

**NAHDLATUL ULAMA AND THE STATE:  
EXAMINING NAHDLATUL ULAMA'S  
POLITICAL FLEXIBILITY IN  
POST-REFORMASI INDONESIA**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Political Science at the  
Faculty of Social Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of**

**Master of Arts (M.A.)**



by:

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**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA**

**DEPOK**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to investigate the main factors that drove Nahdlatul Ulama's (NU) political flexibility in Indonesia's political history. It also demonstrates how Nahdlatul Ulama maintains its political flexibility during post-*reformasi* Indonesia. The *reformasi* (reform era) was considered to have cleared the path for Islamic groups, including NU, to play distinctive political and electoral roles in keeping their interests in power. During this time, NU became a potent Islamic political force in relation to the state. It had a flexible political action that could either be accommodative or tend to support or oppose the regime, particularly based on its elite networks. Incorporating evidence from document reviews, NU's internal publications and autobiographies, personal correspondence, and interviews, this study demonstrates that the main factor driving NU's political flexibility post-*reformasi* is the network of its religious elite. This network can be divided into two categories: a knowledge network that spans years and a kinship network that represents the firm ties between the elite, society, and the government. By utilizing its network, NU has succeeded in moving flexibly and responding to the political situation in various periods of regimes in Indonesia. Second, this flexibility is present in NU's attitude, which has never been the same in dealing with the post-*reformasi* regime. At the same time, this flexibility is also shown by the distribution of NU elites among various political strains to, on the one hand, maintain and balance Indonesia's political stability, and on the other hand, also try to protect their organizational interests. It argues that during various national political opportunities, NU's familial connection became stronger in post-*reformasi* Indonesia. In particular, when it comes to issues at the local level, the scholarly network has greater influence over NU's political attitudes.

**Keywords:** *Nahdlatul Ulama, Religious Elites, Networks, Flexibility, Political Action, Post- Reformasi*

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Libasut Taqwa

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## ABBREVIATION DIRECTORY

<b>ASWAJA</b>	: <i>Ahl-al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah</i>
<b>GERINDRA</b>	: <i>Gerakan Indonesia Raya (The Great Indonesia Movement Party)</i>
<b>GOLKAR</b>	: <i>Golongan Karya</i>
<b>GOLPUT</b>	: <i>Golongan Putih</i>
<b>MASYUMI</b>	: <i>Partai Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia</i>
<b>NU</b>	: <i>Nahdlatul Ulama</i>
<b>PAN</b>	: <i>Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party)</i>
<b>PBB</b>	: <i>Partai Bulan Bintang (The Crescent Star Party)</i>
<b>PBNU</b>	: <i>Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama</i>
<b>PDIP</b>	: <i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)</i>
<b>PILKADA</b>	: <i>Pemilihan kepala daerah</i>
<b>PKB</b>	: <i>Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (The National Awakening Party)</i>
<b>PPP</b>	: <i>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (The United Development Party)</i>
<b>RAKHA</b>	: <i>Rasyidiyah Khalidiyah Islamiv Boarding School</i>
<b>SUNI</b>	: <i>Solidaritas Uni Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Union Solidarity)</i>

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### **A. Problem Statement**

What explains the political flexibility of a religious organization toward government regimes? This question is intended to answer how Nahdlatul Ulama, one of Indonesia's largest Islamic organizations, has responded to the central government after *reformasi*. Generally, the relationship between Islam and the state has been lackadaisical in recent decades. In many Muslim countries, Islamic mass organizations, including Islamic political parties, are often repressed or disbanded by the government because of their strict political attitudes and opposition (Tamburaka 2011, 46). In Egypt, for instance, state intervention against Al-Azhar has run so deep that several clerics have resigned from their positions (Hatina 2010). In Syria, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, Islamic organizations and figures have been banned, aggressively cracked down, and forcibly disbanded due to their curt approach to confrontations with the government (Hamid 2014; Pierret 2013; Hatina 2009; Tamimi 2001).

Unlike the abovementioned examples, the relationship between religious organizations and politics in Indonesia is reciprocal (Hasyim 2013; Ismail 2011). Religious groups, particularly Islamic ones, find themselves embedded in the political realm to a greater degree than secular civil society organizations (Epley 2004). Before *reformasi*, Islamic groups such as NU were viewed as the "Islamic bloc that posed a future threat to the New Order's monopoly on power" (Epley 2004, 44). Then, Indonesia's *reformasi* experienced what Sukma called the "return of Islam" as a potent political force (Sukma 2010). *Reformasi* was then attributed to forging a path for Islamic groups to form their political parties and uphold their interests in government power. This was shown by Abdurrahman Wahid, Cholil Bisri, and other prominent figures of NU's central board who established political parties. At this time, NU had formally separated from politics because of its commitment to returning to *Khittah 1926* but still used its affiliated political parties as a tool in encouraging their political interest (Zaini 2003). This position shows how NU takes a dynamic role in accommodating their interests *vis-a-vis* the state, which could be an accommodative attitude and could either support or oppose the state government.

Thus, NU interests are somehow intertwined with each other and encourage an acrobatic relationship. As early as immediately after *reformasi*, an NU elite from *Partai*

*Kebangkitan Bangsa* (PKB/The National Awakening Party) joined the vulnerable coalition of *Poros Tengah*, or the Central Axis, with *Partai Amanat Nasional* (PAN/National Mandate Party) and other Islamic parties — only to play a major role in the impeachment of then-president and PKB founder Abdurrahman Wahid (Suryadinata 2002). The fall of President Wahid soured the relationship between NU and future central governments, particularly the administration of Megawati Soekarnoputri (Effendy 2005) and Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY). Besides the need to form political parties, NU elites also deal with internal power struggles as they compete for presidential candidacy. In 2004, for instance, three NU figures, Salahuddin Wahid, Hasyim Muzadi, and Hamzah Haz, ran against each other in the country's presidential election.

Historically, the attitude of NU toward the central government has never stayed constant. Unlike predictable modernist Muslim organizations (Muhtadi 2015), NU's political views and actions are dynamic and considered to be a part of NU's political approach, which is considered flexible, zig-zagging, and unpredictable (Fealy & Bush 2014). NU's political movements can also be difficult to predict. Apart from its size, NU's non-monolithic political style also contributed to its influence (Bush 2009). During Sukarno's authoritarian regime (1945-1965), NU was accommodative to power and joined the Cabinet, while other Islamic parties such as Masyumi and PSII chose to be in opposition (Hidayat et al., 2022). In Suharto's New Order, NU's turnout in the 1971 election convinced Suharto that the party represented opposition to his regime (Epley, 2004). NU's flexibility in politics also became evident when the organization decided to return to the *Khittah* of 1926 in *Muktamar Situbondo*, which demanded that it separate from practical politics. However, in 1998, several of its figures formed the PKB, the *Solidaritas Uni Nasional Indonesia* (SUNI/Indonesian National Union Solidarity) party, or the *Nahdlatul Umat* (NU) party (Bush 2000). Until now, NU remains an organization that has great political appeal and is decisive in every general election (Hidayat & Haryono 2004, 17-18).

The influential role of NU was also demonstrated in the 2014 presidential election when many of its figures were involved in promoting both Prabowo Subianto and Joko Widodo as presidential candidates (Kompas.com 2018), as well as in the 2019 presidential election when Joko Widodo surprisingly chose Ma'ruf Amin as his vice-presidential running mate. The choice of Ma'ruf Amin was surprising because most reports had pointed to Mahfud MD as a vice presidential candidate (Kompas.com 2022). On the other hand, the choice of Ma'ruf Amin also shows NU's attitude toward the Joko Widodo regime because Ma'ruf Amin is the leader of this organization. The joining of NU elite figures as

vice-presidential candidates indirectly encouraged the assumption that the organization has always supported and has a positive attitude toward the government (Fealy 2020).

Joko Widodo was the first civilian leader to be elected in direct elections and maintained his presidency for two consecutive terms: the first being from 2014 to 2019 and the second from 2019 to 2024. He is considered a populist who has considerable appeal among lower middle-class Indonesians (Bland 2021). During his second term, NU's influence strengthened in terms of public policy, including in addressing radical Islamic groups (Fealy 2020). During this time, the political engagement between NU and the central government could be described to be in its romantic era.

Changes in NU's attitude toward the post-*reformasi* governments demonstrate that NU's political flexibility is driven not only by efforts to take the middle path of Muslims in response to the ruling administration or by competition against other Islamic organizations as in the past, but also by other factors. Hence, I proposed this research to study the flexibility of NU's political behavior toward Indonesia's central government, particularly after *reformasi*, with a main focus on how its behavior is influenced by the organization's elites. It will also explore how NU elites maintain this political flexibility in addressing ruling administrations. This research will contribute to understanding the attitudes and actions of Islamic mass organizations toward different regimes, specifically exploring why and how Muslims in Indonesia take different paths to the government after *reformasi*.

## **B. Research Question**

This research tries to answer two main questions:

1. What are the main factors driving the political flexibility of Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia's political history?
2. How do these factors maintain Nahdlatul Ulama's political flexibility toward the ruling governments of post-*reformasi* Indonesia?

## **C. Research Objective**

This research has two main objectives:

1. To discuss the main factors driving Nahdlatul Ulama's political flexibility in Indonesia's political history.
2. To demonstrate how Nahdlatul Ulama maintains its political flexibility in post-*reformasi* Indonesia.

#### **D. Significant of Study**

With the growing political role of religious elites in Indonesia after *reformasi*, the need to study their behaviors and attitudes has also increased. Though studies have been conducted on the importance of the network of religious elites in the socio-religious field, not much attention has been paid to understanding the political role of religious elites, especially in the context of NU's knowledge of and relationship with the different regimes of post-*reformasi* Indonesia. This study focuses on bridging the gap in the existing literature by examining how this knowledge and relationship contribute to the flexible political actions of NU elites when facing different government regimes in Indonesia, and how these elites influence NU's ability to maintain its political flexibility. This study will uncover certain areas that many MU researchers could not explore in regard to other significant factors influencing NU's political attitudes, including the category of elites and on what issues NU elites behave in the context of national politics.

