

In Search of the Imagined *Ummah*: Explaining the Political Crossover of Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia's 2019 Presidential Election

*Journal of Asian
Social Science Research*
2020, Vol. 2, No. 2: 109-134
<http://jassr.cassr.web.id>
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Abstract

It has been admitted that the 212 movements constituted not only a socio-religious driving force but also a political one in contemporary Indonesia. In the 2019 presidential election, conservative Islamic camps that had anger and resentments toward President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) as he was regarded incapable of solving crises and keen on discriminating against Islam and *ulama* came up together to win Prabowo Subianto-Sandiaga Uno. Based on qualitative field research in some areas of Indonesia, this article analyses the diffusion of some Islamic groups with their grand narratives and discourses, and their involvement in Prabowo-Sandiaga's campaign, considered as a fast track of establishing a utopia of the imagined *ummah* (united Muslim community). In the light of an Islamic activism and social movement theory, it concludes that such a political crossover is a kind of new Islamic activism and social movement. It has not been merely rooted in a conservative outlook of Islam, but also in their dissatisfaction and contention over Jokowi's social and economic policies. This kind of new Islamic social movement would affect contemporary Indonesian religious and political realms.

Key Words

Indonesian presidential election, political crossover, conservative Muslims, moderate Islam, Islamic solidarity, Islamic *da'wa*, constitutional *jihad*

Introduction

In the post-Suharto era, Islamism emerged in various Islamic social and political movements brandishing the enactment of *sharia* or caliphate (Effendi 2004: 401; Osman 2018; Hasan 2006). Various and different Islamic conservative groups have been exploiting the elections to posit

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their “ideal Muslim leaders” (IPAC 2018). In this vein, they have zealously been promoting mayor and governor candidates taking benefits of the electoral democracy system after *Reformasi* in 1998. Seeing their victory in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, they become more convinced that such spirit of Islam would also matter in the 2019 presidential election. In so doing, they supported voluntarily and militantly Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Salahudin Uno (Prabowo-Sandi), likely their total vote for Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, in expecting the fast-track fulfillment of their Islamic utopia in the country.

Facing his old rival in Indonesia’s 2019 presidential election, Joko Widodo, well known as Jokowi, nominated Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)’s supreme leader (*rais ‘am*) and Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI; Indonesian Council of Ulama)’s general chairman, Ma’ruf Amin, as his running mate. It was eventually a masterstroke for Prabowo’s camp as well as conservatives. In the election, Jokowi-Ma’ruf then gained 85, 6 million votes (55, 5%). They won in some Javanese and non-Muslim strongholds like Jakarta, Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, North Sumatra, Lampung, Central Sulawesi and North Sulawesi, Maluku, Papua, Bali, and East Nusa Tenggara. Meanwhile, in contrast, Prabowo-Sandi accumulated only 69,6 million votes (44,5%) (“Hitung Hasil Suara Pemilu Presiden & Wakil Presiden RI 2019”) by conquering some Muslim strongholds such as Banten, West Java, Aceh, West Sumatera, Riau, Jambi, Bengkulu, South Kalimantan, West Nusa Tenggara, South Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, and North Maluku.

This electoral result reflected the return of ethnic cleavages and identity (Pepinsky 2019), regional polarization, and politics of *aliran* in contemporary Indonesian politics (Dinarto and Nubowo 2020:128-144; Hasyim 2020:75-89). It also attested to a pressing “conservative turn” phenomenon within Indonesian Islam (Bruinessen 2013). This rising tendency also gained traction in Indonesian urban Muslims, specifically the young generation, even those of moderate Islam Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama organizations, especially after the 212 movements and the 2017 gubernatorial election with two pair candidates, Basuki Tjahaya Purnama-Saiful Djarot and Anies Baswedan-Sandiaga Uno (Sebastian and Nubowo 2019). Furthermore, the two moderate organizations were said to be supposedly ‘contingent democrats’, supporting both democratic liberalism and non-democratic values (Menchik 2019:415-433). Moderate Muslim student organizations (HMI, IMM, and PMII) were less attractive than Islamist student organizations (KAMMI and Gema HTI)¹ in

universities (Arifianto 2019: 415-433). Some scholars revealed then that the return of ideological competition, rising Islamism, and executive illiberalism in most recently organized elections provoked and led to a democratic decline (Aspinall 2019).

Nevertheless, little scholarship has been done in understanding the phenomenon of a political crossover between multiple Islamic groups in the 2019 elections. Therefore, this article aims to fill this gap in the literature by asking the following questions: Why did political convergence happen among various conservative Islamic groups in Indonesia's 2019 presidential election? How did they mobilize their resources to support their candidate? What is its effect on contemporary Indonesian politics and Islam? To answer these questions, I conducted qualitative field research in some areas of Indonesia (West Sumatra, North Sumatra, Central Java, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, South Sulawesi, and North Sulawesi). To sharpen some related issues, many in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were also conducted with Muslim activists of Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, of Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam [FPI]), Wahdah Islamiyah (WI), Salafi movement networks, and *tarbiyah* movements in those areas.²

In the light of Islamic activism and social movement theory approach, this article, firstly, will focus on “the mobilization of contention to support Muslim causes”. Secondly, it will describe “how resources are mobilized for such activism”. Thirdly, it will have a look at the cultural, religious, and ideological structure and disposition in presenting opportunities for activism (Wictorowicz 2004). In this sense, by analytically describing the collected data, this article will figure out Islamic factors (Islamic credentials) which became very decisive and pertinent for both candidates in the elections. It will also unearth some common-shared Islamic grand narratives and discourses diffused by conservative camps in the presidential election's campaign. Then, it will slightly reveal some actors, institutionally and individually, who make such political convergence possibly happens. Finally, the article will map out some implications of this new emerging trend of a conservative political crossover to the future of Indonesian Islam and political realms.

Islamic Credentials

Indonesia's 2019 presidential election was an old rival face-off whereby some electoral issues were a reproduction of that of the 2014 presidential election such as the economy, nationalism, social, and political identity

(Fealy 2019). However, the situation was not the same, as the “conservative turn” indicated by the massive organization of the *Aksi Bela Islam* on 2 December 2016 might be a game-changer. The 212 movements were seen as the rise of religious and political conservatism which aims at Islamising Indonesian life. Indeed, it was not just merely a religious and political movement against the incumbent governor of Jakarta Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) but also became a standpoint for the rise of religious and political conservatism within Indonesian Muslim society (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2018:479). Interestingly, the 212 movements became much more pivotal in shaping Indonesian politics. It not only encouraged Muslims to express their political opinion and behaviors, but also prompted elite politicians, political parties, and presidential candidates to be more accommodative toward Islamic causes and factors.

