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Religion-Based Civil Society and Democratization: The Role of Solidarity of Muslimah for Al-Quds Retaken 171 Community in Jatinangor

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Abstract

Civil society has a very important role in the process of democratization. After the downfall of Soeharto Era, civil society had a major role in realizing stability of the implementation of democracy in Indonesia. Now, after nearly twenty years of Reformation era, the role of Indonesian civil society does not only play at domestic level issues but also at the global ones. One of the global issues which civil society plays a leading role is in human security issues such as the Palestine issue. There are so many reasons why people in Indonesia do care about the issue, but the primary reason is "Islam". The commonality of religion between the two countries has embedded the movement of Indonesian people both in local and national level to support Palestinian Independence. Solidarity of Muslimah for Al-Quds Retaken Community called "SMART 171" is a local movement supporting Palestine issues in Jatinangor. The community holds various events to promote the awareness of the people in Jatinangor towards Palestine issue. This paper gives critical analysis about how the role, persuasiveness, and impact of SMART 171 as the religion-based civil society in promoting political awareness in Jatinangor.

Keywords: *civil society, religion, democratization, Palestine*

1. INTRODUCTION

The existence of civil society is one of the requirements the implementation of democracy. Although Civil Society is a very broad concept, but in the sense of contemporary civil society is

simply defined as the space between the government and the society of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), community, advocacy groups, public service groups, etc [1].

Civil society has an important role in the democratization process not only at the international level, the national level but also at the local level (Marchetti, 2010). The role of civil society in the democratization process is related to the five main functions of civil society, they are: (1) Collecting and dissemination of information; (2) Consulting Policy Development; (3) The implementation of the policy; (4) The function of assessment and monitoring; and (5) Advocacy Functions [2]. The initial step in the democratization process undertaken by civil society in improving the people's political awareness is the collection and dissemination of information. In Indonesia, this function is not only done by civil society at the national level but also at the local level.

Now, since the globalization era, civil society in Indonesia is not only focused on domestic issues such as the demands of the implementation of democracy, but also focused on the global ones. One of them is the human security issue which is the essence of the emergence of the concept of global governance today [3]. In Indonesia, one of the human security issues that civil society fights for is about Palestine issue. As the importance of this issue, at the latest Extraordinary Conference of The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jakarta in April 2016, President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo (Jokowi), emphasized that Indonesia supports Palestine's Independence. That was one of the Indonesian efforts to implement the mandate of the Preamble of the Indonesia's 1945 Constitution (in Bahasa, Undang Undang Dasar 1945) which says:

"That in fact, Independence is the right of every nation and therefore, the occupation over the world should be abolished, because it does not correspond to humanity and justice..."

In addition to the reasons for realizing human security in the world and carry out the mandate of the 1945 Constitution as the primary reference for the domestic and foreign policy of Indonesia, the main reason other than that is "ISLAM". Palestine is a historic place for Muslims because Palestine is the first qibla of Muslims before being moved to Mecca as it is written in the Koran (Muslim holy book) Surat Al-Baqaraa verse 144.

Indonesia as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world with a population of as many as 230 123 641 Muslim people or by 88.22% of the total population of Indonesia [4], has its own proximity to Palestine is a State where there is one of the Muslim holy sites, Masjid Al- Aqsa. The emergence of the advocates of Palestinian independence in Indonesia arose on the commonality of religious between Indonesia-Palestine. At the level of Indonesia's foreign policy, as a form of support in the form of bilateral relations between the States, the Government of Indonesia re-opened the honorary consulate in Ramallah Palestine. Meanwhile, the support at the level of people of Indonesia can be seen by the presence of well-formed civil society at national and local level. At the national level, one of the civil society that supports the independence of Palestinian is the National Commission for Palestinians (in Bahasa, Komisi

Nasional Rakyat Palestina, KNRP). Established since May 8th, 2006, KNRP is a humanitarian organization that concerns with the problems of the Aqsa Mosque and humanitarian issues in Palestine. Activities undertaken by KNRP are held in the form of social activities, lectures, seminars, and art to raise funds. While at the local level, one of the civil society engaged in the issue of Palestine is the community named Solidarity of Muslimah for Al-Quds Retaken 171 (SMART 171).