#### **E. Chapterization**

This research is divided into five (5) chapters. The first chapter contains an introduction that consists of the research problem, the research question, the objectives, and the significance of the study. The theoretical foundation is outlined in the second chapter and consists of a literature review and theoretical framework. The third chapter details the design of this research, which includes the place and time of the study, research material, and research management. The fourth chapter provides the answer to the questions and a discussion of the answers. This chapter will be divided into three subchapters. The first subchapter will explore the historical political role of the Kiai (Islamic experts). The second subchapter will examine religious elite networks as the basis of NU's political behavior and actions, including NU's historical fragments of network influences. The third subchapter will analyze Nahdlatul Ulama's networks after *reformasi*, specifically how these networks influence NU's flexible political actions during the *reformasi* era and how they influenced several national political issues. Lastly, Chapter Five will provide conclusions of the research and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

#### **A. Literature Review**

The study of NU's political actions has garnered much attention from scholars throughout Indonesia's history (Geertz 1960; Anderson 1972; Dhofier 1980; Barton & Fealy 1996; Bush 2009). Apart from the fact that NU is the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, maybe even in the world, this is also because NU had transformed into a political party in the 1950s. Additionally, studying NU is interesting because unlike many other organizations in the Islamic world that tend to turn into a violent movement, NU has since its beginning been committed to non-violent efforts in campaigning its teachings (Hilmy 2013, 2014). From previous studies conducted on the organization, we can discern several things about its political actions. This literature review will discuss several related studies that explored the relationship between NU and Indonesia's central government administrations, its elites' behavior toward these administrations, and the dynamics of NU's political strides after *reformasi*.

To begin with, this study will discuss several previous studies, particularly related to NU's relationship with government administrations. Several studies view NU's political actions more as political opportunism (Febrina et al. 2014) and competition with Muslim modernist groups (Mansur 2009). According to Febrina, et.al, (2014), based on their research on the role of NU in Banyumas, East Java, NU's political support during the two *pilkada* (regional election) periods in Banyumas showed that the organization sided with the candidate who was able to guarantee the future well-being of its followers.

This shows that NU will take several actions to ensure its followers will benefit from its influence in politics. What is interesting from the findings of Febrina et al is the argument that NU has never been in opposition because it bases its political stance on a religious ideology that puts the interests and needs of its followers first (Febrina, et al. 2014, 99). This analysis is interesting, although it also comprises certain weaknesses. I argue that, albeit this perspective reaffirms NU's political-religious opportunism when dealing with the state NU took an oppositional stance when dealing with the New Order regime. In other words, NU's political opportunism is not as described by Febrina, et al, which does not recognize opposition but is broader than that. Therefore, despite laying down their research on the development of NU's political activities at the local level, the authors were unable

to provide a complete explanation of the extent to which NU's political opportunism works: Is it only limited to constituent considerations, or does it go beyond that? In addition, the claim that NU will always avoid such political opposition is not completely defensible. It is well known that the New Order's intervention in NU's chairmanship election in Cipasung, West Java, in 1984 was considered a form of deep-state intervention in NU's political independence (Barton 2012). This situation prompted NU to take a radical oppositional stance against the New Order government (Nakamura 1996). Febrina et al.'s approach is also a genre of research on NU politics in the 1950s that emphasized the opportunist view of this organization in politics. Meanwhile, Fealy (2011) added that several studies on NU conducted in the 1950s and 1960s described it as an organization that did not have a clear goal except for its opportunistic attitude. Therefore, we need a new explanation of NU's political actions to understand the changing context of its behavior and ideology across regimes, particularly during democratization.

In contrast to Febrina, et al, Mansur (2009) and Bush (2009) provide a distinctive analysis by arguing that NU's relationship with modern Islam shapes much of its public and political behavior and not the state. In other words, NU's political interactions with the state and public political discourses are primarily intended to improve NU's political position vis-a-vis modernist Muslims, not to strengthen its position vis-a-vis the state. Indeed, this perspective indicates that NU is a purely political organization that prioritizes competition between actors to achieve its goals. However, Bush (2009) in particular, is still trapped in seeing NU's competition with modernist Islam within the framework of NU's separation from the Masjumi party in the Old Order. This argument will ignore organizational dynamics across time, especially when Masyumi disbanded as a political party, and after the reform era, a number of non-political modernist organizations did not have the same resources as NU. Does this mean that the competitive perspective still applies now that NU has become the largest Islamic religious organization in Indonesia?

Furthermore, some studies also provide the role of the *Ulama* (ulema) as a stakeholder in facing the New Order regime and the internal strife (Fealy, et al. 1997; Bruinessen 1994). However, Fealy and Bruinessen only provide a brief and general explanation of how the elites network in relation to certain socio-political contexts. Besides, several other studies have focused on NU's political *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and how NU views politics in general. This kind of view argues that NU's political attitudes and actions are not influenced by external elements such as the state or its competition with modernist Muslims, but by NU's internal religious doctrine. Feillard (1999), Fealy (2011),

Haidar (1994), Nakamura (1981), and Arifianto (2021) see NU's political attitudes and actions as part of their religious doctrine, which adheres to Sunni political principles that reject radical opposition to the government.

However, most of those studies were conducted before Indonesia embraced democracy in 1998 after the fall of the New Order regime. However, no significant studies have been developed on NU and its behavior toward the state after *reformasi*, and any previous research did not sufficiently understand NU and its relation to the state after *reformasi* — at least because of the distinctive elements of *reformasi*. These elements were revealed by Shidiq and Vermonte (2013), who noted the importance of political Islam and decentralization in the post-*reformasi* era because of the rise of electoral democracy and decentralization. Thus, I could argue that to some extent, *reformasi* then formed a different arena for NU to implement its political interests, unlike in the pre-*reformasi* period. After *reformasi*, however, several studies preferred to explore the idea of *Islam Nusantara* (Indonesian Islamic model) and how NU formulates its ideas of moderation. This kind of view was developed specifically in the study of Baso (2017), Salik (2020), Arifianto (2017), Ghazali (2016), and Qomar (2015), who saw NU's attitude on *da'wa* moderation or political moderation within the framework of *Islam Nusantara*. Of course, these studies are limited to only providing a sketch of the jargon of *Islam Nusantara* to NU during the leadership of Said Aqiel Siradj (2010-2021). Unfortunately, they did not explain conclusively the extent to which NU and the state were intertwined, particularly in the context of different regimes. In other words, we cannot rely entirely on the argument that organizational doctrine matters in this regard. Given the aforementioned discussion, it is clear that there is a research gap related to NU's attitudes and actions in response to Indonesia's different regimes and governments. Previous studies only discuss NU in a pre-democratization manner, mostly during the authoritarian era of Soeharto (1966-1997). Meanwhile, this proposed study will try to fill in the research gap by examining NU's political attitude and action toward regimes after *reformasi*, especially in the context of democratization, in which political participation is one of the core political phenomena.

## **B. Theoretical Framework**

This study uses the elite network theory in explaining NU's attitude toward politics, particularly NU's religious elite network. In this study, the role of religious elites is defined as their role as political influencers. In general, the elites include, for instance, key decision-makers in the largest or most important organizations and movements in society: top

executives, business and military leaders, as well as leaders of political parties, professional associations, media associations, mainstream groups, and major religious groups, education, and culture (Higley 2018). Based on these roles, elite-influenced outcomes include the fundamental stability or instability of political regimes, the forms and functioning of political institutions, and key government policies. Concerning the role of the elites, social scientists have long analyzed their influences in democratic transitions and collapses, revolutions, mass movements, and various other social phenomena (Moore 1993; Acemoglu & Robinson 2006; Heilbrunn 2005; Ross 2012).

In the study of elitism, the definition of this term is inseparable from classification. The most common classification made by political scientists and sociologists, according to Parry, Slootjes, and Perkins, is the distinction between the hierarchies of power, wealth, and status (Parry 1969; Perkins 2009; Slootjes 2011). These three dimensions are, in principle, separable even if the distinctions present some problems for empirical investigation. Power refers to one's ability to participate electively in decisions that substantially alter the balance of advantages and disadvantages of the courses of action open to others. In addition, wealth is related to those with the largest income and the greatest accumulation and capital. Class, as noted by Parry, is determined by the position that one occupies along with others in relation to the productive process.

In common usage, the term elite has several connotations, mostly associated with notions of excellence, upper-class status, privilege, and superiority. Furthermore, Vilfredo Pareto, cited in Hagemann, et al. (2020), distinguishes between governing and non-governing elites. He further separates governing elites into those who dominate by force and those who dominate by skills and persuasion. The discussion on elites also varies among scholars. This variation lies in the context of the language differences besides the discussion on whether this term should be defined by its function or as a neutral terminology. However, Endruweit, cited in Hagemann et al. (2020), ensures that almost all theorists agree that the elite is a minority consisting of members of a social system who, due to selective criteria, consider themselves superior to others and/or are considered superior by others. In this study, the definition of elites is based on Hagemann et al.'s definition of Muslim elites. Hagemann et al. (2020: 30) defined elites as individuals and groups of individuals who are in a position or have the potential to influence social, political, economic, and religious processes and decision-making in their communities. This definition is similar to Higley's (2018), which emphasizes elites as small, relatively cohesive, and stable individuals and groups with significant decision-making power. Based

on this definition, we can consider several characteristics in applying this term in this study. The elite gained influence through a combination of some or at least two main internal factors. First, ancestry, including the constructions of ethnic, tribal, and family affiliation; and second, exceptional personal qualities such as charisma, intelligence, strength, or poetical/musical talent (Hagemann et al. 2020, 30). In NU's community, the *Kiai* as the elites also gain their influence through such factors. These then enable the NU *Kiai* to become political elites who are "intermediaries between the government and the people" (Hourani 1981, 44) and provide a path in NU's socio-religious-political stances across history (Chalik 2010).