In this regard, both Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and Prabowo Subianto’s camps had to consider the new rising Islamic conservatism within Indonesian socio-political contexts. It has been argued that it was Prabowo’s camp and his conservative supporters who manipulated Islam to pursue their political gains. Nevertheless, Jokowi performed also such parallel politicization of Islam. To some extent, he managed better this issue than his rival. Considering Islam as a dominant political driving force in the election, Jokowi made a series of political “triangulation” maneuvers by approaching conservative Muslims and *ulama* (Tornquist 2019:459-474). He nominated Ali Mochtar Ngabalin, a conservative Muslim politician and former Prabowo’s spokesperson in the 2014 election, to join the Office of the Presidential Staff (KSP). His task was to communicate Jokowi’s policies to the public, especially Muslim audiences. Ngabalin became then a blatant spokesperson of KSP who defended Jokowi’s policies and confronted the oppositions, especially that of his conservative fellows.

It was reported that Jokowi approached two moderate Islam organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. He frequently met NU’s *ulama* and structural leaders, notably its supreme leader (*rais ‘am*), Ma’ruf Amin, on several occasions. He also visited many traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) that belong to this traditionalist organization, especially in Java. During his safari visit to *pesantrens*, his photos wearing a sarong and black *peci* got published and became viral through every social media platform. It is interesting to observe that since those frequent *rendez-vous*, the NU’s supreme leader reportedly conveyed some compliments overtly to Jokowi. On many occasions, Ma’ruf Amin encouraged *ulama* and Muslims not to hesitate to support the former Jakarta governor. “I invite *ulama* to support Jokowi,” said

Ma'ruf Amin. To secure his card within modernist Islam, Jokowi also made political rapprochement maneuvers toward Muhammadiyah, the biggest modernist Islamic organization in Indonesia. He reshuffled Anies Baswedan from his ministry by appointing Muhajir Effendy, one of the chairmen at the Muhammadiyah National Board, to lead the Ministry of National Education. He also invited Din Syamsudin to his administration as a Special Envoy for Dialogue on Religion and Civilization Civilization who then resigned later from his office in September 2019.

To raise his Islamic credentials among Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), Jokowi supported *sharia* economic programs. Having a central position among Indonesian Muslims, MUI constituted a strategic partner for the government. MUI delivered Jokowi's *sharia* economic programs such as the construction of the MUI Tower in Jakarta and minimart networks owned by Lembaga Ekonomi Umat (LEU) affiliated to MUI ("Presiden Luncurkan Ritel Modern LEU Umat"). It is effortlessly discernable when Maruf Amin stated overtly that Jokowi was a nice person and that he had long been familiar with the president. He appreciated Jokowi's insatiable work ethos to develop Indonesia by constructing infrastructures throughout Indonesia. At the commemoration of Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP; Union and Development Party) in Semarang, Amin narrated his conversation with the president:

To speak frankly, I get interested in Pak Jokowi's personality as a president. He is a humble man. What did I say? Pak Jokowi is chosen by Allah to become a president. I said to Pak Jokowi: "If Allah determines someone become whatsoever, He just says "*kun faya kun*" (*creatio, ex nihilo*). And then you get such *kun faya kun*, not anyone else. Why did Allah choose you? On your personality, there is something which is not in anyone. Hence, Allah lets you lead this country, to develop prosperity and welfare for this nation and state" ("Ma'ruf Amin Puji Kepribadian Jokowi Sebagai Pemimpin").

Ultimately, in this logical background, Jokowi would say clearly that he had been close to Islam and moderate Islam in Indonesia, represented by Muhammadiyah, NU, and MUI. His cunning strategies and maneuvers toward these influential two moderate organizations and the *ulama* council were intended to streamline them into his political *status quo* and considerations. Furthermore, the nomination of Ma'ruf Amin was aimed at, particularly, consolidating moderate Muslim voters and, on the other side, breaking down the conservative ones.

Nevertheless, this nomination sparked controversies. Within Jokowi's die-hard supporters themselves, Ma'ruf Amin was very unpopular. He had been long considered as the notorious intellectual actor behind the blasphemous allegation over Ahok and his two-year imprisonment. His opinion on religious diversity and pluralism had been considerably criticized and questioned (Burhani and Simanjuntak 2018). Some Islamists concomitantly accused him of having betrayed the Islamic struggle and *ummah* when he turned to Jokowi's camp by accepting his nomination as a vice presidential candidate (Schaffer 2019: 235-255). However, as we might know, ultimately, Jokowi's unpopular strategy was effective in discouraging Prabowo's Islamic credentials among his conservative Muslim supporters. In this context, by nominating Ma'ruf, Jokowi himself needed to appease conservative Muslim's contention and resentments as well as to consolidate and secure *Nahdliyin's* (NU followers) votes.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting, through his state apparatus, Jokowi also allegedly repressed conservative leaders. A chairman of FPI and a most notorious leader of the 212 *Aksi Bela Islam*, Rizieq Shihab, had to flee to Saudi Arabia. He was allegedly accused of having a sex chat scandal and other "subversive" statements on Pancasila and some ethnic and religious groups. A Salafi network prominent figure and coordinator of the National Movement for Guarding Fatwa (GNPF-MUI), Bahtiar Nasir, was also accused of supplying illegal weapons to Palestine fighters through his AQL charity funds (IPAC 2018). Those allegations sparked further controversies among the Indonesian Muslim population. In the meantime, we witnessed Rizieq and Nasir became the symbol of socio-religious and political contention toward Jokowi. For their supporters, they were "martyrs" for their struggle and *jihad* against the political repression and the outlawing of *ulama*. This contention against Jokowi has triggered further the newly emerging political crossover of religious conservatism in nowadays Indonesian politics.

Prabowo enjoyed a wide range of Muslim (Islamist) networks since he was active in the Indonesian national military (Hefner 2000). He also enjoyed his father Sumitro Djojohadikusumo's political legacy. Sumitro's affiliation to the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI), to some extent, facilitated him to have these wide-ranging conservative networks which inherited Masyumi's political legacy. Historically, the Masyumi and PSI were banned undemocratically by Sukarno in 1960 as they converged in a point to confront Sukarno's politics. In West Sumatera, for instance, as a biological son of Sumitro Djoyohadikusumo, Prabowo was quite popular among the Muslim population, due to the historical alignment between

Masyumi and PSI in the period of the local rebellion of PRRI (Adriwanto and Sebastian 2020:108-127). In this socio-political context, it is easy to understand why Prabowo became a magnetic political leader among Muslim supporters in 2014 and 2019. His long historical proximity to Islamist and conservative groups permitted him to get easily backed up by wide-ranging and diverse Muslim leaders and population.

