenomenon is increasing in the public sphere after the 1998 reform. This is marked by the frequent use of religious issues in the political contestations such as the 2017 DKI Jakarta Gubernatorial election and the 2019 Presidential election. In the DKI election, certain Islamic groups demanded Basuki Tjahaya Purnama, who from the double minority group, as a subject due to blasphemy issue. However, in 2019 Presidential election which Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto rematched for the second candidacy, religious issues were also raising. Political contestation continued despite the fact that the two presidential candidates are Muslim. This interesting fact certainly raises the question of the phenomenon of national politics which leads not only to the strengthening of Islamic identity politics but also the identity politics between Islamic groups in Indonesia. Based on field studies, literatures and interviews, this study will discuss the construction process of the identity politics of Islamic groups against social and political reality nowadays, moreover in the 2019 Presidential Election. In contrast to the other researches that still focuses on why identity politics arises, this research will examine the construction process, moreover in the 2019 Presidential election.

Keywords

Islamic Groups; Identity Politics; Constructivism

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Identity politics is not a new phenomenon in Indonesia, but this phenomenon was skyrocketed after 1998s

political reform. The phenomenon marked with the emergence of various Islamic parties in the general election based on multiple parties in the 1999s. Also, the legal need to implement Islamic Syari'ah in Indonesia based on Islamic parties such as PKS (Prosperous Justice Party/Partai Keadilan Sejahtera), PPP (United Development Party/Partai Persatuan Pembangunan), and PBB (Crescent Star Party/Partai Bulan Bintang) at the beginning of the reformation (Maarif et al.,

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2010). In addition, the emergence of anti-mainstream Islamic group such as (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia/Indonesian Mujahedeen Council), Laskar Jihad, and Front Pembela Islam/Islam Defender Front (FPI) that insisted on the establishment of Islamic *syaria* and by identifying their group as the movement that hold the tenet of Islam, such as “enjoining good deed and forbidding wrong” “*amar ma’ruf nahi munkar*” (Maarif et al., 2010).

The resurgence of identity politics was also marked by the rise issues of SARA (ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group) that politically commodi-fied in the contestation of regional election (Pilkada), legislative election (Pileg) up to presidential election. The main purpose of playing this issue is raising the electability of certain candidates. For example, is in the presidential election in 2019, where Islamic identity politics were more expressive than the previous election in 2014. The second match and the repeated candidacy of Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto as presidential candidate in 2019 have stirred public emotion and raised the tension of each

group. Indeed, both Prabowo Subianto and Joko Widodo are Muslim.

Departing the fact that Islamic identity politics and the interest of inter-groups in the 2019 presidential election were getting stronger, the issue of identity is relevant to the social and political situation in Indonesia today. By applying the constructivism approach in the context of International Relations, this paper will focus on how identity politics construction affect Islamic groups political activism related to 2019 Presidential election, such as NU (Nahdlatul Ulama), Muhammadiyah, FPI (Islam Defenders Front), FUI (Forum of Islamic Community), and GNPF (National Movement of Fatwa Guard), etc.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Research Method

This research paper is based on the obtained data from various literatures and interviews, both personal documentation based on the direct interviews with relevant sources and the data obtained from digital track records on social media platforms, such K.H. Said Aqil Siradj, Din Syamsuddin, Alimatul Qibtiyah (LPPA (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pimpinan Pusat Aisyiah), Cholid Mahmud (DPD RI Yogyakarta), etc.

Technically, this study adopted an interactive model analysis technique developed by Miles and Huberman

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(1994), which is selecting and processing existing field data, either in the form of direct interviews or interview results obtained from comprehensive secondary data. The Huberman and Miles model include three things, specifically data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. This research prioritizes a qualitative approach due to the fact that the scope of the problem is complex and involves many Islamic groups.

In addition, this paper also relooks at previous research, for example, Debora L. Sanur's writing in her article entitled "Reconciliation of Indonesian Identity Politics". Sanur argued that to minimize the strengthening of identity politics in Indonesia, reconciliation from all parties, including religious leaders, community leaders, and the government through legislative, executive and judicative by preparing the law instruments (Sanur, 2017).

While Ali Maschan Moesa's research, departing from social science studies with a sociological scientific approach to examine the social construction of NU Kiai about nationalism after the New Order. In his dissertation, Moesa used Berger's social construction theory and concluded that the social construction of the Kiai is divided into three typologies:

'*fundamentalist kiai*', '*moderate kiai*' as the majority group, and '*pragmatic kiai*' (Sanur, 2017).

Based on the results of his research, Moesa argued that '*fundamentalist kiai*' and '*pragmatic kiai*' tend to be more frontal and extreme in dealing with religious issues. According to Ali Maschan Moesa, it was influenced by their educational background who had received education in the Middle East. Meanwhile, Moesa considers '*moderate Kiai*' calmer in responding to religious issues in Indonesia, in light of the fact that their local educational background that is more adaptable to local values (Moesa, 2006). In spite of the fact that his research talks about social construction related to nationalism, Moesa's research is considered relevant to the theme of identity politics, due to the reason that nationalism itself describe for the political identity of a group in society.

Furthermore, another research from the approach of sociological scholarship, Fitri Ramdhani Harahap, argues that the sense of identity triggers religious social conflict in light of the fact that there is a grouping that makes some groups feel different from other groups and vice versa (Harahap, 2014). Their interpretation of his group gave birth to superiority in the name of religion by the doctrine that their existence was God's will so that it was

more special compared to other groups. Harahap concluded, in the context of Indonesia, this interpretation of religious identity was then transformed into identity politics that could be mobilized as a source of political power, both by minority groups and the majority to achieve their interests (Gürbüz, 2004).

