

## **Conflict Resolution between Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah Congregations in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, Ponorogo Regency**

**\*Elsa Nurrohim Safitri<sup>1</sup>, Anwar Mujahidin<sup>2</sup>**

*<sup>1-2</sup>Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ponorogo*

*\*Email: elsanurrohim20@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah are Indonesia's two largest and most influential socio-religious organizations. They have members all over the country and have different religious views, especially on aspects of religious rituals. These differences often give rise to friction in the realm of social life. This study aims to describe the conflict resolution problem between NU and Muhammadiyah in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, Tambang Village, Pudak District, Ponorogo Regency. This study used a qualitative approach, and the data were obtained from interviews and observations with the residents of Tumpak Rejo Hamlet. This study shows that the conflict between NU and Muhammadiyah members also stems from differences in views about religious practices that take place in society. The role of the village government and community leaders succeeded in producing conflict resolution between the two community groups and, at the same time, creating tolerance and mutual respect between the two. This study concludes that cultivating an attitude of tolerance, a sense of togetherness, and mutual respect between communities is a resolution model that can overcome religious conflicts in society.

**Keywords:** *Conflict Resolution, NU-Muhammadiyah, Tolerance*

### **Abstrak**

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) dan Muhammadiyah adalah dua organisasi sosial-keagamaan terbesar dan paling berpengaruh di Indonesia. Mereka memiliki anggota di seluruh negeri dan memiliki pandangan keagamaan yang berbeda-beda, terutama pada aspek ritual keagamaan. Perbedaan tersebut seringkali menimbulkan gesekan dalam ranah kehidupan sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan tentang penyelesaian konflik antara NU dan Muhammadiyah di Dusun Tumpak Rejo, Desa Tambang, Kecamatan Pudak, Kabupaten Ponorogo. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dan data diperoleh dari wawancara dan observasi dengan warga Dusun Tumpak Rejo. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa konflik antara warga NU dan Muhammadiyah juga bersumber dari perbedaan pandangan tentang praktik keagamaan yang terjadi di masyarakat. Peran pemerintah desa dan tokoh masyarakat berhasil menghasilkan penyelesaian konflik antara kedua kelompok masyarakat sekaligus menciptakan toleransi dan saling menghargai di antara keduanya. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penanaman sikap toleransi, rasa kebersamaan, dan saling menghargai antar masyarakat merupakan model resolusi yang dapat mengatasi konflik agama di masyarakat.

**Kata Kunci:** *Resolusi Konflik, NU-Muhammadiyah, Toleransi*

\*\*\*

## A. Introduction

The two main Islamic groups in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), have members all over the country. Both existed before Indonesia's independence and made significant contributions to the country's fight for self-determination. After Indonesia's independence, the two groups also significantly advanced religious proselytism. Although their methods of spreading the word about Islam may differ, they both share a common purpose (Aminuddin 2018; Ansori, Jurai, and Metro 2014; Binfas, Abdullah, and Ismail 2014; Widodo 2011).

NU and Muhammadiyah, as the two major Islamic groups in Indonesia, bear a heavy burden in fostering a harmonious nation (Ika 2019). This responsibility is tied to matters that have both a religious and a social dimension. The social dimension takes the form of attempts to foster harmony and well-being for the entire Indonesian nation based on Islamic moral ideals. Unfortunately, the social relationships between those associated with the two organizations are not always cordial. It is not rare for social friction to emerge in religious conflict when two mass organizations are in the same location. Some literature has shown in several areas and eras, there are conflicts among them. According to Yusuf (2001), a conflict between NU-Muhammadiyah in Indonesia has been going on for a long time, and the issues at stake are actually not those of fundamental religious principles but of *furu'iyah* (branches) and, at times, culture..

In accordance with this, the majority of available studies have revealed that the causes and context of the conflict between the two organizations at the community level are non-fundamental factors. Further examination reveals that conflicts between NU and Muhammadiyah occur almost exclusively at the lowest organizational levels and infrequently at the middle and upper organizational levels. Then, conflict is more likely to be precipitated by divergent perspectives on rituals and religious practices rather than the fundamental aspects of religious teachings (Fajarini 2014; Rahardjo 2008; Rofiah 2017; Romadlan 2017; Sya'roni 2020).

Prior to the rapid development of technology and the unequal education of the Indonesian population, the conflict between NU and Muhammadiyah followers

was frequently reported in print and broadcast media. However, as time progresses and the level of public education rises, the differences between NU and Muhammadiyah cause social conflict to diminish, and conflicts occur less frequently. Currently, collaboration and synergy between the two are occurring more frequently. Luthfi (2020) revealed that NU and Muhammadiyah have become more compatible and synergistic in various fields, particularly the economy. This synergy then has an effect on the dynamics of conflict between the two groups adherents, which can be managed more effectively.