Thus, for the Prabowo-Sandi's camp, such Muslim image and credentials were indeed pivotal for political mobilization. Through a series of campaigns, Prabowo was idealized and romanticized as the best Muslim candidate who was friendly to Islam and not hostile to Islamic causes and Muslims' aspirations. Despite his father's socialist and *abangan* (nominal) Muslim and his non-Muslim mother, Prabowo was known for having established widespread relations with Muslim intellectuals and activists who occasionally named him "Umar ibn Khattab", the second caliph in the early Islam, for his bravery and sincerity toward Islamic causes. In this regard, it is easy to understand, Prabowo and his political team made the Islamic (modernist) and conservative support as the basis for his support of the presidential elections in the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections. Prabowo's credentials and his proximity to Islam, denoted by his black *peci* and specific Islamic terms and word such as *Allahu Akbar*, *alhamdulillah*, and *insha Allah*, were regarded as a symbolic attempt to polish his Islamic credentials among the Muslims' eyes.

Prabowo was seen as competent in taking and winning conservative Islamic groups' hearts and minds. Unlike his contender supposedly hostile to Islam, the former commander of the elite military Kopassus, on the contrary, promised to protect *ulama* and other religious leaders from any criminalization or persecution. He then condemned, further, growing persecution against several *ulama* in his camps such as Rizieq Shihab, Bachtiar Nasir, and Alfian Tanjung. In front of his thousands of supporters in Jakarta Convention Center in January 2019, Prabowo said:

It is essential that, in our national history, the role of *ulama* is of enormous significance in our struggle. Indeed, Indonesian Independence was proclaimed in Jakarta on 17 August 1945. Nevertheless, such Independence was examined and challenged (by the aggressors) in Surabaya, East Jawa. The battle that happened in Surabaya had been supported by a *jihad* revolution by the great *ulama* ("Prabowo: Kami akan Pastikan Pemuka Agama-Ulama Bebas Kriminalisasi").

Prabowo seemed to understand that his most prominent supporters came from modernist, conservative, and Islamist Muslims. It is easy to understand why Prabowo tended to use Islamic populism such as *haji* issues, financial and economic issues, and foreign debts (“Janji Prabowo di Depan Ulama”). To attract more supporters and polish his democratic profile and credentials, he also promised to defend any religious groups following the Constitution and the ideology of Pancasila. This statement was likely intended to answer the accusations that he protected FPI and HTI, regarded as anti the Constitution of 1945 and Pancasila. On the other hand, it was also aimed at attacking Jokowi’s policy that was leaning toward democratic decline due to allegedly persecution and criminalization against his opposing voices.

To polish his tolerant image, Prabowo was not reluctant to show publicly his religiously plural background of his own family. On Gerindra’s Facebook page (24 December 2011), he stated that his family consisted of religiously plural backgrounds. His father was a Javanese Muslim, while his mother was a Christian. According to him, the principle of pluralism and multiculturalism has been highly respected in his family. Therefore, he claimed to be accustomed to religious differences and pluralism and to be close to other religious groups such as Christianity, Catholicism, and even Jews. Once again, in his Facebook, Prabowo conveyed further that he grew up with Muslim colleagues and activists, including traditionalist *ulama* that belong to NU.

Strategy patterns of using Islamic identity politics were also performed by Prabowo’s running mate Sandiaga Uno. Sandiaga is well known as a young businessman, instead of being a Muslim *santri* or coming from a *santri* family. However, after running for Jakarta Pilkada with Anies Baswedan, suddenly his ‘*santri*’ image was politically well polished. To polish Sandiaga’s Islamic credential, it was PKS who called him “a new *santri* of Post Islamism” (“PKS Jelaskan Definisi Santri Post-Islamisme Sandiaga Uno”). His soft discourse and rhetoric full of Islamic phrases such as *insha Allah*, *alhamdulillah*, and *subhanallah* made his Muslim militants effortlessly idealize him as a young *santri post-Islamist* leader. Initially, Sandiaga felt uncomfortable with such a new identity, as he has never been to any *pesantren*. However, he finally enjoyed his new nickname (“Sandiaga Sempat Bingung dengan Julukan Santri di Era Post-Islamisme”). Ultimately, in the lead of the election, conservative *ulama* issued a *fatwa* through the *Ijtimak Ulama* (Ulama Consensus) supporting Prabowo-Sandi in the 2019 election (“Ini Alasan Ijtimak Ulama Capreskan Prabowo Subianto”). They believed that by supporting Prabowo-Sandi, the

project of deep Islamization in Nusantara would be in fast-track fulfillment. In this regard, they were engaged voluntarily and militantly in the long campaign to win this ‘ideal’ and ‘best Muslim presidential candidate’.

Grand Islamic Narratives

During the 2019 election, there were unimpeded and massive circulations of grand political narratives through social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp). Both Jokowi and Prabowo’s camps generated concomitantly political discourses and narratives to win the fierce electoral battle. In this sense, they created coherent narratives out of the complicated reality of political and human life. These narratives had an impact on the political agency and ultimately constructed social and political orders by drawing on limited narrative resources. The process of narration was necessarily selective because there was always more than one story to tell. Narratives are thus tools to understand, negotiate, and make sense of situations they encounter (Graef *et al.* 2018:2-3). In the case of the election, narratives are “equipment for conquering and winning.”

Within Prabowo’s militant supporters, there were grand Islamic narratives and discourses which were widely distributed throughout the country. These include “Prabowo and Sandiaga are good Muslims”, “Prabowo-Sandi pair is an ideal Muslim candidate”, “Prabowo is competent to tackle social-economic agonies”, “Prabowo-Sandi’s victory is for an Islamisation of the country”, “Jokowi is hostile to Islam”, “Jokowi outlaws, criminalizes, and persecutes ulama”, “Ma’ruf is less convincing”, “Jokowi is incompetent”, “Jokowi is close to the Chinese-non Muslim tycoons, “*al-ukhuwah al-Islamiyah*”, “Islamic *da’wah*”, “constitutional and political jihad against Jokowi-Ma’ruf, enabling an Islamic *khayru ummah*”. These narratives and discourses were readily accepted by Prabowo’s political agents and then were exploited as political instruments and weapons to obstruct the rival camp.