Based on the research above, there are many studies on identity politics, but according to the authors, these studies are still general. This is due to the fact that these studies are still focused on why the phenomenon of religious identity politics is a rise, not on how the construction process of identity politics itself. Thus, this research is expected to provide a new discourse in seeing social and political dynamics in Indonesia, moreover the close relationship between religion and politics in public spaces such as the 2019 presidential election.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Identity Politic: Opportunity and Threat

Based on a constructivism approach, the idea and the narration of Islamic identity politics socially constructed, then this paper perceives that the identities, interests, and behavior of Islamic groups (actors/agents) both from Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto group are socially constructed by collective meanings,

interpretations, and assumptions. Thus, based on constructivism's view, the identity politics of Islamic groups in the 2019 presidential election is the consequence of a social construction process, not a given or coincidence. Hence, this research is expected to provide a new discourse in seeing social and political dynamics in Indonesia, moreover the close relationship between religion and politics in the public sphere such as in the 2019 presidential election.

Since the explanation of constructivism approach is complex and included multiple variants, this paper will focus on the section used to identify the topic by applying the classic constructivist approach of 'wendtian'. The basic assumptions of constructivism include two things, specifically: (1) The dimensions of ideas determine the structure of human relations more than material dimensions and (2) The identities and interests are constructed by ideas rather than '*given by nature*' (Wendt, 1999). This invisible idea is more important than material due to the fact that "*material will only have meaning through a structure of understanding along with shared knowledge wherever they are*" (Wendt, 1995). An Idea can be identified as true-false according to each individual then articulated in collective actions and statements through inter-subjectivity processes (Wendt, 1995). The logic of

constructivism emphasizes knowledge distribution or inter-subjectivity-*shared understanding*, and on the contrary, realists emphasize the distribution of capabilities between actors (Rosyidin, 2016).

From the abovementioned explanation, according to constructivism identity is one of the main keys to understand social phenomena. Identity in the constructivism idea is actually adapted from the concept of identity in psychology and sociology, which is understood into two categories, explicitly: personal identity and social identity. Personal identity defined as "*attributes or a characteristic inherent in the actor and the existence is without differentiation process*" (Rosyidin, 2016) The Identity in this category is self-awareness in which the actor recognizes without inter-subjectivity, such as ethnicity, religion, and so on so forth.

On the other hand, social identity means attributes or characteristics that distinguish a group of the community from other parties. Specifically, in the perspective of social psychology, social identity interpreted as the concept of society that distinguished about who they are, how do they look at, and how they relate to others (Abrams & Hogg, 2006) and also about the distinction in which the individuals and certain groups make social relations with other individuals and groups

(Jenkins, 2014) This concept is in accordance with the concept of identity proposed by Katzenstein (1996) that identity is distinguishing between 'self' and 'other' which are constructed by individuals or groups and implies interests as well as threats to other individuals or groups that are always dynamic and constantly modified through interaction with other parties.

The definition also refers to the concept of identity in constructivism perspective in which the identity is not given and this is different from the primordial perspective, but identity is changeable. Social identity is change-able depending on the meaning in the interaction process, but personal identity is relatively static in light of the fact that it does not require inter-subjectivity to define the self. In addition, personal identity also does not need a differentiation process, due to the reason that "*the actor acts on his own will and purpose without considering his position in the social context*" (Stets & Burke, 2008).

The simple explanation of social identity in Wendt's view is "*self-understanding and expectations derived from interaction and self-definition in relation to structures that consist of social relations, meanings, rules, norms, and certain practices*" (Soejipto, 2015). Identity

is a self-prescriptive representation of political actors and about their relations (*self-other*) with each other (Katzenstein, 1996). The term identity (based on convention) refers to the construction process and development of self-images and -other (Katzenstein, 1996).

Wendt perceives identity as subjectivity; *"something that is inherent in actors intentionally to produce behavioral motivations and dispositions and is rooted in self-understanding"* (Katzenstein, 1996). According to Wendt; *"identity is relatively constant by understanding the specific roles and expectations about oneself"* (Wendt, 1992). Nonetheless, understanding the identity is not solely on 'subjectivity or unit level' which is as simple as self-understanding. Identity also takes on understanding and representation from other parties, so the quality of identity is determined by 'inter-subjectivity or systemic' and its construction both internal and external (Wendt, 1994). Identity is the product of construction in the process of interaction with other parties (*significant other*) (Rosyidin, 2018).

Furthermore, identity does not differ between self and other or about the way individuals and groups perceive the others, but according to Raffery and Mansbach (2012), identity also means the perception of an individual, other people or other groups in defining 'I', 'He', 'They',

and 'We'. For further explanation, each individual and group has multiple identities (Raffery & Mansbach, 2012), in which each identity is a reflection of a set of interests. Thus, the conflicts among these identities are possible, due to the fact that religious identities, class identities, and non-state identities can overlap with individual identities such as citizenship and loyalty to the state (Raffery & Mansbach, 2012). For example, it is the identity of Islamic groups such as FPI that in an effort to enforce Islamic law in Indonesia. Within the effort and interest, it can be interpreted that their identity is overlapping with their loyalty to Pancasila and state.