However, the rapid development of the times and the advancement of public education did not necessarily eliminate all tensions between NU and Muhammadiyah adherents. Particularly at the rural community level. In some regions, social friction that has escalated into conflict between NU and Muhammadiyah adherents persists. The source remains the same, namely differences in religious perspectives regarding a number of religious ritual practices that occur within society. Differences in religious understanding between these two organizations at the village level frequently lead to disparities in worship procedures, and each of them asserts that their method of worship is the correct one.

Conditions as described previously persist. One of them is located in Tumpak Rejo, Ponorogo, East Java. This hamlet is one of the earliest Islamic centers in the Pudak District, Ponorogo Regency. Initially, the Tumpak Rejo community was quite homogeneous because only one religious belief, NU, developed and was followed by the community. In 2018, the Muhammadiyah organization began providing mosque assistance to Tumpak Rejo Hamlet's residents. The assistance came via the Bina Muwahidin Surabaya Foundation from Saudi Arabia. At that time, the residents of the hamlet received assistance following a community meeting held at the residence of the head of the RT. Residents accept because of the physical condition and limited capacity of the old Mushalla building.

Muhammadiyah gradually modifies the social dynamics of society. Initially, homogeneous hamlet residents gradually became heterogeneous, contributing to the polarization of society. When long-held religious rituals are questioned, this

polarization increases. Consequently, the social relationships between NU and Muhammadiyah adherents in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet began to change, leading to conflict. However, the friction and conflict can be resolved over time. This article aims to discuss how the conflict resolution among NU and Muhammadiyah adherents in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, Tambang Village, Pudak District, Ponorogo Regency was made.

## **B. Method**

This article was the qualitative approach, specifically a case study method. The information used in this study came from participant observations and interviews with a number of people in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, Tambang Village, Pudak District, Ponorogo Regency. Several community members of Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, along with RT heads, NU figures, Muhammadiyah figures, and others, participated as informants for this study. The process of observation that was carried out for the purpose of this study consisted of observing residents engaging in activities such as mutual cooperation and other activities, as well as those activities that were directly related to the resolution of conflicts. After collecting data through interviews and observations, it was then analyzed and presented in a descriptive manner in order to provide an overview of the efforts that members of NU and Muhammadiyah put forth in order to resolve the conflicts that arose in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet. The author makes use of a method of interactive analysis that was developed by Miles and Haberman, and this method is referred to as the analytical model (Ridder et al. 2014).

## **C. Result and Discussion**

### **1. Religious and Social Practices in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet**

Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, Tambang Village, is administratively located in the Ponorogo Regency's Pudak District. It is bounded to the north by Mendak village in the Pulung district and to the west by Tumoncol village in the Pulung district. It is bounded on the south by Pudak Wetan Village Pudak District and on the east by Krisik Village in Pudak District. Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, Tambang Village, has a mountainous climate and a high-altitude topography, located approximately 1000

meters above sea level. The Mine Village is 3 kilometers from the district capital and takes about 5 minutes to get there. The district capital is 27 kilometers away and can be reached in about an hour (BPS 2021). The majority of the people in Dusun Tumpak Rejo are Muslim and follow customs and traditions. NU and Muhammadiyah prayer centers (mosques) are about 50 meters away from Tumpak Rejo Hamlet. The NU Mosque is located in the eastern section, among the NU settlements and several Muhammadiyah residences. Meanwhile, the Muhammadiyah mosque is located in the western part of the neighborhood, surrounded by Muhammadiyah residents and two NU houses.

Tumpak Rejo hamlet also has traditions and religious activities, such as daily rituals at the NU and Muhammadiyah mosques. The activities consist of *yasinan*, recitation, and customary prayers. The following describes the social practices of individuals affiliated with NU and Muhammadiyah in relation to the social dynamics that occur in society:

**a. Religious Activity**

The members of Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, not unlike the faithful of any faith, observe a variety of religious rituals on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis. The five daily prayers and the call to prayer are practised as they do everywhere else. NU and Muhammadiyah both have similar practices in their mosques. Even if there are no discernible distinctions between NU and Muhammadiyah in their daily religious practices, there are apparent variances in their weekly religious practices. Locals with ties to NU each week participate in *yasinan* and *tahlilan* rituals. Men and women alike participated in this weekly event, which rotated from one participant's home to another. Since the advent of Islam to Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, this endeavour has been ongoing. On the other hand, locals Muhammadiyah don't do that but rather carry out and participate in group Al-Quran recitation activities among them.

