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Religiosity Value as Indonesian Nationalism (Study of Nahdlatul Ulama Multipurpose Ansor Brigade)

Valor da religiosidade como nacionalismo indonésio (Estudo da Brigada Multi Final de Nahdlatul Ulama Ansor)

Valor de la religiosidad como nacionalismo indonésio (Estudio de la Brigada Multi Final de Nahdlatul Ulama Ansor)


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Abstract: The religious nationalism of Multipurpose Ansor Brigade (Banser) was made of a series of Indonesian long history. The resolution of Jihad was the momentums that awaken and infused the passion of nationalism among students. The value that became the basic point was derived from *Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah annahdliyah* teachings which inherited by Baser. This study aimed to describe the religiosity value as the root of nationalism in Indonesia. The methodology used was qualitative methodology with historical approach. The data were collected through historical sources. The result showed that nationalism was influenced by religiosity value. Various training and experience had influence the level of Banser's religious nationalism. Banser could obtain more experiences through the length of their participation. Therefore, both training and experience could define the level of religiosity and nationalism.

Keywords: Multipurpose Ansor Brigade, Religiosity, Nationalism, Nahdlatul Ulama.

Resumo: O nacionalismo religioso da Brigada Multispose Ansor (Banser) foi feito de uma longa história indonésia. A resolução do Jihad foi o momento que despertou e infundiu a paixão do nacionalismo entre os estudantes. O valor que se tornou o ponto básico foi derivado dos ensinamentos de *Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah annahdliyah* herdados por Baser. Este estudo teve como objetivo descrever o valor da religiosidade como a raiz do nacionalismo na Indonésia. A metodologia utilizada foi a metodologia qualitativa com abordagem histórica. Os dados foram coletados através de fontes históricas. O resultado mostrou que o nacionalismo foi influenciado pelo valor da religiosidade. Vários treinamentos e experiências influenciaram o nível do nacionalismo religioso de Banser. Banser poderia obter mais experiências através da duração de sua participação. Portanto, tanto o treinamento quanto a experiência poderiam definir o nível de religiosidade e nacionalismo.

Palavras-chave: Brigada Ansor Multipurpose, Religiosidade, Nacionalismo, Nahdlatul Ulama.

Resumen: El nacionalismo religioso de la Brigada Ansor de usos múltiples (Banser) se hizo a partir de una serie de larga historia indonesia. La resolución de la Jihad fue el impulso que despertó e infundió la pasión del nacionalismo entre los estudiantes. El valor que se convirtió en el punto básico se derivó de las enseñanzas de *Ahlussunnah wal*

jama'ah annahdliyah que heredó Baser. Este estudio tuvo como objetivo describir el valor de la religiosidad como la raíz del nacionalismo en Indonesia. La metodología utilizada fue la metodología cualitativa con enfoque histórico. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de fuentes históricas. El resultado mostró que el nacionalismo estaba influenciado por el valor de la religiosidad. Diversos entrenamientos y experiencias tuvieron influencia en el nivel del nacionalismo religioso de Banser. Banser podría obtener más experiencias a través de la duración de su participación. Por lo tanto, tanto la formación como la experiencia podrían definir el nivel de religiosidad y nacionalismo.

Palabras clave: Brigada Ansor Multiusos, Religiosidad, Nacionalismo, Nahdlatul Ulama.

1. Introduction

Nahdlatul Ulama or usually abbreviated as NU was the biggest socio-religious organization in Indonesia that caught public attention. The winning of Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of NU, as Indonesian Republic President in 1999-2001 proved the strength of NU's position in Indonesia. In the reign of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), Chinese Ethic Groups have had their place with the announcement of Chinese New Year as a national day. Gus Dur was known as a leader with nationality conception. His nationalism was obtained from his grandfather, Hadratusyaikh Kyai Haji Hasyim Asy'ari who had been burning the passion of students' nationality to fight and defend the state from colonialism. Since that time, NU had been known and had rapid development with the popularity of Multipurpose Ansor Brigade or Banser as a semi-autonomous organization of NU from Ansor Youth Movement (GP Ansor) that constantly participated in every social activity. However, since the dead of Riyanto in saving the Cathedral Church in Mojokerto in 2000, Banser started to become a debate topic.