However, these elites do not only have religious, social, and even political authority but they are also bound in a chain of networks that has existed for a long time (Ridwan 2010). In this point of view, religious elites will strengthen when they form networks. In a chain of networks, powerful individuals and small groups control the main centers of decision-making in modern societies. Elites can mobilize the population under their command for various purposes and means (Pakulski 2018). The networks then connect nodes via links, thus representing patterns of relations among social or political actors (Ward, et al. 2011).

Networks in this study mean a relation and a connection among NU elites that are divided into two elements: knowledge networks and family or kinship networks. As part of the Islamic milieu, the chain of knowledge networks between Muslim religious elites in Indonesia and various places in the world since premodern times has been demonstrated by several scholars (Burhanuddin 2005; Ali 2006; Jahroni 2013; Bradley 2014). Those studies also explored the significance of the role of religious elites in transmitting the idea of reformation and modernization in various places in Indonesia and the Malay world (Azra 2013). In this context, knowledge networks are defined as the relationship and the connection between various Islamic groups and their religious authorities or religious scholars, as well as the relationship between them and their pupils as ultimately the essential channels by means of which information, texts, documents, and oral transmissions will be exchanged even over great distances (Eich 2011). Educational journeys and pilgrimages, in particular, play an important part in this knowledge network and overcome not only the limitations of social stratification and borders between urban, rural, and nomadic societies but also spatial distances (Eich 2011, 3).

In addition, as essential networks, kinship and religion indeed acted as irreducible elements for a social organization (Durkheim 1977). In modern Muslim societies, those

roles can be traced throughout Islamic countries, showing that Muslim elite families greatly influence the political milieu. In the 1979 Iranian Constitution, principle 10 clearly mentions that the family is “the fundamental unit of Islamic society” (Ramazani 1980, 190). Besides, the Iranian families of higher religious officials have intermarried and have had an important role in the dynamic of Iranian public discourses. In Syria, *Ulama* families intermarried with urban traders and artisan families (the most religiously oriented class) (Batatu 1982). This also happened in Morocco and Saudi Arabia, where intermarriages between the *Qadi* (Islamic Judge) forged alliances among provincial notables or the kingdom’s families (Eickelman & Piscatori 1996). Though Muslim families across countries do not have the same levels of political influence, this interweaving of families plays a salient role in politics, and familial networks solidify and extend political influence (Eickelman & Piscatori 1996, 84-87). Moreover, elite marriages can become “a means by which political and economic conflict and competition in the wider society are negotiated and managed” based on the interests of the elite, and could be different depending on the time and conditions (Lindisfarne & Tapper 1991, xv).

In the Indonesian context, the very first piece of literature written about the families of religious elites was produced by Zamakhsyari Dhofier (1980a) in his work “Kinship and Marriage Among the Javanese *Kiai*.” Dhofier emphasizes that the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school), in which *Kiai* is the center, has its own distinctive family and kinship system that influence NU’s organization. Most *Kiai*, he added, are related through kinship and marriage, and also developed a tradition of keeping a record of their genealogies going back several generations. Using strategic endogamous marriages, they constantly and consistently strengthen kinship (Dhofier 1980a, 54). The *Kiai*’s kin groups, which are comparatively more cohesive than those of the average Javanese, are one of the main contributors to the development and expansion of *santri* (Islamic boarding school student) culture and community in Java (Dhofier 1980a, 58). Interestingly, Dhofier’s study indicates that the strength of kinship in NU also influences how this organization acts in social situations, and these actions can differ according to the context of kinship interests (Dhofier 1980a, 51-52).

To review some of the salient religious elite networks’ impact on politics, scholars have acknowledged the importance of clergy as political leaders (Jelen 2001; McKenzie 2004), and religion and its networks in influencing today’s world (Heiberger, S.F. 2019). In the United States, the role of religious elites has been a controversial issue (Olson, & Carroll, J. W. 1992). In Israel, the religious elite connection has never been separate from

the state or autonomous from party politics (Etzioni-Halevy 1994), while Hmong Christian elites in Vietnam's highlands "enjoy a potent combination of spiritual authority, strong external networks, and financial success" (Rumsby 2021, 701). In Muslim history, the relationship between religious clerics and the state is also central (Kuru 2019). The situation was the same in Latin America, where the competition between religious elites and institutions, especially between the Protestant church and the Catholic church, involved a deep relationship with the state (Gill 1998). In this regard, Hunter (1987) notes that several important religious leaders show an active concern for several issues. Firstly, they are connected to racially and economically oppressed people. Second, they show aggressive political leadership in protesting and changing social wrongs and supporting social and political causes that may be unpopular. Religious professionals then consistently rated these qualities significantly higher and more important than lay people. In other words, the role of religious elites is very significant and influential both for society and the government, and it should be noted that the political behavior of religious leaders, therefore, is the product of balancing between background and foreground factors (Oldmixon 2019).

In discussing flexibility, here I define "flexibility" in NU as a part of social system flexibility in a political context. In general, Barak and Ariella (2016) stated that flexible thinking is part of an individual's ability in the social milieu to collectively access responses and behavior and to make various necessary adjustments. Purzycki and Sosis (2009) confirmed that religion shows various adaptive responses to different life situations. In traditional Muslim culture, especially in NU, *Ahl-al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah* (Aswaja) is regarded as the religious doctrinal system all issues should be based on. This doctrine, as noted by Hallaq (2004), has been playing a significant role as a structure of authority that contains the power to control dialectical moves between traditional continuity and changes in accommodation. In NU's tradition, Aswaja specifically means that in the field of *aqidah* (theology), this organization follows the schools (*Mazhab*) of Imam Abu Hasan Al Asy'ari and Imam Abu Manshur al-Maturidi. In *fiqh*, NU follows one of the four Imams of schools, such as Imam Hanafi, Imam Maliki, Imam Syafii, and Imam Hambali. In addition, in Sufism, NU follows Al-Ghazali and Al-Junaid al-Baghdadi (Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama 2022). Therefore, NU's adherence to the Aswaja doctrine naturally led to its flexibility in terms of managing the dialectical movement between the continuity of its traditions and the accommodation of change. This is because the decisions made by the NU community always prioritize schools of thought that allow for differences of opinion. According to Suprpto's definition (1987), NU's political flexibility has enabled it to

survive under various government regimes in Indonesia. This is because NU's political vision prioritizes avoiding *mafsadat* (deterioration) over receiving benefits. The definition of *mafsadat* and “benefits”, however, could be multi-interpretative and especially will be based on how NU’s elites defined and functionalized them based on their “considerations”. Therefore, we could define flexibility as the ability of organizations and their main decision-makers to operate rapidly in an environment that is characteristically fast-changing and very difficult to comprehend (Dostál 2002). From here, I abstract some points. First, flexibility relates to the ability to adapt or to adjust to certain political events or issues that are characteristically fast-changing and multi-interpretative, and that can affect the position of NU elites. Therefore, they would need certain adjustments to encourage multifaceted actions that could be practically opposed to the regime or support it. Second, flexible actions are not decided by one source of authority, but on different subject backgrounds. Flexible options allow for a variety of options that may better suit the interests of a particular decision-maker. Flexibility in this context is indeed different from the idea of pragmatism in political science. Pragmatism is strongly related to the idea of supporting the status quo. In other means, a pragmatist will act as an apologist for the status quo, whose work was understood to amount to a “politics of acquiescence” (Bacon, M., & Chin, C. 2016).

Based on these reviews, in the political context, this research will only focus on NU's political actions related to the political situations in Indonesia after *reformasi*. This choice was influenced by the fact that previous studies of NU's political attitudes and actions were heavily based on observations made over a long period during *pre-reformasi*. To tighten the analytical framework, the role of elite networks in NU's political behavior is understood in the context of how they respond to political regimes and political situations in several phases of certain regimes in Indonesia.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH MANAGEMENT**

#### **A. Research Methods**

In this study, I used a qualitative method. Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). It means that qualitative researchers study in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. This kind of research, therefore, involves a collection of a variety of empirical materials—case studies, such as personal experience, life stories, interviews, and observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe the routine and problematic moments and meaning in the life of groups and individuals. Unlike quantitative data, qualitative research is not measured in terms of frequency or quantity but rather is examined for in-depth meanings and processes (Labuschagne 2003). Therefore, I used the qualitative method because it considers the object of study related to the interaction of a group or organization, in this case, NU and the state. Qualitative research, therefore, involves the interpretation of texts, socio-political contexts, influential individuals, and phenomena of the NU and the state relation as the object of the research. In terms of texts, the results of the organization's internal publications, including the writings of their figures who responded to events in the past, will also be considered.

#### **B. The Place and Time of Study**

This study was conducted in Indonesia, particularly in areas around Greater Jakarta, such as Depok, Bogor, Tangerang, and Bekasi. However, it should be noted that this research treats NU as a national organization with federative characteristics that is loose by nature, which enables its elites to make different political decisions. Several of its prominent figures and significant organizational branches, however, are based in East and Central Java. Several central board members are also based outside of Greater Jakarta and will travel to the capital only for important events. Therefore, we must bear in mind that the research could involve those areas, depending on analytical results and developments. Several interviews were conducted online to accommodate time and financial constraints. In practice, the unit of analysis in this study is organizational interaction, and in this regard, NU's Central Boards (*Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul ulama/PBNU*) and Indonesia's political

regimes after *reformasi*. I chose the PBNU because this central board represents NU in national affairs. The study spanned around six months, from December 2022 to June 2023.

## **C. Research Design**

### **a. Data Collection**

For the purpose of this study, I interviewed several prominent figures of PBNU, selecting them through a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling (Ilker 2016). For the first technique, I recruited participants who were able to provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation; in this case, the relationship between NU and the state after *reformasi* and the main factors that influenced NU's flexibility during that time. It should be noted that participant selection for the research study is highly subjective. Only those who are NU intellectuals, leaders, or part of an influential network within NU's organization will be considered. PBNU members were my primary sources, and non-members were secondary. These secondary sources could be researchers, academicians, NGO activists, etc., who have deep concerns about the relationship between NU and the state.