In addition, if the identity has a question about *"who or what actors are,"* the interesting design is *"what actors want"* and shows motivation from the actors/action. According to Wendt, *"Interest presuppose identities because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is, and since identities have varying degrees of cultural content so will interest"* (Wendt, 1999). Without interest, identity has no 'motivation power' and unable to explain the *action* that was a combination of *desire* and *belief* (Wendt, 1999).

The practice of the actions of actors is not only shaped by identity but the actions also shape the identity itself. Identity shapes the interests of the actors, and then the interests determine the actions/

behaviors of the actors and eventually shape the identity and so on so forth. The identity can also be a reference of actor relation and reveal the effect of these relations on the actors and society. Further, the effects can also be a reference to understand social phenomena occur in society both positively and negatively

Thus, the process of identity politics construction has linked to the perceptions, ideas, meaning, social norms and the personal-collective interactions to others and their social situations. These processes influence the actions of Islamic groups in interpreting their worldview socially and politically. In the context of 2019 presidential election, this worldview plays to interpret the opportunities and the threat of their existence. In addition, the process of identity politics construction was also influenced by the interaction with others, and that is where the social learning process takes place. In the constructivism, identity can be a standard to explain the relationship between the identity politic construction and the actions. For the reason that identities determine interests, which then play significant role in shaping the behavior/actions of the actors.

Moderate Islamic Group in 2019 Presidential Election

Before discussing the topic in this sec-

tion, the authors need to be underlined that this paper prioritizes formal data which contain statements, moreover from the official web, the mainstream media, and so on since this research uses a constructivist approach. While the 'moderate groups' in this paper referred to Muhammadiyah and NU that also the result of their identity construction as the two largest Islamic groups in Indonesia. Therefore, the consequences of this study (constructivism approach) will refer more to moderate factions both in Muhammadiyah and NU compared to other factions or variants in both organizations. Despite of the fact that, the authors do not intend to rule out the fact that in the two mass organizations there are also other factions, such as liberal, radical, etc.

During the campaign of 2019 presidential election, it was difficult to find the neutral Islamic groups, and seemingly all groups had decided on their political standpoint, either supporting or not supporting one of the presidential candidates and to keep conducive situation. Some of Islamic group may absent and had declared for leaving practical politics. Surely, in the fact that is also a political choice by taking the role of preaching (*dakwah*) or perhaps they were apathetic for having different agenda. Despite the fact that NU and

Muhammadiyah, the two largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, held a joint meeting to determine their standpoint at the 2019 presidential election. Both agreed to be neutral and not supporting one of the candidates. Moreover, both of them are often identified with certain candidates, NU is close to Joko Widodo-KH. Ma'ruf Amin and Muhammadiyah are close to Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno.

In an interview with Haedar Nashir, chairman of Muhammadiyah, Nashir stated that it was a misleading perception that Muhammadiyah and NU were identified with one of the candidates. Nashir also emphasized that the standpoint of Muhammadiyah and NU remained neutral from politics. Similarly, the General Secretary of Muhammadiyah, Abdul Mu'ti, ahead before Muhammadiyah *tanwir* (conference) in Bengkulu on February 17-19th, 2019, Mu'ti expressed that Muhammadiyah is consistent as a *da'wah* movement that respected politic of nationality rather than a political party and absent for recommendations or support to one of the candidates (Raharjo, 2019).

In spite of the fact that this neutral standpoint was criticized by Amien Rais who is also a Muhammadiyah figure and Honorary Council Chairman of the PAN (National Mandate Party/Partai Amanat Nasional). Amien Rais encouraged Muhammadiyah to take a clear position in

the contestation of 2019 presidential election (Retaduari et al., 2018). Despite of the fact that having different views, Muhammadiyah keeps neutrality and Amien Rais's view is a natural view in the organization. Definitely, it is well known that Amien Rais is supporting Prabowo Subianto, as well as PAN, which since 2014 presidential election has been an ally to Gerindra (Great Indonesia Movement Party/Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya) led by Prabowo Subianto.

The neutral standpoint of NU in 2019 presidential election was clearly said during the *halaqah* (meeting) of NU *Dzurriyah* (descendants of the founder) and the number of scholars in Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School, Jombang, East Java on October 24, 2018. The caretakers of Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School, KH. Solahudin Wahid (Gus Sholah) stated that there were three taken decisions at the meeting; *First* is insisting NU remain on the *khithah* (decree) of 1926 as decided at 26th *mu'tamar* (conference) in 1979 and confirmed in the 27th *mu'tamar* (conference) of NU in Situbondo 1984. Second, NU does not involve in any kind of practical politics, political party as well as tool of power struggle. Third, NU fellows are free to take decision of their political choices according to their conscience (Fauzi, 2018). Gus Sholah underlined that NU is not affiliated with any of presidential

candidates in the 2019 presidential election.

The similar statement was also by KH. Said Aqil Siradj, Chairperson of the PBNU (Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board). KH. Said Aqil Siradj stated that NU's position is neutral during the presidential election. Nevertheless, if there are NU figures that support one of the candidates, they do not represent NU as a whole. In spite of the fact that, Said Aqil's statement is in contrary to the fact NU supports Joko Widodo. The news covered by national media was that NU and PKB leaders agreed to withdraw support for Jokowi Widodo if his running mates outside NU's cadre or keep choosing Mahfud MD as a vice president (Fathurohman, 2018). At the end, the polemic in the coalition ended with a surprising drama when Joko Widodo announced KH. Ma'ruf Amin for his running mate. Certainly, Amin is the chairman of MUI, senior politicians and also *Rais' Aam Syuriah of NU* (Advisory chairman of NU). Therefore, it is acceptable if NU and PKB have a significant role in KH. Ma'ruf Amin as Jokowi's running mate. While the cancellation of Mahfud MD as Jokowi's running mate, KH. Aqil Said Siraj clarified that the threat of withdrawing NU's support to Joko Widodo was not his idea, but Robikin Emhas's personal statement,

as Chairman of the PBNU (Wildansyah, 2019).

