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# Role of the Organization Nahdlatul Ulama in Warding off Radical Islamic Ideology

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**Abstract.** This study aims to determine the meaning of the concepts and arguments of Islam Rahmatan Lil Alamin (mercy for the whole world) and to know the role undertaken by Nahdlatul Ulama in counteracting radical Islamic ideology. The subjects of this study are 3 informants who are members of the organization of Representative District (Pengurus Wilayah) Nahdlatul Ulama in Lampung Province who have special criteria that are members of the background Scholar (Ulama), Politicians, and Academics. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. The test results show that there is a role of the organization of Representative District Nahdlatul Ulama of Lampung Province in an effort to deter radical Islamic Ideology. Based on the results of testing and discussion can be concluded that Islam Rahmatan lil alamin is a concept that reflects that someone living in this world must have the nature and attitude of the grace (rahmah) for all the natural, be it to fellow human beings, animals, plants, even inanimate objects. In the religious view of Representative District is based on creed (aqidah) Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah which philosophizes the basic of Islam Rahmatan lil Alamin. Then the concept is poured into 4 basic philosophies in organizing the attitude of Tawassuth (neutral) and I'tidal (steady), Tasamuh (tolerance), Tawazun (balanced), and Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar (efforts to uphold religion). Radicalism or movements rooted in radical ideology is the main rival of Islam Rahmah (the grace of Islam) because with the existence of radical, grace will not be realized. In carrying out its duties and roles, Representative District still has constraints and is not optimal because the focus of the organization is also divided into the affairs which are related to the social community as well as in the field on economy and health.

## INTRODUCTION

According to [1] Radicalism is a movement carried out by individuals or groups who are disadvantaged by socio-political and socio-historical phenomena. Then according to [2] Radicalism does not appear by itself, there is always an accompanying cause. Following the understanding of the asocial fact that radicalism is a movement that is related to or caused by other facts. The genealogy of radicalism can be traced from various causes:

1. This movement arose from political pressure from the authorities, and emerged as a result of authoritarianism. For example, in the case of the new order, the state always cut out funds, leaving no room for movements identified as radicalism.
2. The failure of the secular regime which is considered unable to formulate policies and then implement them in society. This regime in developing countries is considered to have failed to adopt a capitalist system which is considered a product of the West and to implement economic policies that lead to an economic crisis. This creates distrust of people who adopt the experiences of Western countries in implementing their economic system.
3. Negative response to the "Western World". Starting from crusaderism, morality, permissiveness, democracy and even human rights are considered as Western engineering to minimize the role and influence of Islam in people's lives, especially the secular life that is promoted by the West where there is a separation of the world and the hereafter, where worldliness above all else is strongly opposed by Islam.

Then in the last few decades several Islamic groups have emerged that carry out violence in preaching instead of *Rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for the whole world). Especially when there were several events that shocked the world such as the collapse of the WTC building on September 9, 2001 in Washington DC, the Bali bombings on October 12, 2002 and October 1, 2005. This created a stereotype in the world community that Islam is a religion of terror, hard, and also radical. As a result, the wave of Islamophobia has increased in Europe, especially the UK.

*Rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for the whole world) here has a broad meaning, namely grace for fellow humans, plants, and animals. This concept is stated in the Qur'an Surah Al-Anbiya verse 107:

"And We have not sent you (Muhammad) but to (be) a mercy for the whole world."

Because with da'wah like this the image of Islam will be better. Moreover, as citizens of the Republic of Indonesia, the majority of the population is Muslim. From the early history of this religion not a single drop of blood was shed. All done with a wise and wise da'wah. Then there are also several community organizations that continue to preach moderate Islam as mentioned above, including Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.

Nahdlatul Ulama held a National Deliberation and Grand Conference in NTB, 23-25 November 2017, with the theme "Strengthening National Values Through the Deradicalization Movement and Strengthening the Citizen's Economy". This event is the best momentum to strengthen the moderates movement against the increasing phenomenon of religious radicalism [3].

Since its establishment, Nahdlatul Ulama has positioned itself as an opponent of religious radicalism symbolized by the textual, rigid, and extreme Wahhabi movement. The *Hijaz* Committee which was formed by the Nahdlatul Ulama scholars as the embryo of the birth of Nahdlatul Ulama was a quick response to the policies of the Wahhabi government of Saudi Arabia which prohibits the system of sects in religion, and policies that want to destroy the buildings of the tombs of prophets and pious people. Nahdlatul Ulama was also established in an effort to fight for Indonesian independence.