To ascertain the exact number of participants, I used the second technique of convenience sampling. Using this technique, I recruited participants who were easily accessible and convenient to the goal of this study. This may include leveraging geographic locations and available resources to make participant recruitment more feasible. My background as a former researcher with the Wahid Foundation was beneficial in helping me connect with NU's members and followers, using both formal and cultural channels. The Wahid Foundation is a research institution with a cultural connection to NU, and as such, I leveraged my experience there to facilitate my research.

I conducted one-on-one semi-standardized interviews that are commonly used in data collection in qualitative research. One-on-one interviews helped me understand participants' experiences, views, and beliefs (Lambert & Loiselle 2007) concerning their specific answers to the research questions. Semi-standardized (or semi-structured) interviews also meant that I implemented a more flexible approach during the interview process. This kind of interview involves a schedule for pre-determined topics, particularly on religious elite networks and the role of the *Kiai* in political affairs, but I allowed openly unanticipated and spontaneous responses and issues to arise through the use of open-ended questions (Coughlan et al. 2009). In this regard, the research data-gathering methods used were in-depth interviews and participant observations. In-depth interviewing is a

qualitative research technique suitable for a small number of participants (Rutledge & Hogg 2020). Technically, I used an in-depth interview approach to spend a significant amount of time with each interviewee using a conversational format. The purpose of an in-depth interview is to obtain detailed information that sheds light on the interviewee's perspectives, experiences, feelings, and meaning derived from a particular topic or issue.

#### **b. Data Analysis**

This study uses the qualitative research method, which focuses on efforts to explain an event that interacts with the behavior, motivations, and actions of a religious mass organization in certain situations, especially how the organization behaves toward the central government. Data analysis is the process of reducing large amounts of collected data, either from texts or interviews, to make the data make sense. For efficiency, I review the data based on categorizations. Practically, several NU books on political affairs and their relation to the state were a basis for textual descriptions, categorizations, conceptualizations, and comparisons. This process was also applied to the results of interview transcripts. To integrate and compare these processes, I employed a cyclical process of data collection and analysis, ensuring that data collection and analysis are mutually reinforcing (Mudge, et al. 2013). The collected data was then analyzed and reflected upon, and based on the analysis and reflection, I was able to go back to the data to validate the results.

To strengthen the analysis, research, and publications related to some of the studies reviewed above were also resource material for this research. To provide context for NU's political attitudes, I reviewed its responses to key historical events during the New Order and Old Order eras, as well as the actions of other Islamic groups during the *reformasi* period.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### **A. A Political Role of the *Kiai*: A Historical Overview**

According to Hagemann, et al. (2020), the literature on elites — in social sciences and other areas of science — has grown extensively since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In the field of Islamic studies, the idea of the "politics of notables" as an elite was introduced by Albert Hourani in 1981 (Hourani 1981, 44-45). Hourani understood “notables” to be urban dignitaries during the Ottoman period who were engaged in politics by "acting as intermediaries between the government and the people", usually without seeking autonomous rule for themselves. However, in his work, Hourani was interested in the status of provincial towns vis-à-vis the imperial centers rather than the question of elite status and membership.

Hourani’s perspective is relevant to the transformation of the role of NU elites as the basis of their political behavior and action. In Indonesia, discourses on religious elites have begun to flourish, particularly when it comes to the political arena. As an organization that relies heavily on religious authority, NU’s figures play a central role in influencing followers’ behavior in all matters, including politics (Masyhuri 2005). The study on *Kiai* as elites first appeared in a classical study by Geertz (1960). In his “The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker”, Geertz asserts that the *Kiai* were among the Indonesian elites who acted as a cultural broker “both for securing and enhancing his social power and prestige” in society (Geertz 1960, 230). While Wahid exposed the *Kiai* as a charismatic figure obeyed by his students (Wahid 2000), Binder (1960) found that the *Kiai* was a mediator among modern Indonesia, Islam, and its rural citizen. He even noted that as an elite, the *Kiai* was the center of their *santri* and that “these *santri* are the social and political support of the *Kiai*” (Binder 1960, 250).

Religious elites in NU are also not limited to their figures at the national level. Several influential figures are based in the country’s rural areas, particularly East Java, where NU was founded. Not all NU elites are connected to *pesantren*. They work in various professions as state officials, intellectuals, writers, preachers, NGO activists, and even academics (Amin 2009). However, top NU leaders are traditionally selected by a *Kiai*, who is believed to have spiritual knowledge about leading the organization. For this reason, the NU *Rais Syuriah* (leadership position) is always given to those who are recognized as having the strength of religious knowledge equipped with spiritual depth.

Studies that specifically connect the political role of NU elites to certain political issues after *reformasi* began to emerge after the release of Turmudi's work. For him, religious elites in NU have the power to mobilize the masses, lobby the government, and influence regional leaders, including at the national level (Turmudi 1995). Yani, et al. (2022) explore the political interactions of NU *Kiai* as religious elites in the national political arena and their current impact on Indonesia's Muslim community. Meanwhile, Pribadi (2013) tried to examine the religious elites' networks, particularly the nature of *pesantren*, the role of NU, and *Kiai* within the whole tradition of *santri* Islam in Madura, and how those three elements are intertwined. Previous studies by Azra (2013) explored the scientific networks of Islamic scholars in Indonesia who were connected so intensely with Islamic scholars in the Middle East, and these networks became the foundation of Islamic reform in Indonesia.

These studies convey several main points. First, they confirm that NU's *Kiai* could be categorized as religious elites who, at least, have several characteristics as defined by Parry earlier regarding power, wealth, and status (Makhasin 2017; Amal & Saat 2021). Second, as shown by Alkaf et al (2022), as religious elites, NU *Kiai* also control assets such as Islamic boarding schools and land, and they have authority over socio-religious issues. These studies also show that across NU's history, the *Kiai* was a central figure of the organization and its followers.

Thus, before explaining how religious elites have become the basis of political action in NU, I will demonstrate the strong role of the *Kiai* as a group of religious elites who are influential at every level of society, especially among its students. Several biographies of religious elites written by NU figures indicate how the *Kiai* became a reference for social, economic, and political issues (Zuhri 1974; Shohib et al. 2014). The purview of the *Kiai* ranges from people's daily problems to issues of national leadership, science, and technology (Amin 2009). Previous studies on the *Kiai* also show that the role is not only limited to the social aspects of society but also to the political sphere (Bashri 2020; Chasbullah 2015; Zuhri 1987; Horikoshi 1987). In fact, throughout its history, NU is widely known to have a reciprocal relationship with political power. NU needs power politics and vice versa. On the other hand, the political elites of Indonesia need NU to boost their electoral interests (Suaedy 2023).

In traditional Islamic organizations such as NU, the *Kiai* is a central figure — both formally and informally — in community leadership. This status was achieved through several means (Moesa 2006). First, “*Kiai*” is a title/status given by the community to an

expert on Islamic religion (the *Ulama*) who owns or becomes the leader of a *pesantren* and teaches classical literature (Dhofier 1980). Because of this, not everyone in NU can become or be called a *Kiai*. Certain conditions are required and can be obtained through specific processes, not all of which are formal measures. Second, NU's *Kiai* must have an in-depth knowledge of Islam and Islamic teachings (*tafaqquh fiddin*), as well as follow strict rules that govern their life and behavior, such as avoiding luxury and living simply. Third, the *Kiai* formally and informally devote themselves to helping society. In the past, those criteria also included the *Kiai*'s association with a particular *sufi tariqa* order to support their spiritual legitimacy (Pringle 2010).

However, these criteria do not apply universally and have various interpretations. In certain cases, a person can be called a *Kiai* because he married the daughter of a *Kiai* — even though he had no connection to the *Kiai*'s family prior to the marriage. Secondly, because of their metaphysical approach and informal parameters, these criteria have their own weaknesses. For instance, there have been cases where *Kiai* were given the title just because they were believed to have supernatural abilities, even though they had been working as a *dukun* (shaman) who often deceived the public. In fact, the above prerequisites have become part of the standard criteria in NU to describe its religious elites. That is why these characters are prominent features of the religious elite among NU, and because of these characteristics in general, one can easily identify whether he is a *Kiai* affiliated with NU or not. According to Horikoshi (1987), through these roles and positions, the *Kiai* then offer an agenda for real change in society which they deem appropriate to the needs of the community they lead.

Historically, the role of traditional *Kiai* has also fluctuated due to the influence of the political situation at both the national and local levels. Even though NU ideally understands politics as a series of activities related to the benefit of the people (especially NU followers), "in physical and spiritual life, in relations between communities in general and public relations with various state institutions" (Mahfudh 1994), political dynamics, to some extent, shape the influence of the *Kiai* whether they are directly involved in electoral politics or not. This long tradition of political engagement is culturally embedded in NU's organizational life (Haidar 1994).

Although the *Kiai*'s role was prominent both during the struggle for independence and afterward, there were periods when *Kiai*'s authority was challenged or even bypassed by other NU political elites. For example, when NU was transformed into a political party (1952-1983), the influence of the *Kiai* in party management was reduced by the joining of

various national-level, “secular” political activists such as Subhan ZE (Fealy 2003). During that time, political conflicts between NU elites were unavoidable, especially because they were related to how NU behaved toward Islamic political unity with Masyumi, addressing President Soekarno's guided democracy, or accepting the single principle of Pancasila during the Suharto era. All of these political processes are considered to have reduced the role of the *Kiai*, who are unable to mobilize the masses in prolonged political turmoil. The rise of the *Kiai* has reappeared since the 1984 *Muktamar*, which emphasized the return of NU to being a socio-religious organization (Adnan 1982). The influence of the *Kiai* was once again questioned after various political dynamics triggered by *reformasi* reduced their electoral influence, especially after the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid (Laksana, et al. 1998; Fealy & Bush 2014; Aidulsyah & Mizuno 2020).

