

## The Exploring Concept of Islam Nusantara in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Congress Nahdatul Ulama (NU) in Jombang, East Java which took place on August 1-5 2015. Since NU coined the term in 2015, the term "Islam Nusantara" has been widely misunderstood by several communities. " The questions that will be answered are First, Why was the term "Islam Nusantara" raised by NU circles at the 2015 MUNAS in Jombang? What is the history of the emergence and development of the term "Islam Nusantara" in Indonesia? What are the concept of "Islam Nusantara" can be able to adapt to Islamic teachings in the Indonesian context?. The purpose of this study is to understand more deeply the concept of Islam Nusantara, a critical historical study, this paper will use a historical approach to explore the historical roots of the emergence and development of the term "Islam". This research is used qualitative method and its approach to literature review. This analysis data in this research ara reduction data, display data, verification and conclusion. The results of the study stated that 1) the idea of Islam Nusantara is related to the political dimension, 2) Islam Nusantara brings a pluralist pattern to Islam and 3) the idea of Islam Nusantara is not representative so that it does not accommodate it as a whole.

**Keywords:** Islam Nusantara, Pluralism, Representative, Political

**Abstrak:** Kongres Nahdatul Ulama (NU) di Jombang, Jawa Timur, yang berlangsung pada 1-5 Agustus 2015, merupakan peristiwa penting. Sejak NU menciptakan istilah "Islam Nusantara" pada tahun 2015, istilah ini telah banyak disalahpahami oleh beberapa komunitas. Pertanyaan yang akan dijawab adalah: Pertama, mengapa istilah "Islam Nusantara" diangkat oleh kalangan NU pada MUNAS 2015 di Jombang? Apa sejarah kemunculan dan perkembangan istilah "Islam Nusantara" di Indonesia? Bagaimana konsep "Islam Nusantara" dapat beradaptasi dengan ajaran Islam dalam konteks Indonesia?. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami lebih dalam konsep Islam Nusantara. Sebuah studi sejarah kritis, makalah ini akan menggunakan pendekatan sejarah untuk mengeksplorasi akar sejarah kemunculan dan

perkembangan istilah "Islam Nusantara." Hasil penelitian menyatakan bahwa: 1. Gagasan Islam Nusantara terkait dengan dimensi politik, 2. Islam Nusantara membawa pola pluralistik ke dalam Islam, 3. Gagasan Islam Nusantara tidak sepenuhnya representatif, sehingga tidak mengakomodasi keseluruhan konsep.

**Kata Kunci:** Islam Nusantara, Pluralism, Respentatif, Politikal

## Introduction

Islam Nusantara gained its popularity momentum during the 33rd NU Congress in Jombang, East Java. In a word, Islam Nusantara "exploded" at the moment of this congress so that its effects were targeted and felt in various aspects.<sup>1</sup>Some of the impacts are with the establishment of NU universities under one name, namely Nusantara Islamic Higher Education<sup>2</sup>even the opening of the Islamic Archipelago Masters study program (ISNUS) at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta.<sup>3</sup>

Islam Nusantara, a term that emerged in recent years, refers to a unique form of Islamic practice and belief that has developed in Indonesia. It emphasizes local traditions, cultural integration, and a moderate approach to religious practice, distinguishing itself from more orthodox or fundamentalist interpretations of Islam

More than that, the adoption of Islam Nusantara as the theme of the 33rd Muktamar is an endeavor from NU to respond to cases of violence in the name of Islam as well as various polemics at the national and international levels that hit Muslims where as a result the image of Islam is considered negative and even has decreased in significance.<sup>4</sup>Actually, this idea is quite visionary and opens an alternative door in understanding how Islam is embodied in a pluralistic society. However, the fact is that not every NU

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<sup>1</sup>Saiful Mustofa, "Strengthening Archipelago Islam for Progressive Islam Malatrack Epistemological and Historical Roots of Islam (in) Nusantara", *Episteme*, Vol.10, No.2 (2015): p.406.

<sup>2</sup>Mochamad Nasichin Al Muiz, *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah: Genealogi, Ideologi Dan Sistem Pendidikan di perguruan tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri Indonesia*,. Thesis : UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2024 atau dapat diakses di [https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daftar\\_perguruan\\_tinggi\\_Nahdlatul\\_Ulama\\_di\\_Indonesia](https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daftar_perguruan_tinggi_Nahdlatul_Ulama_di_Indonesia), accessed on October 12, 2021, at 0:38.