Nahdlatul Ulama as the main force of moderate Islam in Indonesia which has a network from the center to the regions has a big responsibility to build constructive dialogue with radical groups on major issues, including economic and legal justice, human rights, and *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

In the last ten years, Nahdlatul Ulama has taken concrete steps. In its 32nd congress in Makassar in 2010, Nahdlatul Ulama proposed the theme "Khidmah Nahdliyah (organization service) for a Dignified Indonesia". The theme was prepared based on concerns about the spread of radical ideas, both religious radicals and ultra-liberals, so that it is feared to dim the moderate attitude that is characteristic of Indonesian society [4].

At the 33rd NU Congress in Jombang, East Java, August 1-5 2015, the attitude of Nahdlatul Ulama in responding to global and national developments was further emphasized by taking the theme "Consolidating Islam Nusantara for Indonesia and World Civilization. The purpose of writing this thesis is to find out the meaning of the concept and postulates of *Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* (mercy for the whole world) and to find out the role played by Nahdlatul Ulama in countering radical Islamic ideology.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Evidence and Concept of *Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*

The proof of *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin* is verse 107 of Surah Al-anbiya which means: "And We have not sent you (Muhammad) but to (be) a mercy to the whole world". This verse is the basic concept of *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin*. According to Abdulah Nata [5], professor of Islamic Education at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah stated that the concept of *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin* can normatively be understood from Islamic teachings related to faith, worship and morals. The faith or faith possessed by humans must give birth to *rabbaniyah* (a life that is in accordance with God's rules), noble life goals, taqwa, trustworthiness, sincerity, and worship. Aspects of this faith, must foster an attitude of emancipation, elevating human dignity, awareness of a just, open, democratic society, harmony in pluralism.

### Definition of Role

According to [6], what is meant by a role is a behavior that is expected to be carried out by individuals who have specific positions in a group. [7] state that the role is a series of behaviors that are carried out and or expected to be

carried out by group members who have certain positions in the group so that they distinguish them from other members who have different positions. Then it is further explained that the role arises because the group consists of a collection of individuals who have different functions, according to their position, some are leaders and some are followers. Some are rulers and some are ruled. Every individual who is in a certain position is required to display certain behavior.

### **Nahdlatul Ulama Organization**

Based on the explanation above, it can be stated that Nahdlatul Ulama is an association or *jamiyah diniyah Islamiyah ijtima'iyah* (community organizations or social organizations engaged in the Islamic religion) with the aim of creating the benefit of society, the progress of the nation, and the elevation of dignity and worth human dignity [8].

### **Countering Radical Islamic Ideology**

Based on the above understanding, the researcher can state that the definition of radical Islamic ideology is a concept/understanding/theory that is based on the teachings and also the provisions and the Islamic religious law as the basis for their way of thinking and acting in a violent way. Historically, this radical Islamic ideology has existed since the time of the Prophet's companions. According to [9] the roots of the radical Islamic movement began when there was a group called the Khawarij.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive type of research, with the aim of explaining or describing the problems that are currently happening. The informants in this study were selected according to several criteria, namely the Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province and the administrators of institutions under the Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province. The technique of determining informants in this study used purposive non-random sampling, namely the determination of informants was determined by the researchers themselves with special considerations and did not use a random method with the number of informants being 3 people. In this study, because the level of homogeneity is high, namely only examining one organization, the researcher considers 3 informants to be sufficient to support the data that the researcher wants to examine. And to get mixed results, the researchers gave special criteria for the three informants, namely administrators with Ulama (Islamic Scholar) backgrounds, administrators with politicians backgrounds, and administrators with academic backgrounds.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **The Meaning and Concept of the Islamic Proposition *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin***

*Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin* has the meaning of embodiment of social life that is mutually harmonious and cooperates in building or maintaining *ukhuwah* (solidarity). *Ukhuwah* itself is divided into three namely *Ukhuwah islamiyah* (religious solidarity), *ukhuwah basyariyah* (humanity solidarity), *ukhuwah wathaniyah* (national solidarity), and *ukhuwah 'naturaliyah* (environmental solidarity).