### **B. Religious Elites Networks as the Basis of Political Behavior and Action**

NU's elites alone cannot significantly influence societal issues at the national level. Therefore, the role of their network is crucial. This network may be formed through both knowledge and kinship ties and has a significant impact on NU's political decision-making at both the regional and national levels. In addition, their network also fosters channels for charismatic leadership that are distributed locally in various locations. As a result, their political decisions are related to, or at least known by, each religious leader at the local level.

As this study will show, I argue that NU's elite networks, which are divided into two categories — kinship and knowledge networks — greatly influence NU's political flexibility toward Indonesia's post-*reformasi* government regimes. Generally, these networks are referred to as one of the important pillars of NU's strength because they are culturally an integral part of the foundations of traditional Islamic traditions (Anam 2010). It has been stated that the roots of NU's strength lie not in its organizational system, but are firmly embedded in the life network of the *santri* community with its independent and autonomous *Kiai* (Yusuf, et al. 1983). According to Dhofier (1983), this chain of networks forms solidarity and cooperation between various elements in NU so that the legacy of kinship and scholarship transmission is maintained over time. These kinds of networks are important not only because they maintain NU as an institution, but also encourage a varied perspective on various problems and phenomena in society because the *Kiai*, who have different socio-geographical backgrounds, form their different authorities on issues that influence its followers. In this regard, I particularly agree with Nakamura, who elaborated

that the network was a "base" where development processes in the wider community could be carried out (Nakamura 1981, 1997).

Over time, influential NU figures became more authoritative because their networks further strengthened their position as a part of the religious elite. Institutionally, their network has contributed to a flexible perspective on various political issues in Indonesia. For instance, I argue that these networks encourage NU figures to make political decisions that are not monolithic and independent based on each figure's kinship and knowledge connections. This flexibility is also supported by the nearly equal distribution of charismatic leadership among NU elites, which encourages them to adopt policies in politics without being fixated on a particular authority. As I previously mentioned, NU elites formed several political parties led by influential figures to participate in general elections after *reformasi*. These political parties were formed based on the network of each elite who had a major influence within NU. Another example is the three influential NU figures who participated in the presidential and vice-presidential elections in 2004, which will be explained later on, showing NU's flexible attitude toward regimes in determining their political attitudes due to the tendency of the network of their respective elites. Based on this view, NU's political actions can differ because religious leaders pursue their goals based on different socio-demographics and their network contexts. The political behavior of religious leaders, therefore, is the product of balancing background and foreground factors (Oldmixon 2019).

On another occasion, Fahrur Rozi (2023), a *Kiai* from East Java who is now one of NU's leaders in Jakarta, conceded that the actions and political choices of NU followers were free from organizational intervention because NU as an organization does not practice politics. This statement was relevant to Wahid Hasjim (2011), who noted that the *Kiai* do not monopolize NU because morally, they are only guardians and disseminators of religious teachings so that they can be carried out and implemented in society. However, I found that in practice, the *pesantren* network and the scholarly linkages of the *santri* and their *Kiai* have determined how society responds to their political positions. Rozi diplomatically gave the example that his actions and political stance were based on the fact that he was an alumnus of the Sidogiri Islamic boarding school and both *santri* and the surrounding community would follow their *Kiai's* decisions, even though, he conceded, not all of them agreed.

Rozi's view could be a basis for our discussion on the role of knowledge networks in NU's political stances. If we trace NU's historical fragments, the role of the *Kiai*

knowledge network in determining political attitudes and actions is quite prominent. When NU was first formed, it was known that several *Kiai*, who among them had scientific relations and to some extent familial relations, had helped the formation of NU in 1926 (Abdul Aziz, et al. 2015). Additionally, we can see that during Soekarno's guided democracy and Soeharto's New Order, the influence of this knowledge network was quite prominent in determining political attitudes — both internally and externally — toward the state (Abdalla 2023).

Perhaps the most prominent examples of this knowledge network can be seen in the debate regarding the political attitudes of the Cipete group and the Situbondo group ahead of the NU Congress in 1984. These groups were referred to as the clerical block and the politician block. (Karim 1992). The debate over who deserved the NU leadership position did not only raise internal challenges but also involved NU's attitude toward the New Order government. The Situbondo group itself was led by KH As'ad Samsul Arifin, a charismatic *Kiai* from Situbondo who was one of the last students of Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of NU. This group wanted Idham Chalid to step down as chairman of NU and hand over temporary leadership to the *Kiai*. Apart from As'ad, this group also involved KH Ali Maksud from the Krapyak Islamic Boarding School, Yogyakarta, and KH Machrus Aly from the Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School in Kediri. Later, several of these senior clerics became the backbone of the election of Abdurrahman Wahid as general chairman to replace Idham Chalid.

If the Situbondo group consisted of influential senior clerics, the Cipete group itself mostly consisted of NU politicians, such as Moechamad Baedhowi from Tebuireng and KH Alie Yafi, who supported the continued chairmanship of Idham Chalid. The debate between these two groups led to the rise of certain measures that sought to gain the government's sympathy and support. In this regard, the attitude of *Kiai* As'ad, who issued a statement emphasizing that Pancasila was not against Islam, according to Bruinessen (1994), encouraged the New Order government's tendency at that time to support the Situbondo group. On the other hand, the Cipete group was known for its radical attitude and criticism of the New Order (Feillard 1997). As a result, "victory" went to the Situbondo group.

In this case, in terms of the differences of opinion regarding internal leadership, I found that the knowledge network of these elites played a large role in determining support for the group. We can safely note that the three key figures from the Situbondo group are related scientifically to one another, especially because they tended to support

Abdurrahman Wahid as a candidate for NU leadership at the 1984 *Muktamar*. *Kiai* As'ad and *Kiai* Mahrus Aly were students of Abdurrahman Wahid's grandfather, Hasyim Asy'ari, a founder of NU. Therefore, regardless of their attitudes toward Abdurrahman Wahid, they were swayed to support him because of his lineage. This was proven when *Kiai* Mahrus Aly interpreted the dream of a *Kiai* who claimed had been visited in his sleep by Wahid Hasyim, Wahid's father. Confidently, Mahrus Aly interpreted this as support for Abdurrahman Wahid's leadership. In addition to the two, Ali Maksum was Abdurrahman Wahid's Arabic teacher at the Krapyak *pesantren* in Yogyakarta. These relations, both directly and indirectly, further strengthen the position of this network in dealing with various political situations both internally and externally with the government.

In addition, to understand how kinship relationships also form a complex but mutually beneficial network, Bruinessen's (1994, 137-138) description can explain how kinship among NU elites are intertwined: "...*Kiai* Mahfoezh Siddiq from Jember was the general chairman of NU in the 1930s, NU's fifth *Ro'is 'am* (spiritual supreme leader) is *Kiai* Ahmad Siddiq, who is the younger brother of *Kiai* Mahfoezh. *Kiai* Siddiq was once the personal secretary of *Kiai* Wahid Hasyim when he was the Minister of Religious Affairs of Indonesia. This path then met again with another founder of NU, *Kiai* Bisri Syansuri, because his daughter married Wahid Hasyim. Their eldest son Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) later became a well-known NU leader..."

Although this kinship group was not large and relatively small in number, its members controlled large *pesantren* and were related to each other through, as already mentioned, marriage or scholarship (Dhofier 1980). Within this elite circle, Bruinessen (1994) pointed out that several *pesantren* in Jombang, East Java, gained a dominant position in the hierarchy. The three are the Tebuireng Islamic boarding school, which was founded by KH Hasyim Asy'ari; Tambakberas founded by KH Wahab Hasbullah; and Denanyar, which was founded by KH Bisri Syansuri. These three figures were the founders and top leaders of NU at the beginning of its formation, who apart from having family ties, were also scientifically connected. The charisma of the *Kiai* and other *pesantren* is more or less determined by their relationship with the three major *pesantren* in Jombang. To add important information, the three founders of the *pesantren* also studied under the same teacher, KH Muhammad Kholil from Bangkalan, Madura, who is well-known as the religious teacher of most NU elites. It is from *Kiai* Kholil's path that we can trace the scholarly network of NU elites spreading from East, Central, to West Java. Therefore, apart from a few minor exceptions, all *Kiai* who can demonstrate that they have an affinity with

*Kiai* Kholil and the three *pesantren* in Jombang will be able to achieve respectability within NU (Bruinessen 1994, 2020). Unfortunately, Bruinessen's works only limitedly explained the quantity and the influence of these familial networks in the context of NU's political actions. Whereas its networks were the basis of NU's organizational management and coloring NU's political stances.

**The principal genealogical connections and marriage alliances between Hadratus-Shaikh and other *Kiai* in East, Central, and West Java, according to Dhofier (1980).**

FIGURE 1

1. Kyai Sihah, the founder of Pesantren Tambakberas
2. Kyai ʿUthman, the founder of Pesantren Gedang
3. Kyai Ashʿari, the founder of Pesantren Keras
4. Kyai Ilyas of Pesantren Sewulan
5. Kyai Hāshim Ashʿari, the founder of Pesantren Tebuireng
6. Kyai Hasbullah, the successor of Pesantren Tambakberas
7. Kyai Wahab Hasbullah, President of NU 1947-1972
8. Kyai Bishri Shamsuri, the founder of Pesantren Denanyar
9. Kyai Tayu, Rembang
10. Kyai Muhammad Ilyas, Minister of Religious Affairs
11. Kyai Romly, the successor of Pesantren Peterongan
12. Kyai Tamim, the founder of Pesantren Peterongan
13. Kyai ʿAbdul Jabbar, the founder of Pesantren Maskumambang
14. Kyai Maʿsum, the founder of Pesantren Seblak
15. Kyai Adlan ʿAli, the founder of Pesantren Cukir
16. Kyai Manaf ʿAbdulkarim, the founder of Pesantren Lirboyo
17. Kyai Mahrus, the successor of Pesantren Lirboyo
18. Kyai Mansur Anwar, the successor of Pesantren Paculgowang
19. Kyai Anwar, the founder of Pesantren Paculgowang
20. Kyai Mahfuz Anwar, the founder of Madrasah Sunan Ampel
21. Kyai Nuraziz of Pesantren Singosari, Malang
22. Kyai Mashkur, currently the Vice Chairman of Parliament
23. Kyai Maʿsum, the founder of Pesantren Singosari, Malang
24. Kyai Alwi of Pesantren Keras
25. Kyai Idris of Cirebon
26. Kyai Hafiz Dimiyati of Pesantren Tremas
27. Kyai Ahmad Baidawi of Banyumas
28. Kyai Wahid Hāshim, Minister of Religious Affairs (1949-1952)
29. Kyai Saifuddin Zuhri (as above, 1960-1967)
30. Kyai Ahmad Shaikhu, former Chairman of Parliament

To fill the gap, a complete presentation of NU's genealogical connection can be traced in Dhofier's (1980) work on NU's genealogical connections and marriage alliances from the last century. In his explanation, even though only limited to the 20th century, Dhofier explored most of the influential Islamic boarding schools in East Java and to some extent Central Java, which have connections to each other. These connections and alliances have also expanded more broadly into the post-*reformasi* era and have increasingly influenced NU organizationally. However, as we know, Dhofier's studies mainly focused on a positive review of the Javanese *Kiai*. I argue that if he had focused on how these family relations influence NU's political attitudes, we would have gotten a more complete picture

of the role of the family elites. Even so, in Dhofier's version of the family structure, we can see some of the political statuses of certain figures listed, such as religious affairs ministers and members of the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, Dhofier didn't elaborate on this status eloquently.