The differences described above, a member of Muhammadiyah stated:

“Actually, religious understanding is identical. The only difference is that Muhammadiyah's followers do not participate in Tahlilan and Yasinan. This is a natural occurrence, and it does not violate Islamic law. Nonparticipation in Tahlilan and not reciting the *Qunut* during the morning prayer is not an offence, much less a reason to abandon Islam. Importantly, if the

Yasinan/tahlilan problem returns to each other's beliefs, but what it *wajib* (mandatory) must come first (Interview with Supri, 25 August 2022)."

According to the preceding quotation, the difference in religious activities between NU and Muhammadiyah is insignificant. In daily life, however, some individuals often misunderstand the differences above. Supri explained,

"...society frequently misunderstands these distinctions. Occasionally, members of the NU believe that what they adhere to is not in accordance with the teachings of the clerics in their village, but it is assumed that their religious practices are in accordance with their understanding of Islam. In the past, we were considered deviant from Islam, but as time passed, we both adapted. In actuality, they were deemed deviant due to their inability to comprehend the characteristics of Muhammadiyah members. (Interview, 25 August 2023)."

In addition to Yasinan and Tahlilan, there are also monthly activities for NU members, that as *Shalawatan* in the congregation, were attended by NU groups and NU congregation. Meanwhile, the Muhammadiyah congregation presented a preacher from the Ponorogo Regency Muhammadiyah Regional Board for a recitation that was attended by all of their congregations. Both activities are not conducted simultaneously as a sign of mutual respect (Interview Results, 05 September 2022). Furthermore, for yearly religious activities such as Eid prayers, *Zakat*, and *Qurban*, both at their own mosques. Only *takbiran* around in congregations is performed concurrently. Sukro stated:

"Eid al-Fitr prayers, Eid al-Adha prayers, and *takbiran* are held at each mosque, but if *takbiran* done by around in congregations, it becomes one. Eid al-Fitr visits to homes continue as usual. Therefore, the relationship between residents continues to be positive (Interview, 13 September 2022)."

#### **b. Social Practice**

In general, the hamlet of Tumpak Rejo has a number of social practices, some of which are social and some of which are traditional. Activities like *Arisan* activities and community service have a social aspect. Those with a traditional dimension include religious ceremonies like death, birth, and *selamatan*, which are part of a tradition. *Arisan* and community service are ways for people in the Tumpak Rejo community to get closer to each other and work together.

Also, members of NU do religious and social practices that members of Muhammadiyah don't. These practices are related to death. If a local person dies, the community will do *yasinan* and *tahlilan* at the funeral home for the person who died. The event ends with a prayer led by an Ustaz or other religious leader from the area. In addition to rituals for remembering the dead, there are also rituals for the birth of a child. The tradition of welcoming a baby's birth contains symbols like the *tanem Ari-Ari*, *brokohan*, *sepasaran*, *selapanan*, and *tedak siten*, which all have deep meanings.

The Javanese people think of the *ari-ari* as the baby's "friend" while it is in the womb, so they bury it, so it doesn't go bad. The tradition of planting the *ari-ari* is an important part of giving birth. It has a cultural meaning and is also a sign for the community. A child's birth is also marked by a ceremony called *brokohan*. This is a way to celebrate the birth of a child, and it is done with a *kenduri* to pray for the baby's safety. This *brokohan* custom also has meaning and value for the community (Ghofur 2022). After *Brokohan*, *sepasaran* is held. This is a series of rituals that are meant to save people and give babies names at the same time. For Muslim community groups that can afford it, the *sepasaran* ritual also includes *aqiqah* activities like killing goats and cooking them according to Islamic law. When the baby is 35 days old, the *selapanan* tradition is also carried out, which involves shaving the baby's hair until it is bald. This is done so that people can pray that the baby will grow up healthy and full of good things. Shaving a baby's hair until it's bald is done to keep the baby clean so that it can grow up healthy (Ulya and Ami 2021). Lastly, the *tedak siten* ritual, or more commonly known as "descending from the ground," took place. This is done when the baby is about seven or eight months old. All these cultural practices are done with an understanding of what they mean, and NU members do this.

As described above, social practices in the form of various rituals basically boil down to one thing: asking for blessings. Therefore, in every religious activity, there is always the term "*selametan*." For the residents of Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, *selametan* has its characteristics, it is carried out by inviting local residents so that

those who are invited also feel happy. This tradition represents how people's solidarity is reflected, as well as the spirit of giving to one another. Those who feel happiness want to also share happiness with those around them by holding a *selamatan* event.