NU and Muhammadiyah were consistently stated that they liberated their fellow to support either Joko Widodo or Prabowo Subianto. Nonetheless, the gestures of the figures of both were not, remarkably NU. That is linked that KH. Ma'ruf Amin is an influential scholar in NU. Thus, it is natural that NU's political machine works to support him as a vice president. Political observer, Ujang Komarudin, said that "NU figures such as Khofifah Indah Parawansa, who now serves as Governor of East Java, Saifullah Yusuf (Gus Ipul), and Yenny Wahid, daughter of KH. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) managed to consolidate Nahdhiyin (Nu's fellow) by the identical language of NU, namely "Ngaji Kebangsaan" (Nationality Preaching) (Qodar, 2019). This is an effective way to consolidate NU's fellow in East Java, a regional basis of NU and PKB that supporting Joko Widodo-KH. Ma'ruf Amin for the presidential election of 2019.

At the surface, it seems the majority of NU's figure and fellow were supporting Joko Widodo, but there were also NU figures that supported Prabowo Subianto such as the figure of the Al-Farros Islamic Boarding School, KH. Irfan Yusuf Hasyim or familiarly called Gus Irfan, as a spokesperson for the BPN (Badan Pemenangan Nasional/National Winning

Agency) Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno's. Gus Irfan is the grandson of one of the founders of NU, KH Hasyim Asyari (Carina, 2018). Nevertheless, when compared to other NU figures supporting Joko Widodo, this support is not that significant (Sihaloho, 2018). Also, the support came from KH. Lutfi Bashori to Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno and he is the figure of NU GL (Garis Lurus/Straight Line). Indeed, NU GL is often considered as out of NU, and Bashori's support to Prabowo is personal choice (Fauzi, 2018).

Similarly, Muhammadiyah institutionally closes to Prabowo Subianto's camp, but some Muhammadiyah cadres, figures, and activists also joined the TKN (National Campaign Team) of Joko Widodo. Such as Muhammadiyah activists who are members of Rumah Indonesia Berkemajuan (Progressive Indonesia House) and Raja Juli Antoni, former Chairman of Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM) and former Director of the Muhammadiyah PP Amil Zakat Institute, Khoirul Muttaqin. However, and certainly the nuances of Muhammadiyah in Joko Widodo's camp are weaker compared to the central influential figures who in Muhammadiyah such as Amien Rais, Dahnil Anzar, Chairman of Muhammadiyah Youth, and Suyatno, and General Treasurer of Muhammadiyah Central Board. Based on information from the chairperson of the

LPPA (Central Leadership Research and Development Institute) Muhammadiyah, Dr. Alimatul Qibtiyah, Muhammadiyah tends to support Joko Widodo if he chooses his vice-presidential candidate neither from NU nor Muhammadiyah, but from figures who are not affiliated with any mass organizations, like Mahfud MD. While the survey result such as Indo Barometer, LSI (Indonesian Survey Institute) and Indikator Politics shows that voters who affiliated to Muhammadiyah more support Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno, while Nahdliyin more support Joko Widodo-KH.Ma'ruf Amin (Mursid, 2019; Putri, 2019). These surveys also disclose that NU community and leaders were more persistent and clearer cut to support Joko Widodo-KH. Ma'ruf Amin than Muhammadiyah does. Surely, the number of some Muhammadiyah leaders were openly expressed their support for Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno.

Labeling Islamic Group as "Intolerant" in the Presidential Contestation 2019

Since the presidential election in 2014, the issue of religion has become an effective black campaign to attack each other's, presidential candidates. In spite of the fact that the identity politics of religion is not declining at the contestation of 2019 presidential election. Definitely, each candidate then gets strong political

support from the Islamic groups affiliated with them. Certainly, the interplay issues of religion and politics are always an open-ended debate, moreover in Islam. That is according to common Muslim in Indonesia, Islam is 'the way of life', and that covers many aspects including the matter of politics and the state. Borrowing the concept of NU and Muhammadiyah, the politics of nationality is a legal responsibility for Muslims, but the politics of power or party are not an obligation. Yet, the Indonesian tends to see that the religion (Islam) and politics are close to some certain religious organizations, such as Muhammadiyah that close to PAN and NU that closes to PKB. Nevertheless, religion plays a significant role in history through collective conscience, while the politics influence history with decisions, power, and war (Saputro, 2018).

Interestingly in the 2019 presidential election, the support of Islamic organizations outside the NU and Muhammadiyah is more vivacious than in the 2014 presidential election. Surely, they have been monitoring the presidential election campaign starting earlier on September 23, 2018, ago. The 212 demonstrations are an opening for Islamic mass organizations identical with violence and intolerance such as FPI and religious groups such as FUI, GNPF, and PA 212.

Specifically, for 212, it will be discussed in the next section.