<sup>3</sup>Mochamad Nasichin Al Muiz, *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah: Genealogi, Ideologi Dan Sistem Pendidikan di perguruan tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri Indonesia*,. Thesis : UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2024. Atau dapat diakses [http://pps.uin-suka.ac.id/en/page/prodi/2460-Magister-\(S2\)](http://pps.uin-suka.ac.id/en/page/prodi/2460-Magister-(S2)), accessed on October 12, 2021, at 0:41.

<sup>4</sup>Moh. Rosyid, "2015 Muktamar and NU Politics in State History", *Yudisia*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2015): p.202.

administrator, member or exponent is "unanimous" on the idea of Islam Nusantara.

Pros and cons within NU itself often occur. Among the Nu who agree is Prof. Dr. KH. Said Aqil Siroj<sup>5</sup>, KH. Mustofa Bisri, Ahmad Baso<sup>6</sup>. Their agreement on this term is because Islam is one and only in the substance of its teachings, but its outward appearance is very diverse. Temporary, Therefore, those who disagree are KH Abdul Moqsith Ghazali<sup>7</sup>, KH. Hasyim Muzadi,<sup>8</sup>Gus Sholah, KH M. Cholil Nafis, <sup>9</sup>KH. Yahya Zainul Ma'rif<sup>10</sup>, KH.

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<sup>5</sup>Said Aqil Siroj is an Islamic figure who has extensive knowledge of Islamic sciences, especially Islamic philosophy, Kalam, and Sufism. He completed his Bachelor's degree at King Saud University, Ushuluddin and Da'wah faculties (graduated in 1982), Master's degree at Ummul Qura University, majoring in Comparative Religion (graduated 1987), Doctoral degree at the same university, majoring in Aqidah/Islamic Philosophy (graduated 1994). Judging from his educational background, Aqil Siraj has mastered classical and modern Islamic literature very well.

<sup>6</sup>Ahmad Baso, Religion Nu for the Republic of Indonesia, Cet. II, (Jakarta: Pustaka Afid, 2015): p.92. Taufik Bilfaqih, "Islam Nusantara: Nu Cultural Strategy in the Middle of Global Challenges", *Journal of Aqlam-Journal of Islam and Plurality*, Vol.2 No.1 (2016): p.54.

<sup>7</sup>KH Abdul Moqsith Ghazali, is a expert interfaith relations Indonesia. he studied at State Islamic University/UIN (formerly State Islamic Religious Institute/IAIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, where he graduated from the Masters program in 1999. Prior to completing his Doctoral degree, he participated in a month-long dialogue of religions at United States of America in 2002. In 2005, he attended a short lecture at Leiden University, Dutch.

<sup>8</sup>KH. Hasyim Muzadi is the Secretary General of the International Conferences of Islamic Scholars (ICIS), he is also the former general chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Board, he stated that the true Islam in the archipelago is not archipelago Islam. It can be accessed via <https://www.hidayatullah.com/berita/nasional/read/2015/11/26/83966/kh-hasyim-muzadi-yang-benar-islam-di-nusantara-bukan-islam-nusantara.html>, on October 12, 2021, At 10:33 a.m.

<sup>9</sup>According to the Chairman of the Central MUI Community Da'wah and Development Commission, KH M Cholil Nafis, there are two meanings of Nusantara Islam, namely objective and subjective. It's just that when the Koran and Hadith are not there, it enriches the culture in Indonesia, which according to the science of ushul fiqh is based on 'urf.

<sup>10</sup>KH Yahya Zainul Ma'arif (Caregiver of PP. Al-Bahjah, Cirebon) who is usually called Buya Yahya, when explaining the issues raised in the theme, "Solutions to Contemporary Islamic Dynamics in Indonesia and the World", in a scientific seminar held by the Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School on Sunday 24 June 2016, explained, "This provision is the teachings of the Ulama since ancient times and has become the identity of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah

Muhammad Najih Maimoen<sup>11</sup> and KH. Idrus Ramli. Disagreement over ideas Islam Nusantara because this idea tends to lead to relativism and Islamic plurality and is local in nature, does not include the interests and needs of the nation with its diverse society. The discussion above reflects that entities that agree with the idea of Islam Nusantara tend to be close to and even part of PBNU, namely the structuralists. On the contrary, entities outside the PBNU structure are dominantly against this idea. A portrait like this seems to reveal the idea of Nusantara Islam which is linked to the political dimension.<sup>12</sup> Two other things, the notion of Islam Nusantara belongs to pluralists and not representative<sup>13</sup>for Indonesia.