In some areas of West Sumatera, North Sumatera, Central Java, South Sulawesi, and North Sulawesi, some conservative Islamic groups accepted and distributed those narratives and discourses. They portrayed both candidates Jokowi-Ma’ruf and Prabowo-Sandi differently. Jokowi was considered too late to accommodate Muslim aspirations. He was also seen as having criminalized some *ulama* and persecuted political opposition in the name of political stability and order. Also, Ma’ruf Amin was not enough for convincing them to burnish Jokowi’s image as a good Muslim. Some traditional *kyai* in a very influential local *Pesantren* As’adiyah Sengkang, Wajo, South Sulawesi, interestingly asserted:

We would prefer to have a cup of *kopi pahit* (black coffee) with a little sugar than that of *kopi susu dengan teh* (milk coffee blended with tea). Kyai Ma'ruf Amin insufficiently convinces us to polish and burnish Jokowi's Islamic credential. We then prefer to vote a humbler and more honest Sandiaga, even though he was born a nominal Muslim, than Kyai Ma'ruf".³

Surprisingly, the traditionalist *kyai* culturally affiliated to NU also said that Ma'ruf selection as Jokowi's running mate would endanger and tarnish *ulama* and MUI's credibility. They stated further their preference: "We want to vote for Prabowo-Sandi. Albeit not good *santri*, they are close to Islam and Muslim aspirations. He is a *kopi pahit* with a little sugar (little Islamic credentials)".

Furthermore, amid the conservative Muslim groups, there were massively circulated narratives that President Joko Widodo was hopeless in terms of economic grievances. Jokowi's projects ignited economic grievances and resentments among conservative Muslim groups. They then looked at Jokowi's economic policies as hostile and detrimental to Muslims' economic welfare and prosperity. Jokowi's economic policy which was seen as pro-liberalist and capitalist during his first mandate was considered proof of Jokowi's incompetency to tackle the problem. Some religious leaders in Makassar South Sulawesi revealed their discontent to Jokowi-Ma'ruf.⁴ The common-shared resentment toward Jokowi also came up within conservative Muslim groups in Medan, North Sumatra. Accordingly, Jokowi was regarded to have caused Indonesia's economy to slump and regress by hiring Chinese workers in Indonesia on many infrastructure projects. They said further that Jokowi, in place of Muslims' interests, was so close to the "nine dragons" (non-Muslim and Chinese conglomerates).⁵ The imbalance in economic growths and property, most of which are in the hands of non-Muslim tycoons, was a useful tool to bolster the tragedy of injustice and economic depression among the Muslim community.

In this sense, the *Ijtimak Ulama* which was held by conservative politicians and *ulama* in Jakarta issued a *fatwa* for obliging all Muslims to vote without any reserve Prabowo-Sandi in the 2019 election ("Ijtimak Ulama II Sepakat Dukung Prabowo di Pilpres 2019"). The *fatwa* was based on the perception that the pair was no atrocity toward Islam and Muslims' interest. The conservative *ulama* believed that the Prabowo-Sandi pair was highly competent to tackle such pressing issues and closer to Islamic causes

than Jokowi-Ma'ruf. They crafted and diffused Islamic discourses and narratives such as *al-ukhuwah al-Islamiyah* (Islamic solidarity), Islamic *da'wah*, and constitutional *jihad*. These discourses served to motivate all Muslims to pursue the title of *khayru ummah*, the best community, by voting for Prabowo-Sandi in the election. For conservatives, the three tenets were inherently embodied in their thought and action in pursuing their ultimate objective of Islamizing the country.

Based on the *fatwa* above, the conservative groups struggled for defeating Jokowi-Ma'ruf. They called this duty of constitutional *jihad* for every Muslim. Rahmat Surya, a local *ustadz* and businessman in Medan, said:

Why is it a *jihad*? Ahok is already finished. Right now, we do *jihad* for stopping Jokowi. He is the enemy of Islam as he has been criminalizing our *ulama*. Constitutional *jihad* is our obligation. To defeat Jokowi-Ma'ruf and to win Prabowo-Sandi is an obligation for all Muslims. I believe that voting for Prabowo's victory is part of spiritual and religious obligation. It is following the *ulama*'s political *fatwa*. If I wrongly choose Prabowo-Sandi, at least my sin belongs to *ulama*'s responsibility. However, on the contrary, if I wrongly choose Jokowi-Ma'ruf, then no one bears my sin, because the *ulama* do not support them. By the spirit of *jihad*, we must conduct campaigns for Prabowo militantly and voluntarily.⁶

It is interesting to note that religiously political narratives generated volunteerism. In the name of *jihad* and for the sake of the glorious Islam and Muslim community (*'izz al-Islam wa al-Muslimin*), diverse Muslim groups got engaged militantly in campaigning Prabowo-Sandi's victory. They principally consisted of Muslim activists and supporters of the 212 movements who were famous in their *jihad*'s spirit in Islamic causes and interests. Such volunteerism also was found in all provinces of Indonesia. In North Sulawesi, Muhammad As'ad, an Islamic teacher at the Pesantren Darul Istiqamah Manado, was voluntarily called to the rank of local Prabowo-Sandi's camp. He then created a volunteer group for Prabowo-Sandi in Manado. Acknowledging that he never received any financial support from the party coalition or Prabowo-Sandi's team, they raised funds by themselves to run the campaign. They hoped that what they did for Prabowo's victory become part of *jihad* for Islam.⁷

Interestingly, in South Sulawesi, some politicians from Jokowi's coalition parties differed from the official party's policy and decision in that they blatantly supported Prabowo-Sandi. They argued that Prabowo-Sandi represented their local values leadership which was in line with the Sulawesi Muslim's indigenous Islamic history.⁸ Moreover, in Central Java, Prabowo-Sandi volunteers never lost their militancy. Their spirit and energy of *jihad* did not make them recede to winning their best candidate although they admitted that it was so difficult to convince NU and *abangan* people. In West Java, it was reported that having been ignited by the spirit of *jihad*, some *hijabi* female activists conducted campaigns for Prabowo militantly and voluntarily. By conducting a door-to-door campaign, they were firmly convinced it was inherently part of their *jihad* for enacting their utopia. According to them, this Islamic utopia would be hindered to exist by Jokowi-Ma'ruf's victory.