Hence, this paper focuses on finding the relationship between civil society and religion in the activities undertaken by the SMART 171 Community in an effort to promote humanity and human security issues, and also to increase political awareness at the local level Jatinangor.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Civil society is a very broad concept. The concept of civil society has developed from classical Greek thought up to modern thinking today. Civil society is defined as understanding against 'good life' in Classical Greek period. Plato first defined civil society as community's moral life. Later, his student, Aristotle, defined that civil society was composed of several spheres like family, classes, occupations, circumstances of birth, and the order of merits as a factor contributing to the stability of the community's political life. The civil society definition continued into the Roman Empire which defined civil society as a rule or moral value that governed people from barbarism to politically organized civilization. According to that, In the Roman era, civil society referred to the 'rational and law-governed society of humans' as opposed to the existence of the 'natural society of animals'.

At the end of the middle age, the classical concept of civil society started to advance to the modern concept [5]. Hobbes indicated civil society from the existence of the social contract. In the 18th century, in the initial conception of civil society, it showed that there was no difference between the State and civil society. Civil society was the type of state characterized by the existence of a social contract. Civil society was a society managed by the law, the principle of equality before the law [6]. In the writing of Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu, the civil society referred to:

"...a group of individuals held together, and forming a single society, by virtue of subscribing to a consensually based public authority and sharing the common practice of civility. Civil society was a human artefact, created, sustained and capable of being changed by human beings...It called for its own distinct institutions and practices, as well as virtues and motives that it sought to cultivate...Civil society was not separate from the state nor one of its institutions; rather it was a way...the only proper way, of constituting the state."[7]

Different from Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu, Hegel came up with a new orientation that the civil society was separate from the state. Civil society according to Hegel was:

"...the realm of differentiation, in which free, independent, and otherwise unrelated individuals pursued their self-interest in a spirit of mutual respect and within the limits of the laws."[7]

The state had a role to regulate the civil society so that all activities were for the sake of public good.

Then, this thought was supported by the thought of Gramsci who said that civil society referred to the associational activities that were free, including the families, universities, media, association of traders, customs agency, labor associations, and others. Also, according to Larry Diamond who said that civil society was:

“...the realm of organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules”[8]

Then, Schmitter complemented that in this democratic era, civil society can be defined as:

“...a set or system of self-organized intermediary groups that: 1) are relatively independent of both public authorities and private units of productions and reproduction, that is, of firms and families; 2) are capable of deliberating about and taking collective actions in defense or promotion of their interests or passions; 3) do not seek to replace either state agents or private (re) producers or to accept responsibility for governing the polity as a whole; and 4) agree to act within pre-established rules of a “civil” nature, that is, conveying mutual respect” [9]

From the definitions explained before, we can conclude that the civil society in the modern sense refers to a sphere between the state and the government where people are gathered voluntarily having some purposes to be realized and these groups are including Non-Government Organizations, social movements, charity community, advocacy, and public service.

In the development of civil society, religion turns out to have an important role to civil society. When religion is seen as a part of the civil society, it refers to religion as an institution and not as an individual spiritual experience. Religion has a very complex role in social life. Religion intersects with civil society in five areas. First, religion provides room for the debate about ideas and policies, the notion of good and bad. Second, religious groups can mobilize the people or its members to protest against the unfair policies, in accordance with the values of religious ideology that they profess. Third, in history, religion has an important role in building schools and social service agencies. Fourth, religious groups provide opportunities for communities through music, art, and other activities. Fifth, religious community organize daily rituals to everybody's life in community such as birth ritual, death ritual, etc. [10]

Typology of the relationship between religion and civil society can be seen from the theory by the experts of Sociology Roozen, McKinney, and Carroll. There are four types of the relationships, those are: activist, citizen, sanctuaries, and evangelist. An activist sees that all humans are God's agents to create social change. Meanwhile, a citizen is a person who entered into the political structure and economy, as well as provides knowledge to its members to increase awareness of its members on issues and policies. A Sanctuaries is the member of the community who focuses

on worship, sanctuaries usually withdraw themselves from current world events. The last types, evangelist, believes that social change happens from individual therefore these people focus on attracting those who are outside the group [10].