Kyai (religious teacher), Islamic boarding school and NU were the pillar of nationalism and patriotism in Indonesia [Dhakiri, 2013, p.15]. Salahuddin Wahid stated that, for NU, Pancasila was a vehicle to apply Islamic teaching. This also supported by Jamaluddin Mohammad who claimed that Muslim could become a nationalist if they perform their religion correctly [Ubaid et al, 2015, p.12-18]. No wonder, if the young generation of NU had passion for nationalism. Therefore, this study aimed to describe the root of nationalism in Indonesia through the religiosity values of its citizenship by looking through the relevancy of the history and the correlation constitutional. This study used qualitative methodology with historical approach. The data were taken from historical sources related to *Nahdlatul Ulama* and other supporting materials.

A. The History and The Development of Multipurpose Ansor Brigade

The first youth organization of NU that educated the cadre was Persatuan Pemuda Nahdlatul Ulama (PPNU). PPNU was built on 1931 which then changed its name to Pemuda Nahdlatul Ulama (PNU) on December 14th, 1932 [Anam, 1990, p.18-19]. Said Aqil Siroj, the general

leader of PBNU 2010-2015, stated that in 1924 the youth from Islamic boarding school had established *Syubbanul Wathon* or Pemuda Tanah Air which then became *Anshoe Nahdlatol Oelama* (ANO). On October 22nd, 1945, Hasyim Asy'ari on behalf of PBNU declared the exclamation of *jihad fi sabilillah* or known as Jihad resolution. Thus the jihad fatwa which written on pegon script was announced by Bung Tomo over the radio. Jihad declaration was the first and the only one religion affirmation and justification issued by the biggest Islamic Civil Organization in Indonesia on obligation to defend the State [Ubaid et al, 2015, p.8-10].

In 1936, ANO was holding the First *Confrentie* of ANO Indonesia on April 30th till May 2nd in Surabaya. The first congress was deciding on a marching program wearing uniform in all over Indonesia. The Second Congress of ANO was held on 21st – 24th March 1937 developed an organization named Banoe (Ansor Nahdlatul Oelama Brigade) which then known as Banser (Multipurpose Ansor Brigade. In the congress, Banoe showed its ability in marching by wearing yellow uniform, green tie, black cap and golden star placed on shoulder [Anam, 1990, p.23-25]. The establishment of Banoe was the respond toward the appearance of scouting organizations at that time. The characteristic which focused on the nationalism and state defending aspect showed the nationalist respond of NU.

In the third congress on 19th – 23rd April 1938 Banoe was discussed more intensive. One of the important decisions within the congress was the type of activities which allowed in Banoe. ANO was functioned as a youth organization while Banoe was directed to the practical scouting movement [Anam, 1990, p.26-29]. The fourth ANO congress was collaborated with the 14th congress of NU. Since that time, in every NU regional conference, the ANO administrator was also involved. After the congress, ANO was having rapid development, especially Banoe. Almost in every branch, Banoe showed its ability in playing the trumpet and drum during the opening of the fifth congress, a big Banoe brigade.

On December 14th 1949, ANO changed its name into Ansor Youth Movement (GP Ansor). Along with that, Banoe also changed its name into Multipurpose Ansor Brigade (Banser) [Anam, 1990, p.59–60]. The meeting which held in PB ANO office was attended by Wachid Hasyim, the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In his greeting, he said that establishing the youth organization with the purpose in defending the struggle of Muslims and preparing for NU generation was important. The meeting was resulted a new decision to build the youth organization better. The regulation of Ansor Youth Movement Organization on Multipurpose Ansor Brigade in Chapter I on General Regulation, Article I, Number 1, stated that Ansor Youth Movement which then called as GP Ansor is an autonomous organization of Nahdlatul Ulama established on 10 Muharram 1353 Hijriyah or 24 April 1934 Masehi in Banyuwangi, East Java as the provision of basic regulation and household. While Article I, Number 2 stated that based on the provision of basic regulation an household, Multipurpose Ansor Brigade which then called as Banser was

officially established on 24 April 1964 by M. Kayubi, AtimWiyono, M. Fadhil, Supangat, and Abdul Latif in Blitar, East Java [Isnaini et al, 2017].