In contrast to Prabowo's Muslim supporters, Jokowi's camp volunteerism was relatively low. Their supporters were not as militant as it was in the 2014 presidential election. In South Sulawesi, a member of Jokowi's coalition party would not be engaged in any campaign, if there was not any campaign fund.⁹ An Indonesian film director Indra Gunawan testified: "I was involved in the campaign for Jokowi in the 2014 [presidential election]. But in the 2019 [presidential election], I was no longer active, although I chose him finally".¹⁰

However, among NU's elites, clerics, and members, another *jihad* and political militancy for the Jokowi-Mar'uf's total victory was astonishing. Different from the Jokowi's party coalition, NU volunteers were vehemently militant campaigners. This could be understood because for them, as the most prominent traditionalist Muslim scholar, Ma'ruf Amin is their highly respected *rais am* (supreme leader). For a young NU cleric in Pesantren Ma'hadut Thalabah, Babakan Madang, Brebes in Central Jawa, the 2019 election constituted a real battle for NU between victory or glory (*kemenangan dan kejayaan*) and loss and shame (*kekalahan dan hal memalukan*). He said enthusiastically: "If the pair of *Pak* Jokowi and *Kyai* Ma'ruf lose the election, all NU followers will bear a big shame".¹¹

The Nature of Conservative Convergence

It is stimulating to observe how the grand political narratives were widely distributed and readily accepted by Islamist and conservative camps in the 2019 presidential election. We might analyze the phenomenon of "deep Islamization" through insatiable campaigns of "*Syariat Islam*,

NKRI Bersyariat and Khilafah Islamiyyah” (Islamic *sharia*, the Unitary State of Indonesia with *Sharia* and Islamic Caliphates).¹² Despite their different objectives, those Islamist and conservative groups came up with a common cause to establish *sharia* in Indonesia. The great victory of the 212 movements in putting Ahok in jail and winning Anies Baswedan in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial elections motivated them to nominate Muslim candidates who are supportive of their exclusive Islamist agenda and utopia. Interestingly, this phenomenon was not detached from the role significantly played by MUI, Muhammadiyah, and NU’s conservative elements. Those elements were involved in rallies for some Islamic issues and cause with other conservative elements of Salafi-Wahabism, *tarbiyah*, and caliphate movements.

Some elements of conservatism within MUI, Muhammadiyah, and NU always stand for the NKRI and Pancasila. Meanwhile, Wahdah Islamiyah and FPI are of a utopia for establishing the “NKRI with sharia”. In contrast, the Council of Indonesian Jihadist (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, MMI) and HTI idealize an enactment of an Islamic state or caliphate in place of Pancasila and NKRI. Despite their differences, those conservative elements are united by Islamic doctrines of Islamic solidarity, Islamic propagation, and constitutional *jihad* to construct the “imagined” Islamic community in Indonesia.

The MUI has facilitated the fast-spreading of Islamic conservatism in Indonesia. It accommodates all variants of Islamic organizations, moderate or conservative groups, except the Shiite organizations such as the Indonesian Association of Ahlul Bait Congregation (IJABI) and Indonesian Ahlul Bait (ABI). Although Muhammadiyah and NU dominated the MUI, some smaller conservative organizations were vocal minorities that were undoubtedly able to influence MUI’s Islamic edicts (*fatwa*). Since the Reformasi, the conservative elements have been successful, little by little, in transforming the MUI to be more conservative. In 2005, the MUI issued a *fatwa* condemning western ideologies of secularism, liberalism, and pluralism. MUI was reportedly friendly to pluralism during its inception in 1980 until 1998. However, after the *Reformasi*, the organization turned to conservatism by condemning pluralism which is recognized culturally and constitutionally in the Indonesian realm (Hasyim 2015:487-495). The Ahok’s blasphemy case and the emergence of the National Safeguard of MUI’s Fatwa (GNPF-MUI) are the best examples of such conservative influence and tendency within the MUI’s direction.

Furthermore, the conservative Islamist groups were nimbler than Muhammadiyah and NU. In urban areas and cities, Muhammadiyah

and NU have been challenged by new emerging conservative Islamic organizations and groups that more adept at exploiting their weakness. Being preoccupied with large organizational affairs and business charities, the two organizations pay greater attention to elite concerns and politics. Consequently, they are not well-equipped to cope with fast-moving religious and social change at the grassroots level. In this regard, it is not hard to discern that religious conservatism becomes visible and gains traction among the members of the moderate organizations. In several Muhammadiyah's *pesantrens* and universities in Central Java and Yogyakarta, there have been women teachers (*ustadzah*) and students who wear a burqa.¹³ In this regard, a fully veiled female activist and secretary of Sukoharjo Branch of Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM) shared her story:

I have been wearing a burqa since I was in the second semester of study at my university. It does not impede my social activism. I wear it not because it is an Islamic obligation, found in Al-Quran or Hadith, but mainly in the interests of my safety. I do not subscribe to any radical ideology. It is uncomfortable if someone stares at me. I have the freedom to wear a burqa. I am still active at IMM as I think that donning a full burqa is a private matter and there is no rule disallowing it. I am wonderfully comfortable and will remain active in Muhammadiyah.¹⁴

Moreover, at the regional level of Muhammadiyah, there has been a rapprochement of conservatism. Regional or local activists of Muhammadiyah have been keen to invite some conservative religious preachers such as Bachtiar Nasir, Adi Hidayat, and activists of the banned Islamic organizations like Sobri Lubis of Front Pembela Islam (FPI) and Felix Siauw of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). In other words, "they prefer inviting Bachtiar Nasir to Haedar Nashir, Muhammadiyah's general chairman". In February 2018, The Muhammadiyah Branch (Pimpinan Cabang Muhammadiyah [PCM]) of Mantrijeron Yogyakarta invited the chairman of FPI, Sobri Lubis, to deliver a religious sermon. The PCM Kauman Yogyakarta invited an infamous activist of HTI, Felix Shiauw, to give his religious reflection at the Great Mosque of Yogyakarta at the End of the Year 2017. The catchphrase "back to the Quran and Sunnah" is a standard rallying call of such conservative ideology. It is not hard for Islamist groups to find a convergent point with the conservative strain

of Muhammadiyah. This convergence is happening in many religious events or even politics. Buya Risman Muchtar from the Muhammadiyah Department of *Tabligh* (Islamic predication) stated that Muhammadiyah could collaborate with any other Islamic organizations, including conservative ones (Nubowo 2018).