Civil society in this globalization era is not only focused on domestic issues but also international issues. One of the issues is about human security which is the essence of global governance [3]. Human security is a concept that emerged in the 1990s. The meaning of human security defined as:

“...to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.”[11]

In realizing the human security, we need the support of international and local communities that focus in this field. There are seven roles that civil society can do to achieve this goal [12], they are:

- (1) Protection of citizen against violent from all parties;
- (2) Monitoring of human rights violations,
- (3) Advocacy
- (4) Socialization the value and democracy
- (5) Intergroup social cohesion
- (6) Facilitation
- (7) Service delivery

In addition, there are four civil society's role in preserving democracy, they are: the balance of power between state and society with a focus on community support (a representative role); urging the politicians and bureaucrats to be more accountable for their actions (a disciplinary role); connecting the country with the society through the articulation of the interests of society and facilitating political communication, and acts as a representative complementary (complementary representative) when elections are held periodically (an intermediary role); and perpetuating the democratic norms as the rules of the political process [16]

3. METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative study exploring the case by doing an observation and in-depth interview [13] with the object (SMART 171 Community). This paper also assessing and analyzing

the term of the text content of vision and mission SMART 171 Community in the form of narrative approach.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In Indonesia, the rise and the fall of the development of civil society passed through a very long process. As stated by Edward Aspinall that the development of civil society in Indonesia can be divided into three periods, that each of these periods has its own characteristics. The three periods are during the Old order (post-independence to the 1960s), the New Order (Soeharto era, 1960 - 1990), and the post-new order (reformation era) [14].

During the development of civil society in Indonesia in the old order or the post-independence period up to 1960, Aspinall describes that the civil society existed that time was so politicized, almost all civil society was affiliated with a political party. It's hard to distinguish the boundary between civil society and political party at this time. Then, the function of civil society was not running properly.

The second period was the Soeharto era (1960s-1990s), military forces began to dominate the government, also formed an authoritarian government so that all aspects of social politics including civil society was fully controlled by the government. As a result of this period, the boundary between civil society and the State was increasingly unclear. The Civil society that existed at the time was part of the State, all the activities of civil society to be fully under government supervision. The functions that should be run by civil society can not be done due to massive government intervention [14].

As the consequence of the long-term government pressure, it was causing massive people's movement called reformation in 1998 demanding democracy implementation and overthrowing the regime of Suharto. Entering the Reformation Era or so-called post-Soeharto era, civil society had a major role in democratization process and realizing stability of the implementation of democracy in Indonesia. Now, after nearly twenty years of Reformation era, civil society in Indonesia has had its own space and become an important part of the process of democratization of the Indonesian people [14].

The Relation between Civil Society and Religion on SMART 171 Community

After the Soeharto era, over the past ten years (2004-2014) the number of civil society groups in Indonesia has grown dramatically. Democratization has created space for Indonesian civil society activists to participate in establishing rights for the citizen to involve in public affairs [15]. In this reformation and globalization era, civil society in Indonesia does not only play on local issues but also at international issues. One of the international issues that civil society in Indonesia fights for is the Palestine issue, as being done by Solidarity of Muslimah for Al-Quds Retaken 171 (Smart 171) Community.

The issue of Palestine is an issue that not only concerns about human security problems but also about the religion problems. As we usually often find many campaigns as the support for

the Palestine done by the human rights activist in other countries [12], but in Indonesia, the Palestine campaigns and movements are mostly related with Islam like what SMART 171 Community has been doing. This community supports Palestine issue for the sake of religious reasons. This is done as a form of jihad, defense of religion.