Historically, Islam Nusantara has roots in the early spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago, where it adapted to local cultures and traditions. This adaptation has led to a form of Islam that is deeply intertwined with Indonesian identity and societal norms. However, this unique approach has also sparked controversy, particularly among those who view it as unrepresentative of 'pure' Islam. Critics argue that Islam Nusantara deviates from traditional Islamic teachings, making it unrepresentative of the global Muslim community. They believe that incorporating local customs dilutes the core tenets of Islam, leading to a version that is too syncretic and not sufficiently aligned with mainstream Islamic practices. Some scholars adopt a structuralist perspective, which means they analyze social structures and their impact on cultural practices. In the context of Islam Nusantara, this approach

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throughout the world since the early generations. With this there is no need for Arab Islam, English Islam or Nusantara Islam.

<sup>11</sup>The caretaker of the Al-Anwar Islamic Boarding School in Rembang, Central Java, who is also the son of KH Maimoen Zubair KH Muhammad Najih Maimoen (Gus Najih), firmly rejected the formulation of Islam Nusantara. Gus Najih believes that this formulation leads to misleading public opinion. Moreover, Islam Nusantara was coined and propagated by figures who are well known for their liberal views and even Shia. Gus Najih is worried that the Nusantara Islam movement will become a carriage great liberalization and syiahization for Indonesian Muslims, Can be accessed at <https://al-waie.id/Fokus/pro-kontra-islam-nusantara/>, On October 12, 2021 at 11.09.

<sup>12</sup>Fridiyanto, Firmansyah, M.Kholis Amrullah, Muhammad Rafi'I, Nahdlatul Ulama in the midst of a wave of eruptions strengthening the Islam of the Archipelago Defending the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, GatherWriting for the 34th Nahdlatul Ulama Conference, Bengkulu: Publisher of the Rafflesia Friends of Nature Foundation, 2021.

<sup>13</sup>Writing by Khalili Hasib in the book Islam Nusantara Islamization of the Archipelago or Islamic Manuscripts, 1 August 2015.

examines how Indonesian social and cultural structures influence the practice of Islam in the region.

Departing from the descriptions above, this paper attempts to explain the impact and problems of the concept of Islam Nusantara. Next is also presented a discussion related to Islam in Indonesia as a solution to the idea of Islam Nusantara. In the end, this paper also discusses how to actualize the concept of Islam Nusantara with a critical historical study.

This research aims to explore the historical development, cultural impact, and contemporary controversies surrounding Islam Nusantara. By understanding its roots and evolution, we can better grasp its significance and the debates it generates within Indonesian society. Previous research has highlighted the syncretic nature of Islam Nusantara, examining how it integrates pre-Islamic traditions with Islamic teachings. Other studies have focused on the political implications of promoting Islam Nusantara as a national identity. Building on these studies, this research will delve deeper into the specific controversies and their implications for Indonesian society.

## **Method**

The methods of this research is qualitative with literature approach. A literature review is a crucial method in scientific writing. This method involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of relevant literature on a particular research topic.<sup>14</sup>The main goal is to provide a strong theoretical foundation, identify research gaps, and offer a comprehensive perspective on the topic under investigation. Here is a detailed explanation of the steps involved in conducting a literature review. The first step in a literature review is identifying the research topic. Researchers must choose a specific and relevant topic within their field of study. Selecting the right topic is essential as it determines the direction and scope of the research. A topic that is too broad or too narrow can complicate the process of searching and analyzing literature. The next step is conducting an initial literature survey. The purpose of this initial survey is to gain a general overview of the existing research. Researchers can use various academic sources such as journals, books, conference papers, and online databases<sup>15</sup>

At this stage, researchers gather relevant sources from the available literature. It is crucial to ensure that the selected sources are credible and reputable. Researchers should also record the bibliographic details of each source used to facilitate the compilation of the reference list at the end of the research. Researchers need to establish inclusion and exclusion criteria to

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<sup>14</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Bandung: Alfabeta, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

determine which literature will be reviewed.<sup>16</sup>Inclusion criteria might include literature published within a specific timeframe, peer-reviewed articles, or studies conducted on a particular population. In the conclusion, researchers summarize the main findings from the literature review and identify areas that need further research.