It is quite common to say that compared to Muhammadiyah, NU's structural body of the organization is more immune to conservatism. It is not easy to imagine that someone without a genealogical lineage of a *kyai* and *pesantren* educational background could obtain an influential position in the NU organization. NU has been fortunate thanks to the progressive role and ideas of the late Kyai Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur). During his long tenure in the chairmanship post, he successfully fostered culturally and intellectually the ideas of tolerance and moderation among NU members. Nevertheless, there has been a rallying phenomenon of rapprochement between NU's *ulama* and conservative religious ideas and movements. In the 1999 NU Congress, the Bahtsul Masail committee issued a *fatwa* prohibiting inter-religious prayer meetings, frequently practiced by Gus Dur. Such events arguably contradicted with *shari'a*, and therefore *haram* (religiously forbidden). The committee also declared that it was *haram* for a non-Muslim to be a political leader in Indonesia (Bush 2000:80-81). This *fatwa* is similar to the conservative groups' argument which was used to reject Ahok, a Chinese-Christian candidate, in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election.

Furthermore, at regional or local levels, NU's *kyais* and followers were strongly associated with more symbolic expressions of Islam and conservative discourses. In 2011, East Java governor, Soekarwo, issued a provincial decree No. 188/94/KPTS/013/2011 banning the existence of Jamaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia. This decree was supported by NU clerics stating that Ahmadiyah's doctrine on the prophecy of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not in line with NU's teachings and the Aswaja doctrines. Hasyim Muzadi, former NU chairman, enunciated that all Ahmadiyah activities had to be banned in Indonesia following the Ministerial Decree (SKB) of Religious Affairs, Home Affairs, and the Attorney General Office (Kejagung). Said Aqil Siraj, the current NU chairman, and The East Java Provincial NU (PWNU) also supported the ban of Ahmadiyah. However, they constated that Ahmadis should be respected as Muslim fellows and be reconverted to the correct line of Islam ("NU, Ahmadiyah, dan FPI").

In the case of Tajul Muluk and the Shiite community in Sampang, Madura, NU's Local Branch (PCNU) of Sampang condemned Muluk's Shiite teachings as heresy and a deviation of Islam. He then was forced

to sign a statement that he would refrain from teaching Shiite doctrines and movement in Madura. The expulsion of Shi'a Islam has been a humanitarian tragedy (KontraS Surabaya 2012: 5). NU's stance and opposition against Ahmadiyah and Shi'a Islam may constitute a significant setback for enlightened, tolerant, and moderate Islamic discourses and narratives within this largest Islamic organization in Indonesia.

Moreover, in fact, in many local areas of East Java such as Bangkalan, Pamekasan, and Bojonegoro, there has been an alliance and cooperation between conservative elements of NU with the conservative groups, especially with FPI. Being close to the Aswaja and NU, FPI has received support from NU local conservative clerics. In Bangkalan, Madura, again, to put an example, NU local *kyais* supported or even became leaders of a local branch of FPI (Hamdi 2013:71-95). This Habib Rizieq-led organization has been seen as a brother of Islam that wants to do "compelling the good deed and forbidding the bad one". This *da'wah* has no contradiction with NU's *Aswaja* ideology and doctrines. They also have common cultural traditions of respecting *habib* (plural: *habaib*) and of honoring Sheik Muhammad Alawi al-Maliki. Many NU members and students study and seek the blessings of this most prominent traditionalist *ulama* in Saudi Arabia. Former Maliki students, Luthfi Bashori and Habib Abdurrahman bin Husain Bahlega Assegaf, are dubbed as an advisor of FPI-East Java and an *imam* of FPI respectively. In this context, Al-Maliki and *NU Garis Lurus* networks led them to have mutual understandings leading to convergence and alliance (Iqbal 2020:107-108). Other NU conservative figures in East Java serve as the rallying factor of such conservative convergence: Idrus Romli (Majelis Intelektual Ulama Muda Indonesia [MIUMI]), Jurjiz Muzammil (head of FPI Sumenep), and Syarifuddin Surur (leader of FPI Pamekasan) (IPAC 2018: 9-11).

The rising political crossover conservatism is also characterized by the emergence of young *ustadzs* who gain popularity thanks to social media platforms. Through their easy-to-understand lectures uploaded on YouTube and other social media platforms, these young conservative preachers became famous as a new role model of Islamic preachers among Muslims, such as Bachtiar Nashir, Abdul Shomad,¹⁵ Adi Hidayat,¹⁶ Khalid Bassalamah, Buya Yahya,¹⁷ and Teuku Zulkarnain.¹⁸ These smart urban Muslim preachers and teachers are indeed brilliant in benefiting the growing importance of social media and technology. Their religious sermons and activities had become viral and viewed by hundreds of thousands of viewers. The conservative *ustadzs* also gain a broader public audience through television channels. They create Islamic content for

Islamic soap operas and Islamic FTV compelling to a broader Islamisation among Muslims. Also, they are of numerous broadcasting channels that belong to conservative groups such as Rodja TV and Radio, FPITV, TVAl-Akhyar, and Radio Rasil (Radio Silaturahmi). Radio Rasil, for instance, has been admitted to having 3 million active listeners in Greater Jakarta and other major cities in Indonesia.

In this case, the deep Islamization project undertaken by conservative religious agencies in Indonesia is of a wide range of networks within the public and private sectors. Such networks shape considerably Muslim voting behaviors in the elections by disseminating political and Islamic messages and narratives. In urban areas, mosques and congregational lectures (*majelis taklim*) have been controlled by these smart and savvy social media *ustadzs*. They run regular Friday sermons and Ramadan meetings and activities to attract the Muslim middle class and young generations. At the lower social class, the network of FPI has been effective in rallying Muslim electoral. In this context, a few weeks before the presidential election, Shomad and Hidayat, Zulkarnain, and other *ustadzs* called all Muslims to vote for the Prabowo-Sandi pair. These new *ustadzs* represent different ideologies from Salafi-Wahabi to traditionalist and modernist Islam. Nevertheless, they have been converging on a shared and common call for supporting the Prabowo-Sandi pair militantly in search of their imagined *ummah*.

Polarisation and Division among Moderates

Amidst the emerging political convergence within the conservative and Islamist element of Indonesian Islam, it is interesting to evoke the 2019 presidential election impacts on the two moderate Muhammadiyah and NU. Divisions or sub-divisions have been occurring within Muhammadiyah and NU. Surveys indicate that Muhammadiyah members favored voting for Prabowo-Sandi and NU members favored for Jokowi-Mar'ruf. As has been revealed by some credible surveys, more than 50 percent of Muhammadiyah members preferred Prabowo-Sandi to Jokowi-Ma'ruf. Inversely, more than 50 percent of NU members were solid to back Jokowi-Ma'ruf ("NU Condong ke Jokowi, Muhammadiyah Pilih Prabowo"). This general configuration underpins a long-existing polarisation between the two mainstream Indonesian Islam. It reignites a fierce political division within Indonesian Islam in the 1950s.