## 2. Conflict and Resolution in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet

As is typical of rural communities, the inhabitants of Tumpak Rejo Hamlet have distinctive customs and unique cultures. It should come as no surprise that the people of Tumpak Rejo are sociable, harmonious, and committed to maintaining good relations with their neighbours. As a result of Muhammadiyah's entry into Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, the relationship between communities became somewhat tense, but this was eventually resolved. Warni stated:

“...in the past, there was a conflict lasting about a year after the construction of the Muhammadiyah mosque because the Bina Muwahidin Surabaya Foundation had a contract that the locals had to abide by. For instance, it is forbidden to hold *tahlilan* in the mosque; there is only one call to prayer for Friday prayers, *Qunut* is not used in *shubuh* prayer time, and *basmalah* is recited in *sirr* (soundless) during prayer. Thereafter, there were those who disagreed, and all residents gathered at the RT leader's residence. There are also village leaders, BPDs, and village officials. There, discussions aimed to find a compromise solution to the problem until it was finally decided to respect each other's beliefs. Those who agree with the agreement and do not object to it join Muhammadiyah, while those who do not agree to join NU. Alhamdulillah, the relationship between residents gradually improved again, despite the fact that maintaining the harmony of residents with different beliefs, thoughts, and traditions was quite challenging. Also, through the mediation of the village chief and his staff, a decision was made to respect each other's religious beliefs. (Interview, 13 September 2022)”

The conflict between NU and Muhammadiyah adherents in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet began with the establishment of a Muhammadiyah mosque, which was accompanied by several agreements that violated the religious practices of NU adherents, according to the interview cited above. Although there are actually more NU adherents in this hamlet, they have not openly declared themselves to be NU adherents. As the author explained in the previous point, religious and social practices related to worship are naturally dominated by things with a traditional dimension, much like those of NU members. As a result, some individuals rejected



the agreement. Because ultimately, NU members in Tumpak Rejo continue to "sanctify" traditions such as tahlilan, selamatan, and any other traditions that, according to the community's interpretation, have values or positive dimensions.

On the other hand, the existence of "sacred" to these traditions frequently results in an exclusive (restrictive) attitude and awkwardness when other groups or communities do not practice these traditions. This attitude of exclusivity causes society to reject other groups whose beliefs differ from their own. This frequently leads to conflicts in the daily social interactions of the community of Tumpak Rejo Hamlet, Tambang Village, Pudak District, Ponorogo Province. In general, the non-participation of Muhammadiyah members in carrying out or succeeding the pre-existing traditions was not directly rejected. Because, with the passage of time, NU members have realized that faith cannot be compelled. Nonetheless, social interaction between members of NU and Muhammadiyah is well-established.

Based on this research, it is known that the conflict in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet is a cultural conflict involving diverse ideas, beliefs, customs, and traditions. In the context of the Tumpak Rejo hamlet community, conflict resolutions have been successfully attempted. According to the data collected, the conflict resolution resulted as follows:

1. The community still encourages tolerance even though Muhammadiyah members are not present when invited to events with a traditional component. As a result, Muhammadiyah members gradually make their way to the event under the same pretense of tolerance.
- 2) Despite the differences between the NU and Muhammadiyah mosques, which are both in the same hamlet, the community is open because everyone respects one another and does not prevent family members from praying at either mosque.
- 3) Differences in how Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha are determined are given back to each citizen and continue to be based on the decisions of each organization, so long as friendly relations are maintained.

- 4) Religious differences regarding the Friday call to prayer in order for each to carry out their prayers in accordance with their religious convictions and to be held in their respective mosques, differences in religious viewpoints must be respected and appreciated.
- 5) Although Muhammadiyah members do not observe tahlilan or yasinan, locals still respect one another and still extend greetings, such as when NU and Muhammadiyah members cross paths on the way to the yasinan or tahlilan location.