Following the discussion of political contestation deeper, FPI has transformed as political engine outside the political parties that support Prabowo-Sandiago Uno. Certainly, FPI's support for Prabowo Subianto has been relatively consistent since 2014. Only in the 2014 presidential election, political action of FPI was by supporting PKS and PPP, the Islamic parties that supporting Prabowo Subianto. FPI believes that Prabowo was a potential candidate to realize the aspirations of FPI by succeeding more *sharia* regulations and to endorse the existence of FPI to do the movement of *nahi munkar* (forbidding wrongdoing) in Indonesia. Within this context, any Islamic group that against the Islamic view of FPI supposed to be banned, including Islamic groups considered heretical, such as Ahmadiyah. Due to the fact that FPI is synonymous with violence, former Muhammadiyah chairman Ahmad Syafii Maarif once called FPI a 'robed thug' (Saat, 2018). In addition, Amin Abdullah, a former rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga, called Rizieq Shihab as noisy minority for his attempt to achieve *sharia* enforcement (Saat, 2018). In spite of the fact that FPI in many regions is always unstructured, such as FPI Madura

which is polite and has a good relationship with NU (Hamdi, 2013).

FPI is relatively a new mass organization and just established since 1998, four months after the fallen of Soeharto regime on August 17, 1998s. Certainly, the establishment of FPI is inseparable from the social and political context that Indonesian politic was freed from an authoritarian government. As happened, New Order implemented a political of containment aimed at limit Islamic group's movement. The fall down of Soeharto regime was momentum as well as an opportunity for FPI to move forward as a movement believed to save the Islamic community in Indonesia from difficulty (Ng, 2006).

Rizieq Shihab, the priest and the founder of FPI was the central figure of this movement. He is an Arab descent (*hadrami*) and *sayyid* (descendant of the Prophet) who received his education at LIPIA (Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences) (Ricklefs, 2008). He is also the main actor who mobilized FPI's political existence at the national level, such as in the context of regional election in 2017 and presidential election is 2019. FPI has successfully managed the political situation on a national scale. In 2019, FPI's support to Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno is not free, the interests are clearly stated in the integrity pact agreed with the Ulama

(Muslim scholars) affiliated to support Prabowo-Sandiago Uno. As the initiator of PA 212, Rizieq plays significant role in the emergence of Islamic identity politics. Surely, some of made political choices were decided by FPI, such as *ijtima ulama* (ulama' congress) that intervned the candidate to be mate of Prabowo Subianto. Certainly, the *ijtima ulama* were expected to influence the choice of Islamic community in the 2019 presidential election. Definitely, Muslim is the largest voter and is automatically determining the victory of the election.

The support of FPI to Prabowo Subianto in 2019 was tendentious. The administration of Joko Widodo (2014-2019), gives no room for intolerant groups such as FPI. Certainly, some of FPI's actions were opposing and against the presidential regulation. HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia), a group that considered threatening the ideology of Pancasila was banned through a decree signed by Joko Widodo in 2017. Consequently, under the regulation of Jokowi, FPI as an intolerant group may also be banned. The idea of banning FPI was initiated by the community, activists, NGO, and the figures in DPR (legislative assembly) who oppose the idea of FPI. Nonetheless banning FPI is certainly opposing the idea of democracy for against the right of freedom of association, and surely NU and

Muhammadiyah were organizations that opposing the ban of FPI. An organization such as FPI can be protected in the name of freedom of association; the basic reason is that the organization should be protected, but the action and the actors who did violence must be punished (Cholil, 2010). Therefore, the solution to the problem of FPI is the enforcement of law firmly.

Nevertheless, another problem appears when the authorities made legal remedies, such as the case of Habib Bahar bin Smith and Habib Rizieq, the law was narrated as the criminalization of *ulama*. This narration was also for some religious figures that supported Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno, such as Haikal Hassan, Bachtiar Nashir, Muhammad Al Khatthath also well known as Muhammad Gatot Saptono, and Sugi Nur. Surely, the police will not process the law without prior reports from the community. Indeed, legal cases must be seen objectively, and the criminalization of a particular community is undoubtedly violating the law.

During the government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004-2014), Habib Rizieq had been imprisoned, and the narration of criminalization of *ulama* when Abu Bakar Baasyir imprisoned on the charge of terrorism did not exist. Hence, the narration of criminalization of the

ulama could be a narration created by political entrepreneurs and an opportunity to attract more massive sympathy from the Islamic community in the context of 2019s presidential election. Recently, Habib Rizieq was still in Mecca, Saudi Arabia and even in spite of the fact that the investigation of his case had been stopped.

In addition to FPI, FUI (Forum Ummat Islam) and GNPF (National Movement of Fatwa Guard), many Ulama have also openly expressed their support for Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno. FUI is currently chaired by Muhammad Al Khatthath who was previously an HTI activist and had become one of HTI leaders (2002-2004). HTI is considered as a hardline Islamic group, for its ideology that opposing Pancasila. HTI then is transformed into political activist that struggle outside the parliament to convey their ideas about Khilafah to the public. HTI itself has been banned in twenty-one (21) countries for triggering social and religious conflicts and threatening democracy. Nevertheless, HTI's action is smoother than FPI. Before the banning, HTI's strategy of preaching is more among educated people by initiating the ideas of caliphs, moreover in the non-religious universities in Indonesia.

Whereas, FUI based on a report from INFID (International Forum on NGO of Indonesian Development) on June 2016, said that FUI, as an organization, was formed in 2012. FUI is an organization that brings together a number of Islamic organizations. The formation was based on an action in Yogyakarta demanding the ban of a discussion with a Muslim feminist from Canada, Irshad Manji (Akbar, 2019). Similar to FPI, FUI was also a group of hardline Muslim organization that opposing the idea of pluralism.