However, there were subdivisions within the two organizations (Nubowo 2019:218-222). If we look further, there was an inter-polarisation

within Muhammadiyah and NU members. Muhammadiyah activists were sub-divided into two groups of supporters. Some groups created Jokowi's volunteer networks such as Relawan Indonesia Berkemajuan (RIB), Balad Jokowi, and Kaum Millennial Muhammadiyah (KAMMu). They supported Jokowi-Ma'ruf pairing militantly. Besides, some Muhammadiyah politicians with different party affiliations supported Jokowi-Ma'ruf such as Raja Juli Antoni (PSI), Hajriyanto Y. Thohari (Golkar Party), Ahmad Rofiq (Perindo Party), and Sutrisno Bahir (PAN Party). But, other groups of volunteers within Muhammadiyah in many regions supported Prabowo-Sandi such as Aliansi Pencerah Indonesia (API). Although Muhammadiyah is a non-partisan organization, the polarisation within Muhammadiyah members became more apparent than before. The polarisation also took place within NU both among structural and cultural NU clerics.¹⁹ In some areas in Central and East Java, some prominent clerics of "NU kultural" were very critical of Said Aqil Siraj's leadership who supported Jokowi-Ma'ruf. For them, Kyai Said put the future of NU in danger. Salahuddin Wahid, a grandchild of the NU's founding father, Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari, criticized Said Aqil Siraj's NU leadership for being too deeply politicized in the 2019 presidential election.

These ideological and political cleavages between NU and Muhammadiyah occurred during the campaign period in some areas in Central Java, North Sumatera, West Sumatera, South Sulawesi, and other provinces. For example, in Jepara, Tegal, Purwokerto, Wonosobo, Solo, Pare-Pare, Makassar, Manado, Padang, and Medan, the majority of Muhammadiyah members and activists were firmly convinced with Prabowo-Sandi's presidential campaign projects (Hasyim 2020:76-89; Dinarto and Nubowo 2020:128-144). Conversely, within the NU's congregation and community, there was a firm conviction that the presidential battle belonged to them. For example, the political stance of the NU's structural leaders in Demak, Jepara, Kudus, and Tegal in Central Java to win Jokowi-Ma'ruf was unquestionable. A NU leader in Tegal said:

It is not about only how to win Pak Jokowi and Pak Ma'ruf. Rather, it is about our value to defend the foundations of Pancasila and NKRI. HTI and other conservative groups will replace them with the Islamic State and the global caliphate.²⁰

In Solo, NU local leaders accused Muhammadiyah of being supportive of Islamism and the Islamic caliphate. To them, Muhammadiyah did not

love Pancasila and the NKRI as it was silent toward the rising phenomenon of radicalism and religious conservatism propounded by HTI and other local Islamist and neo-fundamentalist groups such as LUIS (Laskar Umat Islam Solo).²¹ For NU members, defending Jokowi-Ma'ruf's victory was framed as defending the NKRI and Pancasila. Such a narrative of defense was distributed in the name of *jihad* among NU followers. It is worth noting that the grand narratives circulated among NU elites and members seemed to counter the grand Islamic narratives of conservative groups. This situation eventually reproduced religious and ideological frictions and divisions of the 1950s between modernist and traditionalist Islam.

In this vein, such tacit conflict within moderate Islam has become more visible. This unfortunate situation is detrimental to cohesive solidarity within Indonesian networks of moderates. As NU leaders in Solo said:

This is our critical time to win Jokowi-Ma'ruf. If the pair loses the battle, NU's tradition will be threatened by another Islamic ideology that tends to dispel NKRI and Pancasila and replace both with *sharia*. If the time comes, NU will ally with nationalist, *abangan* people, and even non-Muslims to thwart them, including Muhammadiyah people."²²

So, if the division and sub-division within moderate Islam are unstoppable, it would be dangerous for Indonesia. The rising and growing Islamic conservatism could replace a tolerant and open-minded Indonesian Islam of Muhammadiyah and NU.

Conclusion

This article has shown that the scramble of Islamic credentials among the elite power of Indonesia indicates that Indonesia's 2019 presidential election constituted a new come back of 1950's Geertzian identity politics of *aliran: santri, abangan, priyayi* (Geertz 1976). It has since created polarisation and sub-division among the Indonesian population, including among moderate Muslims. The weight of Islam on the national (local) political stages also reflected the dynamic of the ongoing Islamization and *shariatization* of the country. The rising phenomenon of political crossover of various Islamic conservative groups and movements in Indonesia's 2019 presidential election -spanning from Salafi-Wahabi to traditionalist conservative ones- seems to be not a run-off phenomenon

in the current Indonesian political and religious landscape. In the light of Islamic activism and social movement theory, this phenomenon becomes plausible as they share common Muslim causes to mobilize their Islamic and political activism and movements. Their discontent, dissatisfaction, and resentment toward the current government's social, political, and economic policies would be a tough perennial *raison d'être* for their Islamic activism and social movements. Furthermore, they are of vast and wide-range Muslim networks and actors to deploy and circulate religious and political messages, narratives, and discourses among Muslim fellows. By controlling off-line (mosques, schools, universities, and *majelis ta'lim*) and online realms (social media, internet tv and radio), they could effortlessly "win and conquer" Muslim's religious and political orientations and attitudes. Finally, they also considered that the electoral democracy system and structure could be the best opportunity or momentum for electing pro-*sharia* Muslim leaders. In this frame of mind, their volunteerism and political engagement in elections could be understood as being part of the constitutional *jihad* and Islamic activism.

Indonesian Islam is a contested realm of the established Islam (Muhammadiyah, NU, MUI) with a moderate and progressive vision of Islam. There are also new emerging Islam (FPI, Salafi-Wahabi networks, HTI, and *Tarbiyah* movement-PKS). They embrace a more conservative and rigorous strand of Islam and are ready to siege the religious and political momentum. In this case, indeed, the moderate power of Islam, such as Muhammadiyah and NU, must be consistently consolidated. The weaker the moderate strength of Islam, the more the conservative group allows appearing on the national stage. Therefore, a moderate Islamic group needs to re-establish its religious and social authority among Muslims. They should retake over Indonesian Islamic discourses and narratives, enlightening the young Muslim generation, and getting more engaged in addressing social, cultural, political, and economic grievances. Moderate Islam must also reinforce cohesiveness and solidity to build together a sustainable global peaceful effort and to curb the growing worldwide tendency leading to conservatism and exclusivism.