### **C. Nahdlatul Ulama Elite Networks After *Reformasi***

I have shown that the roles of these two categories of networks have been justified in certain historical fragments of NU. Therefore, this section will prove how these two categories of networks work in determining NU's flexible political choices during the *reformasi* period, and how the influence of these two networks works on several national political issues that I will raise.

The fall of the New Order was marked by Indonesia's massive and rapid efforts to break away from the memory of the authoritarian regime and demand for changes (Yasuko 2009). Some of the main aspects that mark these changes include (Mietzner & Aspinall 2010): First, the opening of opportunities for various community groups to form political parties and social organizations (Shidiq & Vermonte 2013). During the New Order era, the formation of political organizations was quite difficult, even before political parties were simplified. Second, as revealed by Diamond (2010), the process of post-*reformasi* democratization in Indonesia has experienced several advances, allowing for reasonably fair elections and extensive freedom of press and association.

NU also thrived in this euphoria. *Reformasi* encouraged NU to stay close to politics even though — in the context of a formal organization — it did not engage in practical politics. This effort then pushed for a more middle role in responding to various national political situations, despite the differences between various elite figures. For Abdalla (2023), the *reformasi* era allows NU elites to play an increasingly open role not only as facilitators between the government and society but also as part of practical politics as shown by many *Kiais*, who emphasize their involvement in the PKB or other parties in Indonesia. Some NU figures were also active supporters of reform long before the call for *reformasi* was echoed (Ramage 1995). Therefore, although the movement and organizational activities in a practical political context are still haunted by the mandate of the 1926 *Khittah*, which emphasized that NU was not political, I argue that in practice, the spirit of returning to the 1926 *Khittah* was often only limited by a thin wall of political tendencies among NU elites so that the 1926 *Khittah* became formal logic. Thus, de-jure NU may be apolitical, but de facto, its movements are loaded with nuances of practical

politics (Achadi 2004). Arifianto (2018, n.p.) even mentions that during the *reformasi* era, NU "is moving away from its highly prized position of political neutrality and is increasingly being closely linked with the PKB, as well as with Indonesian President Joko Widodo."

According to Achadi (2004), this kind of attitude is unclear because NU acts "in-between" as a "socio-religious organization or political organization." I argue that this view seems to only focus on the context of NU as an organization without looking at how NU elites play their role culturally. These views could be repudiated if we look at NU in the context of a structural and cultural movement at the same time. Post-*reformasi* political dynamics have pushed NU to create a new approach to practical politics in Indonesia. In this context, NU was able to present the two sides of the coin in a complementary way, both culturally and structurally, with the formation of the PKB. However, three other parties also emerged: PKU, PNU, and the SUNI Party. These parties were formed as a counter-hegemony to the interpretation of the 1926 *Khittah* and Islam *Ahlussunah Wal Jamaah*, which was carried out by some elites. NU's political shift is a form of reorientation and political decision-making in response to the interactions and interests that they compromised in the post-*reformasi* era (Martin 2003). In other words, NU elites will always be distributed through their network by determining their own non-monolithic interests to maintain political balance in the areas they live. However, as we will see, this attempt to balance political and cultural roles has not always been a smooth one. There was a time when these two aspects intertwined and influenced how NU's political position differed in national political issues. On the other side of the coin, this approach has made it difficult for NU to show cohesiveness, with each NU elite choosing to represent themselves and, therefore, causing confusion when external parties attempt to determine who formally represents the organization.

Shortly after *reformasi*, there was a period of deferring views regarding the presidential and vice-presidential candidates running in the 2004 general election, which involved several leading figures of NU. Three figures were running as vice presidential candidates: Salahuddin Wahid, Hasyim Muzadi, and Hamzah Haz. Hamzah Haz was vice president during Megawati's administration, and he was quite influential among NU's political elites (Smith 2003). Meanwhile, Hasyim Muzadi, who was chairman of the PBNU at that time, was paired with Megawati as her running mate. However, Muzadi's candidacy faced criticism and disapproval. In fact, I argue that this disapproval was influenced by the *pesantran's* knowledge networks. Abdullah Faqih, one of the most influential East Java

*Kiai*, supported the Wiranto-Shalahuddin Wahid pair, partly because they shared the same goal of banning women leaders, and because Faqih had a special affinity with the Wahid family (Karni 2006). On the other hand, Nawawi Abdul Jalil, several other *Kiai*, and several caretakers of *pesantren* in Pasuruan, openly supported the Megawati and Hasyim Muzadi pair. Their choice was not just influenced by their similar views on NU, but also because of their shared religious belief that confirmed their support for a female president — unlike other supporters who rejected the idea. In media reports, this group even compiled a special book to support female future leaders (Detik.com 2004)

On the contrary, *Kiai* Faqih's choice also influenced the Langitan *pesantren* network, which spread across East Java to Central Java, including *Kiai* Mas Subadar of Pasuruan, *Kiai* Azis Masyhuri of Jombang, and *Kiai* Abdullah Abbas of Cirebon. According to Rozi (2023), support for Wiranto and Salahuddin Wahid was also provided by Saifullah Yusuf, the nephew of Salahuddin Wahid who is also another NU leader. After the election, it was clear that voters for the Megawati-Hasyim pair were in the minority. Hasyim's defeat proved that his position as head of NU at the central level had little effect on the electability of this pair. In fact, Megawati-Hasyim Muzadi's votes fell after the first round of the election.

What is thought-provoking about this case is that in its history, there has never been a situation where NU elites simultaneously ran as candidates for president and vice president. In my opinion, several things can be explored from this case. First, the candidates ran in the context of reform euphoria, when previous NU representatives succeeded in becoming president. Efforts to safeguard the political interests of NU's power are important. Second, the advancement of the three candidates shows how the elite within NU play their role and how the differences in the NU community's choice of them are not only driven by the fact that they come from one organization and even the chairman of the same organization, but are further influenced by different knowledge and kinship networks.

In 2009, the case of Abdurrahman Wahid's family and Muhaimin Iskandar's supporters in the context of the PKB party in response to Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono's leadership could be explored as the case of kinship networks. Abdurrahman Wahid, who at that time was still the supreme leader (*Syuriah*) of the PKB, and his close family declared *Golput* (Abstentions) or did not use his right to vote in the 2009 general election because he believed it was riddled with fraud (Kompas.com 2009). Even though he encouraged his followers to freely determine whether to vote or not in the election, as one of the charismatic figures of NU, Wahid's views caused turmoil. As a result, most NU followers who have

ties with the Wahid family encouraged citizens to abstain in the presidential election (Detik.com 2009). On the other hand, supporters of Muhaimin Iskandar (general chairman of the PKB), such as KH Dimiyati Rais (Kendal, Central Java), KH Mahfud Ridwan (Salatiga, Central Java), KH Amin Abdul Hamid (Magelang, Central Java) KH Mufid Abdullah (Cirebon, West Java), and KH Najib Abdul Qadir (Krapyak, Yogyakarta), instead urged NU members to vote, especially the PKB, in the 2009 elections.

This kinship network strengthened in the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections. NU's stance was divided distributively toward Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla and Prabowo Subianto-Hatta Rajasa. PBNU Chairman Said Aqil Siradj stated that he supported Prabowo Subianto as a 2014 presidential candidate (Kompas.com 2014). On the other hand, several NU figures supported Joko Widodo (Dewi 2014). Support for Prabowo Subianto also came through the extended family of KH Hasyim Asy'ari in the 2019 elections. Although the Abdurrahman Wahid family as represented by Yenny Wahid supported Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf Amin pair, the three families of NU's founding figures, namely Hasyim Karim, grandson of KH Bisri Syansuri; Irfan Yusuf Hasyim (Gus Irfan), grandson of KH Hasyim Asy'ari; and KH Hasib Wahab, son of KH Wahab Chasbullah (Detik.com 2019), expressly provided their support for Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno.

We can see this dynamic also at the local level, where the number of NU followers is significant. In South Kalimantan and South Sulawesi, for example, the influence of this network is also very pronounced and intertwined. According to Abdul Hasib Salim, one of the caretakers of the Rasyidiyah Khalidiyah *pesantren* (RAKHA) in Amuntai, South Kalimantan, many provincial and city district officials have links with the RAKHA *pesantren* family. This linkage is intertwined in two categories: *pesantren* alumni and *pesantren* family members. The impact, Salim added, was a mutually beneficial, reciprocal relationship between the *pesantren* and its networks with the government and the latter's socio-political and religious policies (Salim 2023).