Nevertheless, the GNPF Ulama or GNPF MUI was created when the issue of blasphemy by DKI Jakarta Governor, Basuki Tjahaya Purnama on October 26, 2016. At that time, GNPF was one of the initiators that mobilized Islamic defense action or known as 212 actions in accordance with the date on 2 December 2016. The action was attracting national and international attention. As Basuki Tjahaya Purnama charged based on the law of blasphemy, GNPF-MUI was not stopping but transforming into an organization to support presidential candidate Prabowo-Sandiago Uno. The role of GNPF continues and it had successfully influenced the political and psychological situation of voters in the Jakarta Gubernatorial Election. Surely, the action also affected the electability of Anies Baswedan-Sandiago Uno who was supported by the Gerindra

Party, PKS, and PAN and defeated Basuki Tjahaya Purnama.

Seemingly, FPI, FUI, and GNPF were expecting the political nuances and atmosphere of the presidential election as the same as Jakarta gubernatorial election. The collaboration between Islamic mass organizations and the opposition parties remain solid and as a momentum of rise to the national scale. At the end of 212 actions, the mass organizations have transformed as political movements and at the same time transformed as an effective instrument for building identity politics. These mass organizations attempt the succeed their interest in building Islamic Republic of Indonesia.

The narration that Joko Widodo government is an anti-Islam president, criminalizing the ulama has inevitably developed into a 'post-truth' during the 2019 presidential election campaign. This religious sentiment is often produced by the supporter of Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno. This narration influenced significantly the electability of each candidate. Based on the data survey released by LSI Denny JA, there is a significant decline in the electability of Joko Widodo-KH. Ma'ruf Amin in the Muslim voters, contrarily Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno has increased significantly LSI said that hoaxes played important role in reducing the electability of Joko Widodo,

moreover about his view in opposing Islam. In the survey released in August 2018, Joko Widodo's electability reached 52.7 percent but then decreased to 49.5 percent in January 2019. On the contrary, Prabowo-Sandiaga Uno experienced significant rise from August 2018 which was only 27.9 percent to 35.9 percent in January 2019. From these data, it can be seen that identity politics works effectively to give an advantage for one candidate and disadvantage for the other. Surely, it is fair to say that some Islamic groups supporting Prabowo play major role in identity politics.

The Action of 212: from regional election of Jakarta 2017 to Presidential election in 2019

The role of Islamic groups in Indonesian politics is actually common, but their roles are limited by giving support to certain prospective leaders explicitly-implicitly. In spite of the fact that the development of Indonesian politics after the issue of the gubernatorial Jakarta elections at the end of 2016-2017, identity politics issues were expanding and became an inevitable part of the social and political set in Indonesia. The case attracted national and international attention for the issue of *Sara* (ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup relations).

Basuki Tjahaya Purnama is considered disdaining Islam after his speech in the Pramuka islands on 27 September 2016. His view on Surat Al Maidah: 51 become viral on social media after a part of video was uploaded by Buni Yani on 6th October 2016. This video then becomes the main reference for huge number of demonstrations initiated by the Islamic groups such as FPI that under the command of Rizieq Shihab and GNPf-MUI (Before its change to GNPf Ulama) led by Ust. Bachtiar Nasir (and then substituted by Yusuf Martak). The demonstration was then known as Islamic defense action, in 212, 411 and 313.

In spite of the fact that Basuki Tjahaya Purnama has apologized to the Islamic community, his legal case continues and he was convicted for violating blasphemous law. Similarly, Buni Yani was also violating Article 32 paragraph 1 of the ITE Law (Law on Information and Electronic Trans-actions) in a decision at the Bandung District Court ([Alfons, 2016](#)). The uploaded video evoked the issue of blasphemy and it is often associated with the loss of Basuki Tjahaya Purnama as an incumbent in the 2017 gubernatorial election.

Interestingly, both the 411 and 212 actions were supported by political elites from opposition parties, such as Gerindra Party (Great Indonesia Movement), PKS,

and PAN. Even Fadli Zon, Fahri Hamzah, and Amien Rais gave speeches during the action. Hence, the action was Islamic but also has political motive and interest. The interplay between religion and politics intensified by accusing the government of Joko Widodo as an anti-Islam.

By the end of Jakarta gubernatorial election, the member of 212 actions had transformed into an identity politics movement that influences the voter in the presidential election. Many actions carried out on behalf of 212 reunions, such as *munajat* 212 (congregation for worship) which is allegedly more political than preaching. In addition, these Islamic group members of the GNPF (National Movement of Fatwa Guard) then use the term "*ijtima' ulama* (congregation of Ulama) to reinforce the politics of Islamic identity in the 2019 presidential election.

Likewise, to the 212 action, the *ijtima' ulema* (the congregation of Ulama) was also carried out in parts. First *ijtima' ulama* on 27-29 July recommended Prabowo Subianto as a presidential candidate and Salim Segaf Al-Jufri from PKS or Ustadz Abdul Somad as a vice-presidential candidate. Nonetheless Prabowo had chosen Sandi Uno as his vice-presidential candidate. As first *ijtima' Ulama* was unsuccessful, moreover the recommendation of the vice-presidential candidate, then Prabowo Subianto agreed

to an integrity pact in the second *ijtima' Ulama*. Whereas the third *ijtima' ulama* was held on 1 May 2019, and asking Bawaslu (Election Supervisory Agency) and KPU (General Election Commission) to disqualify Joko Widodo and KH. Ma'ruf Amin. The Chairperson of the GNPF, Yusuf Martak, argues that the 2019 Presidential Election was full of fraud so thus the result is invalid.