## Result and Discussion

### A. The Political Side of the Archipelago Islamic Idea

Since the NU congress in Jombang, August 1-5, the issue of 'Islam Nusantara' has continued to roll, giving rise to various debates in cyberspace and in the real world.<sup>17</sup>Various kinds of articles, journals, books, papers have appeared in discussing this term. Why did the term Islam Nusantara become popular at the congress? Even though this term has been discussed before by Indonesian scholars. This is because the term was promoted by NU<sup>18</sup>, and NU is the largest mass organization in Indonesia. In this way what NU promotes will become popular.<sup>19</sup>

In essence, the politics of Islam Nusantara, based on historical experience, is more suitable for a symbolic system than integralistic and secularistic. Apart from the Islamic political system which is still being debated, as well as facts that cannot be forgotten, the independence of this nation is a manifestation of the political struggle of all components of the Indonesian nation which has become a great unit of solidarity created by feelings of sacrifice that have been made in the past and those made by humans. the human being concerned is willing to be made in the future and has a past, but he continues himself in the present through a clear reality, namely agreement, a clearly expressed desire to continue living together.

In other words, the exploding ideas of Islam Nusantara in the end went hand in hand with the anti-radicalism spirit promoted by the government under President Jokowi. This can be seen from the handling of radicalism which has become the main concern of the state for the last 5-7 years.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>Writing by Khalili Hasib in the book *Islam Nusantara Islamization of the Archipelago or Islamic Manuscripts*, 1 August 2015, 199.

<sup>18</sup>Amin Farih, "Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and His Contribution in Fighting for Independence and Defending the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI)", *Walisongo: Journal of Social and Religious Research*, Vol.24 No.2 (2016): p.251.

<sup>19</sup>Amin Farih, "Nahdlatul Ulama's Consistency in Defending Pancasila and the Sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia in the Middle of Islamic State Discourse", *JPW (Walisongo Political Journal)*, Vol 1, No 1 (2019): p.1-20.

This has an impact on the dissolution of HTI as an official mass organization recognized by the state. Especially after HTI was suspected of initiating the 'reject infidel leaders' movement in the 2016 DKI Pilkada. So the radical sentiment within HTI grew stronger, and it got even stronger when that sentiment met HTI's main goal which aspires to the establishment of an Islamic state within the conception of a caliphate. Radicalism, khilafah, jihad, terrorism, are issues that the government is trying to eradicate in the handling of radicalism programs. This then has an impact on increasing the state budget in the field of dealing with radicalism, which therefore also benefits NU as the only mass organization 'assigned' to carry out this program.

The issue of radicalism has also become the main focus of state institutions such as the KPK. Several people who were considered radical were then removed/fired from the management structure. Even though at that time the KPK was handling a fairly serious corruption case, because it involved several political actors who had quite a large influence within the party body which currently dominates the government cabinet. Thus, both HTI and the Corruption Eradication Commission, both of them experience the same threat when trying to deal with the 'big power' that currently dominates the Indonesian government.

Therefore, it is difficult not to see the idea of Islam Nusantara being revived by NU in 2015, after being unpopular for a time, without suspicion that this idea was deliberately created to contain and fight political threats. Moreover, there are two parties who benefit here. First, the party that is currently in power and wants to maintain its power from the Islamic 'radical' group. Second, NU officials who are currently carrying out their duties as high-ranking state officials such as Minister of Religion Yaqut, KAI Managing Director Said Aqil Siraj, and vice president KH. Ma'ruf Amin.

According to Syafi'i Ma'arif, Indonesia with the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is a nation of multi-ethnic, multi-faith, and multi-cultural and political expressions. This sharing, if managed properly, intelligently and honestly, will no doubt be a tremendous cultural wealth. And that is the future of Indonesia that we must defend and strive for seriously, patiently and gracefully. This tremendous cultural wealth should no longer be fought for interests that are all parochial and meaningless. Parochialism is the future enemy of Indonesia.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Fadlan Barakah, Ahmad Syafii Maarif's View of Religious Pluralism in the Indonesian Context of Humanitarian Funding, Thesis of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 5.