Mr. Mis said:

"so the meaning of mercy for all nature is a necessity for all creatures created by god, regardless of religion (muslim or non-muslim), regardless of ethnicity. There is no ethnicity, race, religion, gender, skin color that is not given grace by god."

Mr. As said:

"islam rahmatan lil alamin is a concept to realize a social life that loves each other, gets along in harmony, is brothers, builds and maintains *ukhuwah* (solidarity). So the concept is summarized into *ukhuwah islamiyah*,

*ukhuwah wathaniyah, ukhuwah basyariah, and ukhuwah 'naturaliyah.* For example, if you cut down trees carelessly (let alone not plant new tree seedlings) then you have done a disgraceful act for this nature.”

*Ukhuwah islamiyah,* in terms of human life, is the capital for social interaction among muslims. With this capital, non-principal differences between muslims do not need to be divided. This ukhuwah principle makes the relationship between fellow muslims harmonious and able to become a great force to jointly ground islamic values. *Ukhuwah islamiyah* becomes a bond, not only emotionally, but also spiritually.

Ukhuwah basyariah or ukhuwah insaniyah is a principle based on that fellow human beings are brothers because they come from the same father and mother, namely adam and eve. This brotherly relationship is the key to all brotherhood, regardless of religious status, ethnicity or geographical separation, because the main value of this brotherhood is humanity. This is reminiscent of the companions of ali bin abi talib who said that "he who is not your brother in faith is a brother in humanity." this means that humanity is the highest value in its position as a human being.

Ukhuwah wathaniyah, in relation to the life of society, nation and state is the basic capital for conducting social interaction and dialogue with various components of the indonesian nation which of course is not limited to one religion alone. But more than that, ukhuwah wathaniyah is a commitment to brotherhood among all peoples consisting of various religions, ethnicities, languages, and cultures. The building of ukhuwah wathaniyah must not be a common principle in building a peaceful nation and state life and mutual respect for one another.

Ukhuwah 'alamiyah is the relationship between humans and nature, both material and non-material and living or dead. For example, if someone intentionally and without reason cuts down a tree, it means that that person has done a wrongdoing to the tree, instead of to nature. So to realize mercy, a human being must do justice and protect this universe. A person will cancel hajj or umrah just because he kills one ant or mosquito and is obliged to repeat or pay a dam (fine).

This kind of grace is given by allah in general to all of his creatures, from animals, plants, jinn and humans, both believers and unbelievers. While the womb is love in the form of blessings that are not visible (abstract) such as faith, belief, knowledge and others. Most of the commentators (interpreters) say that rahman is the most merciful and merciful essence with general affection and is given to all creatures in the world without exception. While the word rahim contains the meaning of special affection which is only for believers in the afterlife.

## **Radical Islam vs Islam Rahmatan Lil ‘Alamin based on Nahdlatul Ulama**

Mr. As said:

“the first cause of radical thinking in religion is a misunderstanding in understanding the teachings of islam. Islam forbids its people to kill each other (both fellow muslims and non-muslims). Why do they keep committing murder? The reason is a narrow religious view, if the view is narrow then the heart will be narrow, the effect of a narrow heart is to feel self-righteous, if you feel right then there will be transgression, if you exceed the limit it will become rigid, if it is rigid it will become hard in thought and action. The end result is terror behavior.”

According to [10] the emergence of radicalism spirit can not be separated from a variety of factors that lie behind them. One of the main causes of the emergence of religious radicalism is the understanding of religion itself. Radicalism among islam stems mostly from:

1. Deprivation that political, social and economic still persist in society.
2. A literal, piecemeal, partial religious understanding of the verses of the qur'an.
3. A misreading of islamic history combined with an over-idealization of islam at certain times.

This radical group then brings its own understanding in the community and tries to articulate and implement it in the form of radical changes to the socio-religious order, such as the culture of islamization, as well as political and legal arrangements such as projections of an islamic state, islamic law, islamic economics and so on that smells of islam. Some of these attitudes can be tolerated and justified in a democracy, but this excessive enthusiasm is more destructive and cannot be justified.

Furthermore, to be able to realize these ideals, the spread of radicalism utilizes a number of existing media, both through political movements and civil society movements. However, whatever the form of the movement, one of the characteristics and at the same time the main basis of this movement is education through measurable cadre channels, mastery of mosques, the use of mass media both print and electronic.