The fraud narration of presidential election had been mentioned by Prabowo-Sandi's campaign team (BPN) and his supporting preacher since the campaign period. Hence, when the quick count results released by several survey institutions and Joko Widodo and KH. Ma'ruf Amin led the election; the issue of fraud was increasingly exposed to the public.

The debate over the actions of 212 up to *ijtima' ulama* III was strengthening an academic discourse that the GNPF, FUI, and FPI as initiators were able to influence the psychology of community from the case of Basuki's speech video to becoming the frontline for the opposition during the presidential election campaign. Here I see that the polarization formed during the gubernatorial election still left dissatisfaction among Islamic groups and their supporters, moreover against Basuki. Certainly, it is an inevitable fact that Basuki is a double minority, a Christian and a

Chinese descent. The risen sentiment was not only triggered by the spirit of defending Islam, but also the historical factor of the relationship between the natives and Chinese descendants since colonial era. On the other hand, there are also *habibs* (Prophet Muhammad Descent) and scholars in the GNPF who are Arabian descent. Both Chinese and Arab are Indonesian citizens of descent. Then, the Islamic factor becomes the most influential on the escalation of religious sentiment and community polarization. Surely, the contestation also happened among the Muslims themselves. Among the Muslims are people who have emotional attachment to the groups supporting Prabowo-Sandi and some of them attached to kiai from middle Islamic groups such as NU. Definitely, NU gives open support to Joko Widodo-KH. Ma'ruf Amin and without leaving the spirit of nationality.

Hate Speech, Hate Spin, and Religious Sentiment or Unity Islam in the Presidential Election 2019?

The social and political realities in the context of 2019 presidential election show that the identity politics, moreover Islam plays a significant role in the victory of the candidate. Both Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto camps have used identity politics with certain religious

symbols and Islamic organizations during the campaign of 2019 presidential election. The digital track record of Islamic groups or scholars affiliated to certain candidates is strong evidence that undeniable. Their supports can be easily found on various social media platforms, both online such as Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp group and offline.

However, and unfortunately the sharing statement for supporting or bringing down for one of the candidates is carried out by *Ulama* (preachers). Then, their capacity as *ulama* in the social context is questioned for also carried out a political function. Indeed, these *ulama* are giving speeches from mosque to mosque with the similar narration of bringing down particular parties. Surely, based on social status, politicians are different from Ulama, for politicians speak for their interest in political practice. Yet, the Ulama were constructed for guiding the *ummah* (Islamic community). The produced statements are often in contradiction. As it is known that PKS was one of Joko Widodo's supporters when nominating the mayor of Solo and Gerindra was one of the promoters of Joko Widodo when he was nominated as Governor of Jakarta in 2012.

In addition, never-ending hate speech and hoaxes of religious sentiments were easier to find on social media since the

presidential election in 2014 up to 2019. Based on the digital conversation, an executive director of Political Wave, said that the hoaxes attacked Joko Widodo in 2019 had multiplied into 3-4 times than in the 2014 presidential election (Putri, 2019). Yose Rizal also said that in 2014, the hoaxes against Jokowi in 2014 had multiplied 7 times and keep rising in 2019. Rudiantara, Minister of Communication and Information also said that the hoaxes attacked Joko Widodo is getting more intensified than to Prabowo Subianto. The statement is based on findings in the Ministry of Communication that identified hoaxes since August 2018 and continued to increase until March 2019. The data may be seen as follows: August 2018-25 hoaxes; December 2018-75 hoaxes; January 2019-175 hoaxes; February 2019-353 hoaxes; and March 2019-453 hoaxes (Hanafi, 2019). The data about conversations on issues surrounding the presidential election based on big data can also be easily accessed on social media platforms such as @i-wullung.

Hoaxes on the religious issues that attacked Joko Widodo had become viral on social media on February 2019, when a video uploaded by the @citrawida5 showed some women who were trying to persuade the others for not supporting Joko Widodo-KH. Ma'ruf Amin (Primastika,

2019). They said that if Joko Widodo-KH Ma'ruf Amin won then Indonesian could no longer hear the call to prayer (*adzan*) and forbid Muslim women from wearing headscarves. In addition, they also said that Joko Widodo-KH. Ma'ruf Amin will legalize same-sex marriage. After that, Wulan, the leader of PEPES (Women's Group Supporting Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno) denied that the three women in Karawang who charged by the law were not the members, but only the sympathizers.

The black campaign carried out by some of the women in Makassar against Joko Widodo by using religious issues also had viral on social media. In the video reported by Kompas TV (2019), the woman said that if Joko Widodo won again, he would eliminate religious education. After being traced, the woman was a PKS follower. Yet, PKS has denied that. PKS disallowed its cadres and fellows to do black campaigns.

The hoax produced by these women has much to do with the basic assumption that Joko Widodo is an anti-Islam and against the Ulama. The preaching against Joko Widodo can also be easily found on YouTube channels or other social media platforms, such as preaching by Sugi Nur, Maher Attualibi, Habib Bahar, and Haikal Hassan. One of them, such as Ust. Ali Hidayat, also was doing preaching and

suggesting his follower choose Prabowo Subianto. The suggestion can be seen through his critique to Joko Widodo who is considered authoritarian and at the extreme level is to demonize Joko Widodo, who is also a Muslim. The politic of mosque was expected to be an effective campaign tool that can bring together the power of Islamic community and expected to repeat the momentum of Jakarta elections.