The fact of this diversity forms the characteristics of a democratic Indonesian nation, and because of that, according to Fazlur Rahman, only a truly democratic interpretation of Islam will succeed there.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, Archipelago Islam as a form of moderation in the da'wah system that enters the regions of the archipelago has developed very naturally and continuously. An attitude of openness and respect for society's culture has formed distinctive Islamic values in the form of: first, moderation of thoughts and moderate actions, so that they can be inclusive of the presence of other people of different religions, cultures, traditions and ideologies into their communities; second, being tolerant of followers of other religions; third survival in pluralism

### **B. Considering the Concept of Archipelago Islam**

Since the NU congress in Jombang, August 1-5, the issue of 'Islam Nusantara' has continued to roll, giving rise to various debates in cyberspace and in the real world. Various kinds of articles, journals, books, papers have appeared in discussing this term.

When examined etymologically, Nusantara comes from Sanskrit which consists of two words; Nusa means island, homeland, and Antara means distance, between, between two objects. The archipelago is an archipelago of islands located between the continents of Asia and Australia, flanked by two oceans, the Indian and the Pacific. According to Prof. Dr. KH. Said Aqil Siroj<sup>22</sup>(Public Chairman of PBNU 2010-2015, 2015-2020), Islam Nusantara is a typical Indonesian-style Islam, a combination of the theological Islamic values with the values of local traditions, culture and customs in the country. The character of Nusantara Islam shows that there is local wisdom in the archipelago which does not violate Islamic teachings, but instead synergizes Islamic teachings with local customs which are widely spread throughout Indonesia. The presence of Islam is not to destroy or oppose existing traditions. Islam came to enrich and Islamize existing traditions and culture gradually or gradually (*tadriji*). The meeting of Islam with the customs and

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid..., 5.

<sup>22</sup>Said Aqil Siroj is an Islamic figure who has extensive knowledge of Islamic sciences, especially Islamic philosophy, Kalam, and Sufism. He completed his Bachelor's degree at King Saud University, Ushuluddin and Da'wah faculties (graduated in 1982), Master's degree at Ummul Qura University, majoring in Comparative Religion (graduated 1987), Doctoral degree at the same university, majoring in Aqidah/Islamic Philosophy (graduated 1994). Judging from his educational background, Aqil Siraj has mastered classical and modern Islamic literature very well.

traditions of the Archipelago then formed a social system, educational institutions, and the sultanate system.<sup>23</sup>

This first definition shows that substantively, Islam has Indonesian characteristics, but also as a result of a synthesis between theological Islamic values and local traditional values. It's just that the area of movement is limited to the territory of Indonesia, so that it is narrower than the area of movement in the first sense which refers to the archipelago. Unfortunately, in these sources the archipelago does not explain its coverage area.

Meanwhile Gus Mus defines Islam Nusantara by using the perspective of Nahwu Science, Islam Nusantara consists of two words, Islam and Nusantara, in Nahwu Science it can be called tarkīb *idāfi* (arrangement between *youḍāf* and *youḍāfilaih*), which means Islam in the archipelago. This is what is understood in terms of nahwu science but not all people understand the science of balaghah and in terms of Islamic Nusantara terminology, it is actually not quite right. Because it can lead to the notion that Nusantara Islam is part of the many types of Islam. We must state that Islam is one and not plural (many). As for what appears to be many, in fact are 'mahzabs', schools of thought, adherents and others and not Islam itself. By pinning the nature of the word Islam needs to be careful. The use of adjectives attached to Islam, for example Rational Islam,<sup>24</sup> inclusive Islam,<sup>25</sup> essential Islam,<sup>26</sup> liberal

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<sup>23</sup>Quoted from Zainul Milal Bizawie, "Islam Nusantara as a Subject in Islamic Studies: Cross Discourse and Methodology", in Akhmad Sahal and Munawir Aziz, *Islam Archipelago: From Ushūl Fiqh to Historical Concepts* (Bandung: Mizan, cet-I, 2015), p. 239-240.