Salim's testimony is also in line with Rafiq's (2019) research on the influence of the scholarly network of *Kiai* in Banjar in the context of politics and religion. Rahmatunnair, chairman of the NU branch in Bone, South Sulawesi, made the same statement. In his view, NU's scientific network is spread across various fields, not only in religious and social aspects but also in political matters (Rahmatunnair 2023). Several NU figures at the local level, such as Rizal Mumazziq, a rector of the Al-Falah Assunniah Kencong Islamic Institute in Jember, and Abdul Muhaimin (2023), caretaker of the Nurul

Ummahat *pesantren* in Yogyakarta, acknowledged how the scientific network and the kinship of NU elites are uniquely intertwined.

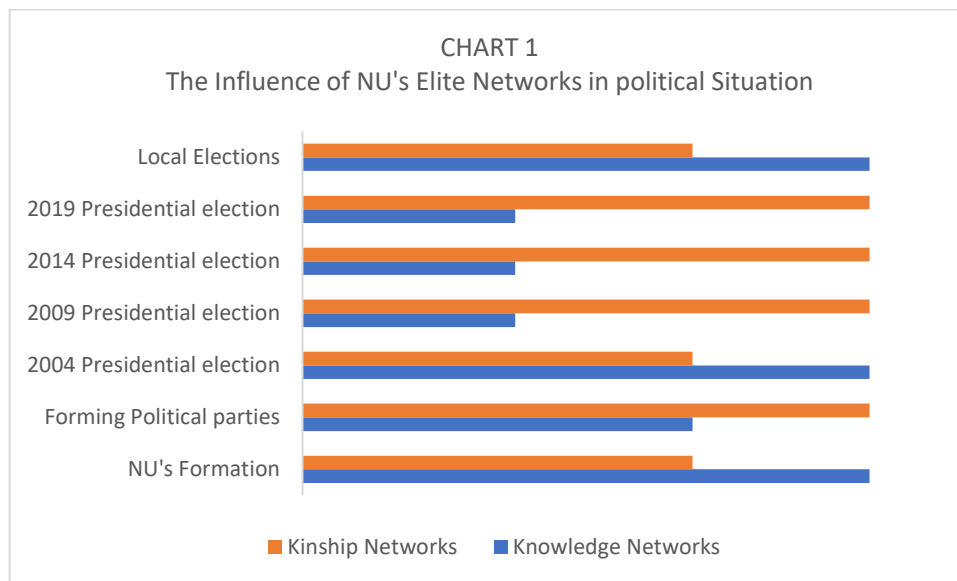
Another local case was the East Java gubernatorial election in 2018. Mumazziq (2023) highlights the case of Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Saifullah Yusuf, who competed for the governorship. Both candidates were students of Abdurrahman Wahid, with Yusuf even being Wahid's nephew. In East Java's political contestation, NU elites were divided into two major camps based on their kinship and knowledge networks (Rohim & Mahardika 2018, 62-65). The first camp, Tebuireng, refers to Pondok Tebuireng Jombang, led by KH Sholahuddin Wahid, and supports the Khofifah Indar Parawansa-Emil Dardak pair. The central figures of this axis include KH Sholahuddin Wahid and KH Asep Syaifuddin Halim (Kiai Asep), leaders of the Amanatul Ummat *pesantren* in Mojokerto.

A second group comprised senior NU *Kiai* who were members of the Lirboyo camp, being the main supporters of Saifullah Yusuf, which included KH Zainuddin Jazuli (Poso Kediri Islamic Boarding School), KH Anwar Manshur (Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School), KH Nurul Huda Jazuli (Ploso Islamic Boarding School, Kediri), KH Miftahul Akhyar (Miftahussunah Islamic Boarding School in Surabaya and Deputy Rais 'Am PBNU), KH Nawawi Abdul Jalil (Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan), KH Agus Ali Masyhuri (Bumi Sholawat Lebo Islamic Boarding School, Sidoarjo), KH Anwar Iskandar (Al Amin Islamic Boarding School, Kediri), KH Mutawakkil Alallah (Zainul Hasan Genggong Islamic Boarding School, Probolinggo, and Chairman of East Java NU when the 2018 gubernatorial election took place), KH Fuad Nur Hasan (Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan), KH Fuad Jazuli (Ploso Islamic Boarding School, Kediri), KH Idris Hamid (Salafiyah Islamic Boarding School, Pasuruan), KH Abdullah Kafabihi (Lirboyo Islamic Boarding School, Kediri), and also several influential figures in East Java. From these two groups, we can discern that supporters of Saifullah Yusuf had ideologically rejected female leaders in the past.

That situation illustrates how networks are flexible in their political attitudes to encourage political balance on the one hand. But on the other hand, it also shows how influential elites in NU have different backgrounds that influence their different political attitudes. Therefore, it shall be noted that these networks are also not monolithic because the influence of these elite networks does not lie in the objects that are influenced by them but in the networks themselves. Because of this, there are also situations where even though several figures have kinship or scientific ties to one another (as in the case of the 2019 presidential election), they still have different attitudes on certain political issues.

The practical consequence of these roles is that NU can benefit from possible political resources. NU has formed alliances with different political parties and has been part of various coalition governments. Not all NU figures joined the PKB. Some of them are members of the Golongan Karya Party, the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra), and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), outside of Islamic parties such as the Crescent Star Party (PBB) or the United Development Party (PPP). According to Tsaqif (2023), by entering politics, NU elites can have a career in the political party that aligns with their aspirations and bring NU's interests with them. This approach allows NU to gain influence and representation in the government while trying to maintain its independence and promote its agenda. These situations further support the involvement of NU elites in national issues, to such an extent that the boundaries between political organizations and socio-religious organizations become blurred. Unfortunately, shortly after the election of Tsaqif as chairman, we witnessed several politicians becoming administrators of the PBNU, which has reduced the influence of certain parties such as the PKB but also heightened the political tug-of-war at the central level of NU management.

Based on these discussions, I have shown how the role of elite networks influenced NU's political flexibility during *reformasi*. Drawing on these findings, I argue that while the kinship and scholarly networks within NU have a significant influence on its political actions, their levels of influence are markedly different. To illustrate this difference, I graphically depicted the increase and decrease of the two networks over the *reformasi* period, using 100 to indicate a more influential network and 95 for a less influential one. I then implemented the model to see the role of NU elites in several issues such as NU's formation, forming political parties, the 2004 presidential election, the 2009 presidential election, the 2014 presidential election, the 2019 presidential election, and local elections. The sketch below shows indicatively that after *reformasi*, the political role of the scientific network was not as influential as that of the kinship network (See CHART 1).



From Chart 1, we can see that in NU's years of political development, its political decisions were influenced by a network of scholars who inspired flexible religious doctrines that also influenced its political perspective. However, it should also be acknowledged that scientific networks are not the only determinants of NU's political views. In several presidential elections after *reformasi*, we can see that kinship networks were more salient in influencing NU's political actions. In other words, as has been shown in this research, the influence of kinship ties is another factor that strongly determines how NU responds to religious and political situations in post-*reformasi* Indonesia.

In several key moments of national politics, we can see that the role of the family network in maintaining political flexibility and balance is more prominent than that of the knowledge network. The only time the knowledge network seems significant is during local elections and related issues. I argue that this situation may occur because, at the local level, the NU community maintains its scientific network through the *pesantren* institution. Scientific institutionalization through *pesantren* at the local level is stronger in maintaining its networks because scientific exchange and interconnection at the local level can occur more quickly due to considerations of the location and locus of the *pesantren*. For example, according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in Jombang, East Java alone, 155 *pesantren* — although they do not have family relations — have strong scientific relations (Mutqiyah n.d.). This is different from family relations, even though there is a history of recording *kiai's* family networks, such as that of Dhofier (1980). In the context of local politics, these familial networks do not work much because of other elements that the NU community cannot directly control, such as political parties. Unlike political parties, NU can freely

control its *pesantren* because many *pesantren* belong to independent religious elites. Another explanation could be similar to what has been explained by Spenkuch and Tillmann (2014) about the role of Christian elites in promoting Nazi ideology in the church community. They found that the effect of religious doctrine could be larger in rural areas than in cities, where the Church (as an institution) arguably yielded less influence and where the pressure to conform is likely to have been lower. In addition, the strengthening influence of family ties/family attachments between elites in several national political situations indicates the weakening of the NU elite's scientific network as a basic consideration for their political decisions. I argue that this scientific network is also being pressured by increasing challenges from various terror groups and religious intolerance movements that challenge open debates regarding NU's religious perspective. We can see a clear picture in the case of the Jakarta gubernatorial election in 2017, which triggered sharp political identity clashes and gave rise to different views within NU communities (Warburton 2020; Jati 2021). According to Fealy (2018, n.p.), "the PBNU was embarrassed by the large number of *nahdliyyin* [NU followers] who joined the anti-Ahok rallies — disregarding the central board's appeals not to mobilize", and because of this, Fealy has a pessimistic view of the existence of tolerance among NU. Some experts also predict that the increasing conservatism among NU members will become a serious challenge for the organization, even though its elites are promoting tolerance and peaceful Islam (Mietzner & Muhtadi 2020).

On the other hand, a schism among NU elites regarding religious minorities such as Shia, Wahhabi, or Ahmadiyya in several areas in East Java and Lombok (Arifianto 2018; Harsono 2019) has disrupted the influence of scientific linkages at the national level. Even though Staquf (2017), who is now the chairman of NU at the central level (2021-2026), has asserted on several occasions that NU would not interfere with these minorities, the facts on the ground show something different. In fact, the government greatly benefited from NU's religious attitude. From my perspective, what is salient is that the NU elite's attitudes on several important issues related to religious radicalism have helped the government in preventing the mainstreaming of religious radicalism in Indonesia (Dja'far 2021: Ansori et. al. 2019). In other words, the scientific network could be significantly active in the context of defending and campaigning for NU's religious doctrines and views and will not have much influence in politics.