Since 1963, Ansor exerted its members to follow the military exercise. Ansor made the Multipurpose Brigade (Banser) because PKI had been involved within the armed force. The demolition of communism had been the main target of armed force and NU declared to help the armed force to get back the peace [Feillard, 2017]. The name of Banser was popular when the impeachment of President Soekarno in 30 September Movement 1965. It was sure that Banser had role in chasing and demolishing the PKI activist, especially in East Java, Middle Java, and West Java. This event was started with a small conflict due to the different ideology between left side, which represented by PKI, and right side, represented by the nationalist and religious parties, including NU, in liberal political system. The conflict became warmer in International politic due to the influence of Cold War between two powerful countries, United States of America and Uni Soviet [Anam et al, 2013, p.180]. NU had burning the passion in fighting PKI as the continuity from the PKI action in Madiun 1948. Seeing PKI brutality, GP Ansor was immediately holding an organization consolidation. The youth of Ansor and Banser had been prepared for facing PKI [Anam, 1990, p.87-88]. Banser was working in guarding, managing, and securing the events held by NU and other related organization. However, those roles were not limited to NU only, Banser was often involved in other religion and social events. In general, the presence of Banser was accepted by society since the police apparatus was still limited. As a part of NU, Banser always declared its existence as a defender and fortresses of Ulama, also declared its nationalism commitment to defend the State. This could be seen through its commitment in helping anyone without seeing the religion, ethnicity, or group.

B. The Value of Religious Nationalism of Multipurpose Ansor Brigade (Banser)

Banser focused its whole spiritual activities to Allah SWT. Every activity which done was based on the values believed by Banser. It was also a part of religious expression. The rules or orders from Kyai that must be done had function to bond and integrate the relationship with God, humans and environment around. Besides as a place for nationalism, Banser was also seen as a place for religious expression. Its whole activities were believed could fulfill the religious deficiency in life. This belief was becoming the life guidance for a better life. The whole Banser's activities had its foundation and intention for worshipping that made Banser as the description of religiosity based on the Islamic perspective. Banser religiosity could be seen through three aspects; the first was Banser had strong aqeedah or belief on the truth of religious teachings which fundamentalist and dogmatist. The second was seen through the syariah (law) aspect. Banser had requirement to be loyal and obedient in doing every religious ritual activities commanded by the religion. The third was

the moral aspect, Banser was constantly taking part within the social life even within the State Defense. According to Driyarkara, happiness in religion was the eternal human accomplishment since religion and happiness had strong relationship [Dhakiri, 2013]. The recumbence to God was the absolute requirement to be happy. It could not be denied if people had desire toward religion and had determination in defending the religion. Hence, in its essence having religion was the human nature.

The interview with Banser's members that stated the main purpose in joining Banser was to get Allah SWT blessing could give the description on Banser's belief and resignation toward the religion. The feeling that occurred from both belief and resignation was happiness. Banser had high militancy which could be seen from the willingness to sacrifice, such as the willingness to pay for training, for buying uniform, and for the readiness when assigned to every occasion though they do not pay. According to Lukens, only madness people who want to do those things. But for Banser, this madness showed the love to NU, Islam Aswaja, Ulama, and Indonesia. Through Banser, the religiosity value could be rated. The religiosity value of nationalism was relied on the heart sensitivity. It was a value that upheld by Banser and became the behavior guidance.