<sup>24</sup>The term Rational Islam, which is synonymous with Muktaẓilah thinking, began to be widely known in Indonesia after Harun Nasution became Chancellor of IAIN Syarif Hadayatullah Jakarta (in 2002 it was transformed into UIN when Azyumardi Azra became Chancellor). Harun Nasution himself is considered a reformer of Islamic thought in Indonesia by many circles. See Harun Nasution, *Renewal in Islam: History, Thought and Movement* (Jakarta: PT Bulan Bintang, 1982), *Islam in View of Its Various Aspects* (Jakarta: UI-Press, cet-V, 1985), *Rational Islam: Ideas and Thoughts* (Bandung : Mizan Publisher, cet-IV, 1416 H/1996 AD).

<sup>25</sup>Alwi Shihab, *Inclusive Islam: Towards an Open Attitude in Religion* (Bandung: Mizan, cet-V, 1419 H/1999 AD).

<sup>26</sup>See for example Hasan Baharun, *Essential Islam: A Study of 'Grounding' the Sunnah of the Prophet* (Jakarta: Pustaka Amani, cet-I, 1998).

Islam,<sup>27</sup>Progressive Islam,<sup>28</sup>Progressive Islam,<sup>29</sup>Substantive Islam,<sup>30</sup>dynamic Islam,<sup>31</sup>Islamic Dadical,<sup>32</sup>Pluralist Islam,<sup>33</sup>etc.<sup>34</sup> and others will create the

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<sup>27</sup>There are four typologies of Liberal thought in Indonesia; Liberal-Progressive, Liberal-Radical, Liberal-Moderate, and Liberal-Transformative. See works discussing Liberal Islam, Zuly Qodir, *Liberal Islam: Variants of Islamic Liberalism in Indonesia 1991-2002* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, Cet-I, 2012). The term Liberal Islam in Indonesia only became popular when a community of NU and Muhammadiyah youths with various educational backgrounds opened the Liberal Islam Network in 2001. This community actively spread new discourses related to the relationship between Islam and democracy, religious pluralism, gender equality, sharia. 'ah Islam and human rights. According to Zuly Qodir, the intellectual characteristics of Liberal Islam are; First, placing the Al-Qur'an and hadith as open books to be interpreted without having to stick to one form of interpretation that is hegemonic in nature. Second, to reconcile between faith and modernity. Third, they are willing to adopt the constitutional system and culture of the modern world. Fourth, have freedom in interpreting religion. Fifth, follow the modern style of education by adopting rationality. Sixth, don't think sectarian so that you can understand the different views that arise without judging different parties. Seventh, acknowledge the existence of religious pluralism. Eighth, being inclusive-tolerant in religion. Ninth, think and act openly beyond the boundaries of the line of thought of the NU and Muhammadiyah religious organizations, although many of the liberal intellectuals in this country have NU and Muhammadiyah backgrounds. Tenth, not interested in the idea of formalized implementation of Islamic law. Eleventh, have a pluralist-inclusive theological perspective, not an exclusive theology.

<sup>28</sup>Friends of Progressive Islam was once promoted by Muhammadiyah in the Muktamar in Makassar in 2015.

<sup>29</sup>See for example Laode Ida, *Young NU: Progressives and New Secularism* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2004).

<sup>30</sup>Azyumardi Azra, *Substantive Islam: So that the People Do Not Become Foam*, Bandung: Mizan, cet-I, 1421 H/2000 M.

<sup>31</sup>See for example Syahrin Harahap, *Dynamic Islam: Upholding the Values of Al-Qur'an Teachings in Modern Life in Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, cet-I, 1997).

<sup>32</sup>M. Zaki Mubarak, *Geneology of Radical Islam in Indonesia: Movements, Thoughts and Prospects for Democracy* (Jakarta: LP3ES, cet-I, 2008).

<sup>33</sup>Budhy Munawar-Rachman, *Pluralist Islam: Discourse on the Equality of the Believers* (Jakarta: Paramadina, print- I, 2001).

<sup>34</sup>Abuddin Nata in his book, *Map of the Diversity of Indonesian Islamic Thought* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo, 2001), p. 9, put forward 12 typologies of Islam in Indonesia; Fundamentalist Islam, theological-normative Islam, exclusive Islam, rational Islam, transformative Islam, actual Islam, contextual Islam, esoteric Islam, traditional Islam, modernist Islam, cultural Islam, and

impression that Islam is plural and narrow the meaning of Islam and the ideas of Nusantara Islam trigger the presence of Islamic relativism and direct it to a pluralism frame.