Based on this evidence, NU's elite networks are actually an integral part of its political flexibility in managing its political actions. On the other hand, this network also

played a significant role in the effort to create a balanced perspective within NU elites. The distribution of support from the NU elite network to various government regimes at both the local and national levels shows this. Although it must be acknowledged that the indirect consequence of these characteristics is that elites can leverage each of their networks to obtain a weighted bargaining value, such that the political legitimacy they give to certain prospective leaders obtains spiritual legitimacy from the scholarly network and NU descendants.

With that in mind, it must be noted that in their political history, NU elites were not completely unified. The characteristics of NU's state political perspective are based on differences of opinion, which also come from the scientific background and context of each of their elite groups (Wahid 2023). This resulted in frequent debates between these small elite groups regarding their political interests both internally and externally in the context of their relations with the state. Even so, the contradictions within NU are not easily cracked at all because of the familial and scientific connections. On the contrary, this relationship makes the political sphere manageable and compromised, and at the same time, contains conflict (Bruinessen 1994; Rozi 2023). However, it shall be noted that the conflicts inherited during the transition from political parties to socio-religious organizations during the late 1970s to early 1980s became the initial formation of the increasingly decentralized NU — which persists to this day. *Kiai* and local branch officials no longer receive patronage from above through the lines of the NU power center in Jakarta, but directly negotiate with leaders such as governors or district heads and military leaders in the regions to channel their interests, which encourages elites and figures in the branches. As a result, local NU branches have become more independent than before.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### **A. Conclusion**

By analyzing Nahdlatul Ulama's political flexibility in post-*reformasi* Indonesia, I have argued that this organization does not take the same actions on various political issues in which its elites are involved. This chapter will comprise the conclusion of the study by summarizing the key research findings about the research aims and questions and discussing the value and contribution thereof. Furthermore, I will also provide a review of the limitations of this study and propose opportunities for future research. This study aimed to investigate the main factors that drove NU's political flexibility in Indonesia's political history. Additionally, this study also aims to demonstrate how NU maintained its political flexibility during post-*reformasi* Indonesia. The results indicate that first, the main factor driving NU's post-reform political flexibility is the network of its religious elite, which is divided into two categories: a knowledge network that spans years and a kinship network that ties the elite, society, and the government together. These networks also have their justifications in NU history. By utilizing its network, NU has succeeded in moving flexibly and responding to the political situations of various government regimes.

Second, this flexibility is present in NU's attitude, which has never been the same in dealing with post-*reformasi* regimes. At the same time, this flexibility is also demonstrated by the distribution of NU elites among various political factions. This allows them to maintain and balance Indonesia's political stability while also protecting their organizational interests. I have argued throughout this study that in various national political opportunities, even though knowledge and kinship networks have influenced NU's political actions, we can see that NU's familial connection strengthened in post-*reformasi* Indonesia. In particular, I demonstrated how the influence of these two networks works differently on the national and local levels. If at the national level, the family network plays a significant role, in issues at the local level, the scholarly network gets more space in influencing NU's political attitudes.

However, this study has a limitation in that it does not provide an in-depth explanation of why knowledge networks were not more influential than kinship networks, and vice versa, in the post-*reformasi* period. Therefore, further research is needed to determine the potential for measuring these factors. This research has shown how the

religious elite networks can explain NU's flexible political attitudes toward various government administrations during the *reformasi* era. Therefore, this study challenged and played a role in filling the gap over previous studies that focused on NU teachings and doctrines as the only factor that encourages the flexibility of political views within NU communities. In doing so, this theory explains the attitudes and actions of religious organizations such as NU, which completely base their attitudes and decisions on their religious elites. The use of the theory of the network of religious elites is crucial in understanding the attitudes and political actions of different religious elites who may have conflicting views. However, it should be noted that the theory used in this study may not apply to explaining the political attitudes and actions of modernist religious organizations that do not rely on their religious elites for political decision-making.

### **B. Recommendation**

The current study is part of an effort to encourage further research on the political role of religious elites in organizations where they play a central part. Therefore, I would like to suggest that other researchers conduct further studies on this topic. Future research may investigate the same topic but with different data with deep exploration that may be supported by time and budget, considering that NU is the biggest religious organization in Indonesia and relies heavily on its religious elites. Because the scope of this research for post-*reformasi* national political issues cannot be said to cover all aspects of politics, it may be important to consider NU's attitude as a whole, including at the local level, and how NU's networks influence the organization in the local political context. On the other hand, it would be very appealing if future research also analyzed the extent to which the transformation of the actions of the NU religious elite from time to time had an effect on the political constellation in Indonesia both at the local and national levels.

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### **Interviews**

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Position : Research, Advocacy and Policy Officer

Home Address : Perumahan Nuansa Alam Cilebut Asri (NACA) Blok. L 17. Jl. HM. Edyson, RT 003, RW 021. Kecamatan Sukaraja, Kelurahan Cilebut Barat, Kabupaten Bogor, Jawa Barat.

Office Address : Jl. Taman Amir Hamzah No. 8, Pegangsaan, Jakarta Pusat.

### B. Education Background

#### b. Formal Education

- i. Sekolah Dasar Negeri 2 Kota Bima, 2004
- ii. Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri 6 Kota Bima, 2007
- iii. Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri 1 Kota Bima, 2010
- iv. Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2014
- v. Universitas Indonesia, 2017
- vi. Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, 2023

#### c. Non-formal Education

- i. Participant: Workshop on Crisis and Strategic Communication for PCVE in Indonesia through A Whole of Government and A Whole of Society Approach, February 22-24, 2023. Held by the United Nations Office of Counter - Terrorism UN Counter -Terrorism Center (UNCCT).
- ii. Participant: Summer Institute in Computational Social Science, July 18-29, 2022. Held by the Faculty of Industrial Technology, Department of Informatics, and Center of Data Science and qiscus Enterprise. Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta. <https://sicss.io/2022/jogja/people>.
- iii. Short Course on Policy Advocacy at Sekolah Tinggi Hukum Jentera (Jentera School of Law), Jakarta, January – June 2021.

- iv. Online Training on minority rights at the UN and on the Forum on Minority Issues. Held by Minority Rights Group International (MRG), 2-4 November 2020.
- v. Capacity Building Training on Preventing Violent Extremism in Southeast Asia. Held by the South East Asian Network of Civil Society Organisations (SEAN-CSO), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 24 – 28 March 2019.
- vi. Short course on the Political Thought of Indonesian Founding People. The Megawati Institute, Jakarta, March-August 2015.

### **C. Professional Background**

- a. July 2023 – Present: Research, Advocacy, and Policy Officer at The Wahid Foundation
- b. August 2022-July 2023: Part-time researcher at The Wahid Foundation
- c. June-August 2022: Research Assistant. Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (UIII).
- d. July 2017 – December 2021: Research and Advocacy Officer at The Wahid Foundation
- e. April 2015 – June 2017: Research Assistant at Abdurrahman Wahid Center For Peace and Humanities Universitas Indonesia.

### **D. List of Awards and Achievements**

- a. UIII Scholarship Award, 2021, Awardee of Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia Scholarship 2021 (MA in Political Science).
- b. 2016: Postgraduate Scholarship from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia
- c. 2016: Awardee of International Publications Indexed For Master Tesis Project. University of Indonesia
- d. 2015: Youth with Integrity from Gerakan Mari Berbagi
- e. 2014: Best Graduate: Siyasah Jinayah program. State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya. GPA: 3.63
- f. 2013: The best participant of Pelatihan Kader Dasar Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII) {Basic Cadre Training for the Indonesian Islamic Student Movement} of The Sharia Faculty of State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya
- g. 2010: 1st Winner of Bima Youth Scientific Writing Competition. West Nusa Tenggara

### **E. Organizational Background**

- a. Director: Arrisalah Student Magazine of The Faculty of Sharia, Sunan Ampel State Islamic University
- b. Member: Indonesian Student Muslim Movement (Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia), The Faculty of Sharia, Sunan Ampel State Islamic University

- c. Member: Gerakan Mari Berbagi (GMB)

## **F. Publications**

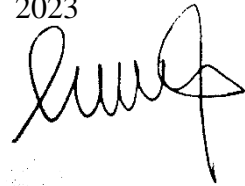
### **1. Books Chapter**

- a. Taqwa, L. (2023). 'Laboratorium Perbedaan' *in* Kamu tak Sendiri; Kumpulan Kisah Perjalanan Memaknai Hidup dan Kemanusiaan. Published by Gerakan Mari Berbagi (GMB), Jakarta.
- b. Taqwa, L., (ed.) (2019). Demokrasi Pasai; Kronika Pengawasan Pemilu di Kabupaten Aceh Utara. Aceh: Bandar Publishing.
- c. Taqwa, L., (ed.) (2018). Kebenaran yang Pahit; Perempuan dan Masa Depan Pendidikan Dayah di Aceh. Tangerang: Mahara Publishing.
- d. Taqwa, L., (ed.) (2018). Melawan Takdir Kelam: Pengalaman Pelayanan Terpadu Itsbat Nikah di Pedalaman Aceh. Tangerang: Mahara Publishing.

### **2. Articles**

- a. Taqwa, L. (2021). "Initiating the National Action Plan on Countering Violent Extremism in Indonesia: Challenges and Opportunities," in Atamuradova, F. dan Zeiger, S. (eds.) *Researching the Evolution of Countering Violent Extremism*. Abu Dhabi: Hedayah, pp. 57–76.
- b. Taqwa, L., Anas, M., Agung,. (2019). "Pemilu Presiden dan Wakil Presiden RI 2019: Peluang dan Tantangan Bagi Negara-negara Timur Tengah". Translated in Arabic "al-Intikhabah al-Indunisiya: Khutwatu al-Sya'b Nahwa al-Mustaqbal." by The Center for Research and Intercommunication Knowledge, Saudi Arabia.
- c. Taqwa, L. (2017). Peran Partai Al-Nahdhah dalam Rekonsiliasi Politik di Tunisia Tahun 2011-2015 (The role of Al-Nahdhah Party in Tunisia's Political Reconciliation 2011-2015). *Journal of Middle East and Islamic Studies*. Volume 5 No. 1 July- December 2017. pp. 21-40

Depok, 23 Juli  
2023



Libasut Taqwa