Banser was holding tight the value of Pancasila as stated in the song Yalal Wathan. Besides as a religion doctrine, Pancasila also had function as moral values. Further, Banser also tried to establish humanity values by having active role in helping the victims of natural disasters in Indonesia. In addition, Banser was always trying to establish the religiosity value by doing anything based on the human's duumvirate value. Banser as an organization having two special characteristics including having leadership system and consist of continuous individual. The members of Banser as an organization were tied with regulation system such as Articles of Association and Bylaws. Besides having intern coordination system, Banser was also having coordination system with the members above.

Banser was also known as an organization for developing human through wisdom prudence. The wisdom prudence can be form from mind, feel, and other group wish. Sympathy feeling was primary modal for individual to join with Banser. The sympathy feeling also led to the moral deed which tried to establish and preserve the society's concern in the social activity.

The spirit of nationalism was depicted as Banser effort to actualize togetherness concept in all of the members structurally and continuously. The concept of nationalism was apparently not acceptable as just a legacy from the previous generation, but must be fostered continuously in order to live fertile, since the next generations have no memories of being together with history from the previous generation. Every generation must evaluate its development so that it was revealed if there have been deviations from the agreed upon characteristics of the national concept or deviations from the original goal, namely, for what the Indonesian nation was originally formed.

As ethical fact, Indonesia nation was having humanism value. Banser believed that every person has to be respect by its persona, and a person should be considered as a whole human, not depend on the race, ethnic community, or even its gender [Isnaini et al, 2017]. Hence, based on the Ulama and Kyai NU utterances, Banser believe that defend the country was reflection for pray to Allah. Further, Banser also believed that Pancasila was not contradicting with monotheism principal since the first Pancasila was “Belief in the one supreme God.”

C. The Relevance Value of Religious Nationalism for Strengthen Indonesia

The history of Banser could not separable with Jihad resolution. While Jihad resolution, was inseparable thought on Islam and nationality with the view of Hadratussyaikh KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari. He followed the developed paradigm on the politic thought of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* by Syaikh Nawawi Al-Bantani. Al-Bantani said that Dar Al-Islam that has been ruled by non-muslim will be viewed as Dar Al-Islam as long as Muslims still live there. Hence, the view of Hadratussyaikh KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari, defending the existence of Indonesian Republic was not for nationalism only, but for the life of Muslim within the State. NU was able to respond the colonialism with Jihad declaration which continued by the movement of a thousand Kyai and students in upholding the Islamic pillars. Thus, it could be said that the nationalism growth in Indonesia was derived from Islam.

Looking back to the past, either PETA or Hizbullah was the most dominant element in establishing Indonesian Armed Force (TNI) which showed that the return of Kyai and students was red threads that connect the battle since independence until today. Fatwa and Jihad resolution which issued on October 22nd 1945 was under the command of Rois Akbar Jam'iyah NU. Hasyim Asy'ari was the main cause of the Mass Battle on October 26th – 29th 1954, when England army commanded by Brigade General A.W.S. Mallaby was attacked brutally by Surabaya citizenship and caused a thousand of England army along with the leader dead. The fatwa of Jihad which announced by KH Hasyim Asy'ari was a straight order from the leader of Islamic scholars to Muslims around Java Island in radius of *masafatulqosr* were obligated to defend the State. While the resolution of Jihad which issued, was the request exclamation from Ulama to government in facing the colonialism.

The historical fact of the battle with England army supported by NICA was ended up in the savage battle in the end of October 1945. This then led to the big battle which known as the battle of 10 November 1945 and memorized as the day of heroes. This momentum was the continuity from the spontaneous movement of students since September 19th 1945 which succeed in tearing the Red, White, and Blue flag to Red and White flag. During the battle, the students were succeeding in taking back the condition by defeating England army in 3 weeks heroic battle.

Islam was compatible with nationalism and democracy. Therefore the young generation did not need to be persuaded following the “nonsense” interpretation that considered khilafah along with the Islamic formalization as the option of government system. Enough with learning and following the paradigm of Ulama who struggle for nation independence in the past could help the young generation getting the lesson on religious nationalism, not radicalism and terrorism that warped in religion.