Even al-Attas, an expert on Malay Islamic History, emphasizes the correct use of language so that the correct meaning of the sacred terms and concepts contained therein is not changed or confused. Every key terminology contains a paradigm.<sup>35</sup> Of course, the term 'Islam' does not require a predicate or other characteristics. If Islam is given another characteristic, it will narrow Islam itself

So, in this case it should be more appropriate to use the phrase "Muslims in the Archipelago". Or it is more appropriate to use the term "Islam in the Archipelago", because Islam has spread widely throughout the world, including in the Archipelago.

In one of his writings, Khalili Hasib also explained that if the character of the Archipelago was based on the word Islam, then that would narrow the meaning of Islam itself. It was as if the Prophet was practicing Islam in Arabia at that time, specifically only for Arabs. Meanwhile, Indonesia also has other types of Islam, and of course this is not true.<sup>36</sup> The impression of Islam is plural in the term "Islam Nusantara" is suspected to be part of the mission of Islamic religious liberalism. The understanding that Islam is not one but many is a liberalization project by carrying out the ideology of relativism and pluralism and leading to an attitude of condescension towards other models of Islam that are not necessarily in accordance with Islamic teachings. Smells of relativism and permissivism permeate the terminology "Islam Nusantara" as expressed by Agus Suyoto where if groups of various faiths are gathered together it is actually the one who inherits Islam Nusantara.<sup>37</sup>

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pluralist-inclusive Islam. M. Nur added that one type of face of Indonesian Islam is appropriative Islam. The intention of this Islam is Islam which does not only pass down the past as it was without reserve, but instead makes the past an inspiration. Appropriative Islam wants to return government to the weak (the people), so that it is not dominated by the strong (vox de vox populi). M. Nur, "The State in Islam: A Study of the Thoughts of Abu al-A'la al-Maududi and Bassam Tibi", Dissertation (Yogyakarta: PPs UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2009), p. 246. See also an explanation of these Islamic typologies in Bahrul Ulum, Ulama and Politics: The National Political Reasoning of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) (Yogyakarta: Student Pustaka, cet-I, 2015), p. 71-72.

<sup>35</sup>Syed M Naquib al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 198

<sup>36</sup>Writing by Khalili Hasib in the book *Islam Nusantara Islamization of the Archipelago or Islamic Manuscripts*, 1 August 2015.

<sup>37</sup>Hall Magazine, May 2014, 17.

There are several other definitions of Nusantara Islam put forward by Islamic thinkers, including: "Archipelago Islam is the understanding and practice of Islam in the archipelago as a result of dialectics between sharia texts and local realities and culture.<sup>38</sup>The meaning is similar, "Islam Archipelago is Islam that is typical of Indonesia, a combination of theological Islamic values with the values of local traditions, culture, customs in the country." <sup>39</sup>Azzumardi Azra revealed that Islam Nusantara is Islam with a smiling face, flowery, tolerant, colorful, and accommodating.<sup>40</sup>

From the point of view of the scope of Islam Nusantara, Muhajir did not provide clear boundaries of validity, Bizawie and Anam only limited it to the territory of Indonesia, so Azra expanded the area of validity to cover the entire Muslim area of Southeast Asia. However, it is a pity that Azra did not explain the essence of the term Islam Nusantara.

Furthermore, there is a meaning of Nusantara Islam which is emphasized as a da'wah methodology that is different from the previous meaning where Islam Nusantara is a da'wah methodology to understand and apply the universality (syumuliyah) of Islamic teachings according to the principles of Ahlussunnah waljama'ah, in a model that has undergone a process of contact with good tradition ('urf shahih) in the archipelago, in this case the territory of Indonesia, or is a bad tradition ('urf fasid) but is undergoing and/or has undergone the da'wah process of amputation, assimilation, or minimization, so that it does not conflict with Shari'a dictums 'Ah"<sup>41</sup>

This definition, in terms of the scale of application, is similar to the second definition. However, this definition contains an emphasis, in addition to the da'wah methodology, also on the universality of Islamic teachings, the principles of ahlussunnah waljama'ah, and the da'wah process of amputation, assimilation, or minimization to sterilize the da'wah methodology from misleading local traditions. The flow of thought reflected in the third definition is also unclear, not to say chaotic, so it is not easy to understand unless it is examined carefully and thoroughly, because the flow of thought is twisty.