Of course, not everyone who conducts cadres, is based in mosques, and uses the media is a radicalism movement. Another mistake of radical groups is that they are unable to dialogue between the moral values contained in religion and the facts on the ground.

In this regard, it is not uncommon for there to be contradictions between the real ideal, between ideas and facts, or between texts and contexts due to a very rigid and linear understanding. As a result, this kind of view is often broken by the ever-changing social reality which is indeed an unchangeable sunnatullah.

The concept of islam rahmatan lil alamin was mixed by nahdlatul ulama into four basic philosophies in religious and social life, namely in the form of tawassuth/i'tidal, tasamuh, tawazun, amar maruf nahi munkar.

Mr. Mis said:

“actually, before nu was founded, the roots of the concept of islam rahmatan lil alamin already existed in islamic boarding schools in the archipelago. It's just that the declaration of the islamic concept of rahmatan lil alamin that was promoted by nu began to be echoed since january 31, 1926, right when nu was founded.”

Mr. As said:

"islam of mercy is islam that is polite (meaning that it can accept differences, islam that does not hurt, islam that does not commit violence, because violence is an act of munkar)."

From these results, it is clear that the diversity of answers among the three informants related to the same philosophy. The first informant prefers to use the typical languages of the ulama (scholar) group which uses logic/mantiq language in answering, then the second informant relates the 4 philosophies more to the life of the nation and religion and uses the language of politicians, and the third informant gives answers that are more educational. In interpreting the 4 philosophies is typical of academics.

### **The Role of the Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province in Countering Radical Islamic Ideology**

The role carried out by representative district of nahdlatul ulama lampung province has not been optimal. However, representative district of nahdlatul ulama lampung province has tried to carry out work programs that are oriented towards countering radical islamic ideology as mentioned in the work program above.

Mr. As said:

“what is clear is that nu plays a dynamic role. Responding to ideological developments that can undermine nu and nu citizens. Because we have three obligations, namely protecting religion, defending national values, and thirdly, we have an obligation to ward off terrorist ideologies”

Mr. Mis said:

“according to me, the role played by representative district of nahdlatul ulama lampung province is not yet optimal. So then it is necessary to collaborate with the campus academic community, then the ministry of religion and the mui (indonesian ulema council), as well as moderate mass organizations such as muhammadiyah to formulate what religious education is important to counteract radical understanding for students and students then need to upgrade religious teachers. So that it can unite the vision and mission of religious teachers.”

### **Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province Program in Countering Radical Islamic Ideology**

Representative district of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung province programs have many focuses including health, education, economics, da'wah, and others. Representative district of nahdlatul ulama Lampung province's programs, especially in countering radical Islamic ideology, are part of the da'wah program and are divided into internal and external programs. Internal programs are events carried out by the representative district of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province and institutions under the auspices of representative district of nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province to instill the aswaja ideology in every NU Lampung cadre. Consolidation of aswaja's ideology as an antidote to radical ideologies that develop in society. Especially in the mknu (*Madrasah Kader Nahdlatul Ulama*)

program which is important for prospective nu regional administrators of Lampung Province before carrying out their mandate. In this program, there are so many things that are discussed in order to indoctrinate the cadres to be militant, including the insertion of *rahmat Islam* and *radical Islam*. In addition, there are also seminars and halaqah-halaqah.

External programs focused on NU Lampung preachers to continue to spread islam of mercy to the people of Lampung and the production of two books from LTN-NU Lampung Province to disseminate information and understanding about *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin* to the public as well as several articles written by several administrators published in newspapers and internet sites.

Mr. As said:

"in the development of nu programs, there has been attention, including the congress which in jombang carried the islam of the archipelago, in fact it was to counteract transnational ideologies while at the same time protecting the values of the unitary state of the republic of indonesia. Well, in the same area, describing the results of the congress. We are very concerned about protecting islam rahmatan, islam nusantara, while developing wasathiyah islam, and also protecting the unitary state of the republic of indonesia against terrorist islam."