Similar to the Head of National Coordination Unit of Banser, Alfa Isnaini, in his interview on October 22nd 2018, stated that the religiosity value of nationalism cannot be separated with the historical development of the State. Banser had been agreed born on April 24th 1934, which often known born in a condition where Kyai brought the religious values. Since it was related to Kyai and the whole components, including the young generation, Ahlussunnah could protect the whole state, ethnicity, and tribe within the nation [Isnaini et al, 2017].

Jihad resolution, according to Alfa, was the momentum used by Kyai in waking up the passion of *khubbul wathon minal iman* (loving the state was a part of iman), because nationalist, at that time did not have self-confidence, thus Soekarno sent someone to meet KH Hasyim to save the nation. The role of Kyai, then, brought the religiosity as the passion in loving the state. The term of *khubbul wathon minal iman* was a part of religiosity value of nationalism which started to be declared before the independence, until today.

The statement “The Unitary State of the Republic Indonesia is undisputed” was a process. Previously, before the Independence Day, the slogan of Indonesian society is “Merdeka” or Freedom. But after the implementation of Independence Day, the slogan is change to “The Unitary State of the Republic Indonesia is Undisputed”. Internalization of NU nationalism was by establishes the national anthem in the NU event. The national anthem was not merely sung in the official event, but it also sing before the main event is opened.

Besides national anthem, the song that always sings in NU event was *Yalal Wathan*. It meant as love our country, in which this song is NU anthem. The lyric described spirit of nationalism and made by KH. Wahab Hasbullah after declared *Nadhatul Wathan* (the Rise of Homeland). There are two versions of this song; in Indonesian and English. It is created to instill nationalism spirit for the young generation. This song firstly used as “spiritual backrest” to fire up the young generation to against the invaders [Anam, 2015].

The incident of the of Riyanto’s death, the member of Banser, while he tries to save the Katredal Church in Mojokerto from the bomb, become a momentum for Banser itself in order to be known national or even international. Banser has announced the brave of Riyantoas Nahdlatul Ulama reflection that its characteristic is respect to the diversity. However, the incident has been performed as a movie entitled “Tanda Tanya.” Several Islamic communities as like Indonesia Religious

Leader (MUI) and Islamic Defense Front (FPI) have protest against the film.

As reflected in the “Tanda Tanya” movie, the bravery characteristic of Banser assumed to be a threat for extremist community in Indonesia. Hence, several parties who dislike with the existence of Banser, always try to against Banser by accused them as disbanding recitation. Meanwhile, Banse is merely disbanding recitation which seems to be provocative.

2. Conclusion

In conclusion, nationalism was appeared through the religiosity value which growth within the soul of Banser. Banser as part of NU inherited the vision and mission of NU to develop the Islamic society based on the understanding of *Ahlusunnah wal Jama'ah*. It was the basic foundation of religiosity value owned by Banser. While the basic foundation of nationalism value, was the passion that came from the past, started from Jihad resolution. The value of nationalism was the heritage from the Islamic scholars known as *Annahdliyah*. Thus, the teaching inherited by NU was the teaching that has the requirement of religiosity and nationalism value. Jihad resolution was the momentum used by Kyai in burning the passion of *khubbulwathonminaliman* because the nationalists, at that time, did not have self-confidence, Soekarno, then, sent someone to meet KH Hasyim to save the nationalism. Hence, the role of Kyai in bringing the religiosity to nationalism became the passion of loving the State was a part of iman. The soul of nationalism and the dedication to society was becoming the concept of Ansor Youth Movement establishment, especially Banser. Banser was bond with Pancasila and made it as the basic moral teaching. Banser was maintaining the humanity values by actively helping the disaster in Indonesia. It was also maintaining the religiosity values based on the humans' nature as God's creature.

Therefore, the role of Kyai and students in defending Indonesian independence was undoubted. Through Banser, Indonesia knew what nationalism is. Thus the root of Indonesian nationalism was came from the religiosity value. Furthermore, nationalism and religiosity were the value contained within Indonesia.

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