Political campaigns on religious activities were also carried out by the supporters of Joko Widodo, moreover those affiliated with NU. On several occasions such as at the *haul* (one-year commemoration) or NU's preaching, they showed their support for Joko Widodo-KH. Ma'ruf Amin and indeed, they often attended the event. Such as attending the Harlah Muslimat NU chaired by Yenny Wahid at GBK (football stadium), Jakarta on Monday 28th January 2019, or the moment when KH. Maimun Zubair, an elder figure of NU, prayed for Joko Widodo to lead Indonesia again. In spite of the fact that Hasto Kristiyanto as the secretary of TKN said that his party had never used a worship place to campaign (Wiladansyah, 2019). This is in contrast to the political activism of Amien Rais who undoubtedly used mosque for political campaign since the 2014 presidential election, and the

2017 Jakarta regional election, as he stated that religious preaching must also have political messages (Rahardian, 2019).

Regarding the campaign at the house of worship, Minister of Religious Affair, Lukman Hakim, in his speech at the National Coordination Meeting for Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) on 18th April 2018 emphasized that religious houses or religious preaching activities should not be used for political purpose, both by supporting and not supporting certain candidates and the party of candidates. He added that the house of worship is certainly often used as a venue for political campaigns spreading provocation and hate speech through religious preaching and caused disharmony. DMI (Indonesian Mosque Council) will also keep mosques or prayer rooms throughout Indonesia from any political campaign. Nevertheless, the political campaign in houses of worship continues up to 2019 presidential election.

Nevertheless, hoaxes always have a negative connotation used and intended for something evil, not just telling lie. For the purpose of conflict or social cohesion, hoax is the most effective and inexpensive way of hate speech influencing the community. Absolutely, the hoax is more dangerous to illiterate community who

don't understand the hoax narration. Unfortunately, the problems of hoaxes are not only for less-educated community or people with less religious education. Nonetheless it also influences the perception of the educated, the religious and the figures regardless of their social status. In the context of presidential election, hoaxes seemed to be the only truth that capable to neglect the objective view on the two presidential candidates.

Hoaxes produce not only hate speech but also a hate spin, a term by Cherian George in his book explained as 'Hate Spin the Manufacture of Religious Offense and Its Threat to Democracy'. Unlike the hate speech, hate spin requires a break from the starting point of the issue of hate speech, such as the case of Basuki Tjahaya Purnama. His case of blasphemy was going viral only after Buni Yani picked up a video clip, it does not happen when the Jakarta provincial government posted a speech about Qur'an from the Pramuka islands. Meaning, this issue utilized by those of political entrepreneurs, such as political elites, entrepreneurs, journalists, and others who have an interest in the issue.

The issue of religion came up in the 2019 presidential election was surely inseparable from identity political construction by Islamic groups, both the supporter of Joko Widodo and Prabowo.

On the one hand, the rising expectations of these groups have been supported by hoaxes and hate speeches that have developed in the Muslim community who have influenced also their political preferences. This is a negative impact on the construction of identity politics. However, on the other hand, the unity of the Muslim community during the last Jakarta elections was kind of solidarity of the largest Muslim community (*ummah*) in Indonesian history who united to defend Islam. At least this discourse appears in the first action of 212. Undoubtedly, it is difficult to say that people who rally on 212's actions was intolerant, many Islamic groups such as Aa Gym and his students who came up not to show the intolerance, but to defend Islam. This solidarity utilized in a different context, namely the 2019 presidential election. Meanwhile, in the context of NU, identity politics is able to create robust and solid support to Joko Widodo-KH Ma'ruf Amien compared to any Islamic organization. In many occasions, NU denied the support and performs to be neutral. Yet, the attitude, action, and gestures of certain figures tend to support Jokowi. The most visible results of the construction of identity politics are the gestures, actions, and practices of the actors. In the end, this paper presents that the construction of identity politics based on religion does not always have a

negative impact, but also presents positive and humanist view; it could save and defend Islam which is mercy to universe (*rahmatan lil alamin*).

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, the authors conclude that this research shows that the Islamic group's political identity is constructed by their elite's statements about the 2019 Presidential election, moreover through media, both those who support one of the candidates or being neutral.

Besides, the constructivist approach that uses formal sources also has implications for the conclusions, in light of the fact that it only sees one faction in each Islamic group. The authors also conclude that the political attitudes of Islamic groups are not given, but they are created and it is the result of construction that builds through the statements of the elites. For example, it can be seen in various statements of the elites who seem to support one presidential candidate in the name of religion and organization.

But on the other hand, the views and statements of the elites also suggest that their organization is neutral and does not support anyone in the 2019 presidential election, even in spite of the fact that their political gestures can mean the opposite.

Moreover, this is related to the possibility that NU seems to support Joko Widodo, due to the K.H. Ma'ruf Amin, who is Rais Aam of NU.

Another conclusion is that identity is an important factor in determining the political attitudes of these Islamic groups. For example, Muhamamadiyah and NU who claim themselves as '*moderate*' and '*middle groups*' affected the policies of their organization to keep neutral. While the other groups related to GNPF declare as the movement of '*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*' and guard the ulama's fatwa that supports Prabowo Subianto-Sandiago Uno.

The identity politics that appears in the 2019 Presidential Election continues to be built by these Islamic groups as a form of existence and balance in the dynamics of democracy in Indonesia. Due to the reason that the political dominance of the singular identity of certain Islamic groups in the name of religion will not reflect the democracy itself and it can also trigger power in other forms in the name of the majority of Islam. Nevertheless, the politics of Islamic identity also triggered Islamic solidarity, which is a series of issues on the 2017 Pilkada DKI Jakarta.

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