Mr. Mis said:

"a seminar was held during the inauguration of lakpesdam around 2013, 'against radicalism'. Then what was done by representative district of nahdlatul ulama lampung province was to publish the book nu escort the changing times where it was a collection of writings on how nu's role was in grounding wasathiyah islam. Next, representative district of nahdlatul ulama lampung province also publishes the book santri and political education. There are also several writings from the author who then inform readers of the importance between indonesianizing islam or islamizing indonesia. Apart from that, there are also writings from the representative district of nahdlatul ulama lampung province management which have been published in local media, both print and online."

**Table 1.** representative district of nahdlatul ulama lampung province's work program in countering radical islamic ideology

<b>Work Program</b>	
<b>Internal</b>	<b>External</b>
MKNU's (Madrasah Kader Nahdlatul Ulama)	Book Publishing
Seminar "Fighting Radicalism"	Training of NU young Dai
Muharrrik Mosque	Articles of NU cadres published in print and online media

In carrying out its program, the Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province often collaborates with government agencies as well as Islamic organizations and youth organizations.

Mr. AS said:

"NU's cooperation with MUI, Polda, TNI, Ministry of Religion."

Mr. AM said:

"We always work together in carrying out work programs with government agencies such as the Police, FKPT, TNI, and BIN. As well as with Islamic organizations outside NU such as MUI and Muhammadiyah."

Mr. MIS said:

"OKPs such as KNPI, PMII, IPNU have also been invited to cooperate to carry out these activities. So it's not just mass organizations but also OKP. Then the local government also often invites dai-dai from NU."

### **Obstacles in Carrying Out the Work Program**

In carrying out its program, of course, the Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province encountered obstacles/obstacles. Still, these obstacles/obstacles were not something physical such as clashes or attacks, but rather wars of thought, ideological wars, wars of influence, and slander that were always posted for Nahdlatul Ulama.

Mr. AS said:

"There is pressure at the national level, especially regional/regional ones. NU is surrounded by radical terrorist ideologies. The way to weaken NU, for example, is to attack the habits of NU residents by saying these habits. was not done by the prophet or did not exist in the time of the prophet."

Mr. MIS said:

"There is no direct resistance (physical resistance), because even for them physical resistance is too risky. But if it is subtle, for example, through comments on social media. Then NU is considered pro-government, NU is considered an arm of the government, NU is considered not an 'Islamic' organization that protects 'Islam', NU figures whose names are dropped, it has become daily food. Internal divisions such as NU are rumoured to be split into straight-line NU and liberal NU, this will undoubtedly confuse the people, which is a form of nudging NU from them. "

Soekanto [11] explained that the role is a dynamic aspect of the position, namely someone who carries out his rights and obligations. According to [12] in his book Introduction to Sociology quoting, Mead's opinion that role theory is associated with socialization. Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province Province has performed its role in carrying out its rights and obligations in disseminating programs related to deterrence both internally to members and the general public.

## CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion that can be drawn is:

- a) Islam Rahmatan lil alamin is a concept that reflects that a person living in this world must have the nature and attitude of mercy for all nature, be it to fellow human beings, animals, plants, even inanimate objects. Nahdlatul Ulama is an organization located in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia that focuses on religious and social activities of the community. In the religious view, Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province Province is based on the Aqeedah of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah which has the basic philosophy of Islam which is Rahmatan lil Alamin. The concept was presented to four basic organizational philosophy that is attitude Itidal/Tawassuth, Tasamuh, Tawazun, and Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar. Radicalism or movements rooted in radical ideology are the rivals main of Islam Rahmah because with the existence of radicals, mercy will not be biased. The behaviors reflected by radical movements do not reflect the values of Islam at all, therefore Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province Province as an organization that carries the values of mercy tries to counteract such behaviors, especially the ideology that is carried.
- b) In carrying out its duties and roles, Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province Province still has obstacles and is not optimal because the focus of the organization is also divided in matters related to social society as well as in the field of economics and health. But when viewed from the work programs made, Representative District of Nahdlatul Ulama Lampung Province has agreed in terms of counteracting radical Islamic ideology both independently and in collaboration with relevant parties.

Suggestions that researchers can convey are:

- a) For further research that wants to develop similar research can make several variations of indicator changes such as researching the role of Islamic organizations other than Nahdlatul Ulama. Then radical Islamic ideology can be further focused into radical thinking or radical movement.
- b) For Nahdlatul Ulama, researchers suggest that programs that are consensual take care of the suppression of radical Islamic ideology in order to be maintained and developed.

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