As for other parts, there are efforts to expand the area of implementation of Nusantara Islam to reach the Southeast Asian region. Islam Nusantara

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<sup>38</sup>Akhmad Sahal and Munawir Aziz (Eds.), *Islam Nusantara from Ushul Fiqh to Nationalism*. Bandung: Mizan, 2015: p.67.

<sup>39</sup>Zainul Milal Bizawie, *Islam Nusantara as a Subject in Islamic Studies: Cross Discourse and Methodology*. In Akhmad Sahal and Munawir Aziz (Eds.), *Islam Nusantara from Ushul Fiqh to Nationalism*. Bandung: Mizan, 2015: 239.

<sup>40</sup>Mun'im DZ....., 2010, 15.

<sup>41</sup>Anam....., tt: 22.

refers to a group of islands or maritime continents (Nusantara) which includes Indonesia, the Muslim region of Malaysia, Southern Thailand (Patani), Singapore, Southern Philippines (Moro), and Champa (Kampuchea).<sup>42</sup> So Islam Nusantara is congruent with 'Southeast Asian Islam' (Southeast Asian Islam).

Meanwhile Tuti Mafrudah said that the chronology of the birth of Islam Nusantara was the answer and solution to an emergency situation regarding a wrong understanding of Islam. The point is that Islam which is considered as a terrorist is synonymous with radicalism, extremism and various negative perceptions about Islam. Of course this is not just perception and discourse but has become an 'identity' that has spread throughout the world, causing Islamic phobia in various parts of the world.

The definition put forward by Tuti Mafrudah illustrates that Islam Nusantara is political, because Islam Nusantara is an example of Islam that is not radical and other things. If one examines it remotely in the era of President Soekarno, when NU was still a political party, the NU party was one of Sukarno's supporters. NU gave the title *waliyul amri adhharuri bisysyaukah*. NU was at the forefront of defending the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which at that time was very vulnerable to divisions, including rebellion by Islamic groups through DI/TII. The situation reversed after the reformation period to the present day. All presidents after the reform movement have always maintained good relations with NU. Various important policies related to religious and social relations by the government always seek NU's advice. The government's attention to the social, cultural, educational, and economic aspects of NU members was increased. So it is not surprising that the term Islam Nusantara became popular after the 33rd Santri Conference in Jombang, besides that NU is the largest mass organization in Indonesia.

Thus, Islam Nusantara is an Islamic characteristic of Indonesia which is used as an example, it is considered by the outside world that even though Indonesia consists of many cultural diversity, Islam Nusantara can unite it. This is where it is necessary to identify the consequences that exist where Islam Nusantara is not representative. This can be seen with so many pros and cons related to the definition of Islam Nusantara, there are even no clear concepts and parameters related to a clear definition of Islam Nusantara according to NU circles and ideas. this triggers the presence of Islamic relativism and directs it to a pluralism frame.

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<sup>42</sup>Akhmad Sahal and Munawir Aziz, *Nusantara Islam from Ushul Fiqh to Nationalism*, Bandung: Mizan, 2015: 169.

## Conclusion

There are at least three conclusions of Islam Nusantara that need to be watched out for. First, Islam Nusantara actually conveys liberal and secular Islamic ideas (separating religion from the organization of life) on behalf of the Archipelago, although strangely it does not refer to books such as the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, *Serat Kanda* or books in the original Nusantara script.

Second, the idea of Islam Nusantara will teach true Islam. Islam is one teaching. There is no difference between Islam in Arabic, in the Archipelago, in Turkey, in Europe and other parts of the world. Differences in clothing, sarongs, robes, trousers, caps, blanks or other things that are different can be interpreted that their Islam is different. Besides that there are no clear parameters for the concept of Islam Nusantara. Things like this are not feasible or not representative to be used as a differentiating benchmark. *Third*, the idea of the great Archipelago Islam is political in nature. Where the concept of Islam Nusantara places the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia as a noble agreement for the Indonesian nation which is based on an awareness of human values towards the reality of national pluralism, so that it is committed to safeguarding it and is a fixed price. Archipelagic Islam studies must be carried out on an ongoing basis in order to reduce errors in understanding the concept of Archipelago Islam. So that truth can appear in its position as a human guide to find dynamic ways of acting in contextual Islam in the midst of a pluralistic society to foster a spirit of love for the motherland that will always exist, be dynamic and in line with the goals of a constitutional state based on Pancasila.

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