Of these five dynamics, it is well known that the development of civic tolerance and openness, as well as the upholding of human values, are the fundamental elements in conflict resolution. In this way, differences that may initially cause social conflict can gradually become something that is understandable. Naturally, this does not just happen because it requires instruction and emphasizes mutual respect and understanding. This is inextricably linked to government officials' functions in the Tumpak Rejo community, including village and RT heads, community leaders, and religious figures.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The conflict between the NU and Muhammadiyah in Tumpak Rejo Hamlet can be traced back to the Muhammadiyah Mosque's aid to the hamlet's residents, which came with a number of agreements that ran counter to the preexisting religious practices. Because of the mosque's aid, which was accepted by the locals, there are now Muhammadiyah believers living in Tumpak Rejo hamlet, even though the vast majority of the population is NU. Then, the differences in religious practice cause tension in the community and contribute to negative relationships. Village officials, RT, religious leaders, and community leaders all worked together to try and resolve the conflict, and they were ultimately successful in getting everyone to agree to treat each other with respect. It will continue in this vein until the majority of the population no longer sees contradictions in religious rituals as such. The community, which includes people of many different faiths, places an emphasis on tolerance and respect for one another. In general, the village

government and community leaders have been successful in reducing tensions between groups with different religious beliefs by fostering an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding. Tolerance, unity, and mutual respect between communities are a model for resolving religious conflicts in society, which can be deduced from this situation.

\*\*\*

### References

- Aminuddin, Luthfi Hadi. 2018. "Rekonstruksi Wacana Modernis-Tradisionalis: Kajian Atas Pemikiran Keislaman Muhammadiyah Dan Nahdlatul Ulama Pasca Reformasi." *Kodifikasia* 12(1):93. doi: 10.21154/kodifikasia.v12i1.1426.
- Ansori, Isa, Stain Jurai, and Siwo Metro. 2014. "Perbedaan Metode Ijtihad Nahdlatul Ulama Dan Muhammadiyah Dalam Corak Fikih Di Indonesia." *Nizam* 4(1):125-39.
- Binfas, Maman Abdul Majid, Mohd Syukri Yeoh Abdullah, and Ahmad Munawar Ismail. 2014. "Tapak Perbezaan Asal Usul Gerakan Muhammadiyah Dan Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Di Indonesia." *Jurnal Melayu* Vol. 12(1):14-31.
- BPS. 2021. *Kecamatan Puduk Dalam Angka 2021*. Ponorogo: BPS Kabupaten Ponorogo.
- Fajarini, Ulfah. 2014. "POTRET KONFLIK KEAGAMAAN MASYARAKAT TANGERANG BANTEN DAN RESOLUSI KONFLIK BERBASIS MULTIKULTURALISME DALAM ISLAM." *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 14(2):341. doi: 10.21154/al-tahrir.v14i2.76.
- Ghofur, Abdul. 2022. "Dimensi Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Tradisi Praktik Brokohan Dan Sepasaran." *IAI Tribakti Prosiding Dan Seminar Nasional* 1(1):135-50.
- Ika. 2019. "NU Dan Muhammadiyah Berperan Dalam Menjaga Perdamaian Dunia." *Universitas Gadjah Mada* 1. Retrieved December 2, 2022 (<https://www.ugm.ac.id/id/berita/17613-nu-dan-muhammadiyah-berperan-dalam-menjaga-perdamaian-dunia>).
- Rahardjo, Shodiq. 2008. "Konflik Antara Nu Dan Muhammadiyah (1960 - 2002) (Studi Kasus Di Wonokromo Pleret Bantul Yogyakarta)."
- Ridder, Hans Gerd, Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña. 2014. *Qualitative Data Analysis. A Methods Sourcebook*. Vol. 28.

- Rofiah, Khusniati. 2017. "Dinamika Relasi Muhammadiyah Dan NU Dalam Perspektif Teori Konflik Fungsional Lewis A. Coser." *KALAM* 10(2):469. doi: 10.24042/klm.v10i2.10.
- Romadlan, Said. 2017. "Pendekatan Komunikasi Antarbudaya Dalam Memahami Konflik Warga Muhammadiyah Dan Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)." Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo.
- Sya'roni, Imam. 2020. "Konflik Paham Keagamaan NU Dan Muhammadiyah Dalam Ritual Tahlilan Di Makam Dongkelan Desa Dabukerja Kecamatan Sukamakmur Kabupaten Hilir Selatan." UIN Sunan Kalijaga.
- Ulya, Azim Zaimatul, and Mucharommah Sartika Ami. 2021. "Expert Validation of The Plant Herbarium Collection Based on Local Wisdom of Sepasaran Bayi." *APPLICATION: Applied Science in Learning Research* 1(1):1-5.
- Widodo, Sembodo Ardi. 2011. "Konstruksi Keilmuan Muhammadiyah Dan NU." *Jurnal Al- Ulum* 11(2):205-38.
- Yusuf, Mundzirin, and Sunyoto Usman. 2001. "Konflik Antara Nahdlatul Ulama Dengan Muhammadiyah Dan Resolusinya: Penelitian Di Desa Pegandekan, Kecamatan Kemangkon Kabupaten Purbalingga, Provinsi Jawa Tengah." Universitas Gajah Mada.