Funding

The author(s) received financial support from Indonesia Programme, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore to conduct field trip research in many areas of Indonesia.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Leonard C Sebastian (RSIS, Nanyang Technological University of Singapore) and the anonymous reviewers for their comments.

End Notes

- 1 Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Islam, KAMMI, has been oftenly described as an underbow organisation of the Prosperous and Justice Party (PKS), meanwhile Gema Pembebasan Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Gema HTI) is a pro caliphate student organisation movement. KAMMI and Gema HTI have been in harsh competition in recruiting new students and members in some universities. Indonesian Islamic Student Movement (Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia [PMII]) is affiliated to NU and Muhammadiyah Student Association (Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah [IMM]) belongs to Muhammadiyah, and Islamic Student Association (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam [HMI]) is the oldest Islamic student movement after Indonesian Independence of 1945.
- 2 I conducted field trips on the 2019 Presidential Election in several cities and provinces in Indonesia: Padang, Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi, Padang Pariaman (West Sumatera) and Medan and Karo (North Sumatera), on 23-30 November 2018, Makassar, Wajo, Pare-Pare, South Sulawesi and Manado North Sulawesi on 16-24 December 2018, Semarang, Demak, Kudus, Jepara, Rembang, Tegal, Purwokerto, Wonosobo, Solo (Central Java) and Yogyakarta, on 6-15 March 2019.
- 3 FGD's with some traditionalist ulama of Pesantren As'adiyah Wajo South Sulawesi on 25 November 2018.
- 4 Interviews with Dr. Mostari Basra (Muhammadiyah) on 22 July 2018, Ustadz Saharudin (Wahdah Islamiyah) on 27 July 2018, and Ustadz Fahrudin Ahmad (Pesantren Darul Istiqamah), 1 August 2018 in Makassar, South Sulawesi.
- 5 Ustadz Slamet Pohan, 28 November 2018 in Medan North Sumatera
- 6 Interview with Rahmat Surya, a young Islamic teacher and local Muslim businessman, 28 November 2018 in Medan, North Sumatera.
- 7 Interview with Ustadz Muhammad Asad from Pesantren Darul Istiqamah Manado North Sulawesi, 23 December 2018.
- 8 Interview with Erna Taufan Pawe, Golkar's national legislative candidate, 20 December 2018 in Pare-Pare, South Sulawesi.
- 9 Interview with a legislative candidate of PAN, Mukhtar Tompo, 18 December 2018 in Makassar, South Sulawesi.

- 10 Interview with Indra Gunawan, 27 December 2019 in Lyon, France.
- 11 Interview with Kyai Aqib Malik in Pesantren Ma'hadut Thalabah, Babakan Slawi, Tegal, Central Jawa, 11 March 2019.
- 12 A prominent historian M.C. Ricklefs (2013) who studied the long process of the Islamization in Jawa says that the deep Islamization has been still ongoing development in all around Indonesia, especially in Jawa. He enunciates that it is important to understand the Islamization of Jawa in three contexts: The history of religion, contemporary Muslim worlds, and of the struggle to the better life (pursuing freedom and justice).
- 13 Interview with Ustadzah Ninin Karlina from Pesantren Muhammadiyah Imam Suhodo Sukoharjo, 2 July 2018 and Azaki Khoiruddin from Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta on 11 July 2018 in Surakarta, Central Jawa.
- 14 Interview with a veiled student activist of Muhammadiyah, Lailatul Husna, in Solo, December 2017.
- 15 Ustadz Abdul Shomad is a graduate of Al Azhar University which got suddenly his popularity thanks to hundreds of his video lectures posted on YouTube. Shomad started his career as an Islamic preacher in Pekanbaru Riau. Recently, he is invited by various Muslim communities and congregational organisations to address his religious lectures from Aceh to Papua. One of his videos entitled "Mr. Limbad Asked to Abdul Shomad" has been viewed by as much as 4,775,786 people. The Fan page of Facebook "Pecinta Ustadz Abdul Shomad Lc, MA" is followed by as many as 46,517 people.
- 16 Adi Hidayat is an alumnus of Islamic Muhammadiyah Boarding School Darul Arqam Garut, West Jawa. After that, he pursued his licence (Lc) in Tripoly University Libya and his master in State Islamic University Sunan Gunung Jati Bandung. He has 632,399 followers on Twitter and 82,930 people on Facebook
- 17 Buya Yahya is a savvy social media *ustadz* who achieved his popularity among Muslim society through his widely spread religious interactive sermons on YouTube. He runs Al-Bahjah Foundation and an Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) Al-Bahjah in Cirebon, West Jawa. He culturally belongs to NU's Islamic tradition despite he is not active in the board of NU. Within the conservative strand of NU, he and Habib Rizieq Syihab were supported to be the next chairman of NU. His official Al Bahjah TV channel on YouTube has 167,369 subscribers.
- 18 Teuku Zulkarnain was a deputy secretary of the Council of Indonesian Ulama. He is a Jamaah Tabligh preacher who gets its popularity among

- Muslims and raises up as one of prominent leaders of The Action 212 through his religious predications and sermons on YouTube. On YouTube, his religious (provocative) sermon “2019 Ganti Presiden, Ini Alasan Cerdas KH Tengku Zulkarnain” is viewed by 336,675 viewers.
- 19 “NU struktural” refers to NU clerics and members who hold the structural body of the organisation led by Chairman Said Aqil Siraj from the national to sub-district levels, and “NU kultural” constitutes clerics and members who are traditionally and culturally affiliated to NU’s traditions and are not involved in running the organisation.
 - 20 Interview with NU’s leaders of the City of Tegal, 11 March 2019.
 - 21 Interview with NU’s leaders of the City of Solo, 13 March 2019.
 - 22 Interview with NU’s leaders of the City of Solo, 13 March 2019.

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- Mukhtar Tompo, 18 December 2018 in Makassar, South Sulawesi.
- Erna Taufan Pawe, 20 December 2018 in Pare-Pare, South Sulawesi.
- Muhammad Asad, 23 December 2018 in Manado, North Sulawesi.
- Indra Gunawan, 27 December 2019 in Lyon, France.
- Aqib Malik, 11 March 2019.

Focus Group Discussions

- Pesantren As'adiyah, 25 November 2018 in Wajo, South Sulawesi.
- NU's local leaders Solo, 13 March 2019 in Surakarta, Central Jawa.