SMART 171 is a community that was established on May, 12th 2016. The members of this community are the Muslimah (Muslim women) who are the student at the Universitas Padjadjaran to unite to form solidarity for the liberation of Al-Quds (Palestinian term for Jerusalem). 171 came from Surah (chapter) Al-Isra (The Night Journey) in Holy Quran verse 1, saying:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al- Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”

This verse had been the main reason why this community believes that the Palestinian issue is important to be disseminated and struggled for. The vision of this community is to be an initiator of Muslimah community for the liberation of Al-Aqsa. The missions of the community are disseminating information about Al-Aqsa, to build awareness for the struggle of Al-Aqsa liberation, and to create the women's movement for Al-Aqsa liberation.

As we mentioned that the community is not only defending the Palestinian issue for reasons of humanity, but also for religious reasons, Maimon Herawati, Founder of the community said:

“For me, struggling for Palestine liberation is my own way to shelter myself from the wrath of God because the one that relieves us from the wrath of God is by helping each other as best as we can with the Muslims fellow,”

Then she added *“Al-Aqsa is ours, Muslims. The liberation of Al-Aqsa is not only the responsibility of Muslims in Palestine but also the responsibility of Muslims around the world”*

As Roozen, McKinney, and Carroll classified [10], this community belongs to the Activist type which sees that all the human beings are God's agents to create social change. As the agent of the God, all Muslim women are required to defend the liberation of Palestine. Then, to realize its vision and missions, this community started the movement from the local community in Jatinangor.

The aim of SMART 171 community movement is only focusing on Muslim women awareness on the issue of Palestine as the awareness of this is the part of political awareness and a part of people democratization in Indonesia. This is corresponding to the function of civil society as one of civil society function is collecting and dissemination of information [2]. There are several programs held by the SMART 171 community. The first was Al-Aqsa Awareness Week (AAW) which was held on September 19th – 23rd 2016 in Jatinangor. At this event there was a photo exhibition; Exhibition of typical food of Palestine; Seminar about Palestina with the themes discussed were Gaza now, School and Education in Gaza, Daily Life Struggle in Gaza, Gaza

surviving many wars, and Muslims wish to Indonesian Muslim Gaza; other than that this event were also completed with merchandise for donations and donation booth for visitors who wish to donate.

This event successfully attracted the Muslim women at Padjadjaran University Jatinangor and Bandung to participate in this activity. At that time, the target of the event was the students and the people in Jatinangor area. Meanwhile, to introduce the SMART 171 community to the people outside the campus of Universitas Padjadjaran Jatinangor, the Community held a charity event, distributing free Iftar (food for breakfast) to society Jatinangor.

To support the dissemination of information to the target of this movement, SMART 171 Community created official accounts consisting of YouTube account Smart 171 ; website smart171.org ; facebook fan page Smart satu-tujuan; Twitter, and Instagram @smart_171 ; and official Line account @smart171 .

As the SMART 171 is newly established, in order to develop the understanding of the Muslims women towards Palestine issue, SMART 171 16 started a cooperation with the Islamic Institution in all Faculties and Muslimah Centre in Universitas Padjadjaran. They hold a regular discussion every Friday prayer time called 'Keputrian'. Keputrian is held to fill the free time of the Muslim women while waiting for Friday prayers as the prayer only done by men. This moment is used by SMART 171 Community to do some socialization to the Muslims women through the discussion about the urgency of Palestine issue.

From the discussions above, the SMART 171 Community's activities as a religion-based civil society is in accordance with what E. Miller thought [10]. Firstly, SMART 171 Community provides a sphere for the ideas debate about Palestine. Secondly, SMART 171 Community is able to mobilize the people to participate in its activities by using the arguments of Al-Quran and hadith in persuasion. Third, the presence of SMART 171 Community as a civil society has spawned new agents of service to make social change in Jatinangor. The last, the SMART 171 community provides the space for the local community through activities such as Al-Aqsa Awareness Week and others.

The Turkey Project

In addition, to promote awareness of People in Jatinangor about the Palestine issue, The SMART 171 Community actively hold charity events to be donated to the Palestinians. Within 5 months (from May to September 2016) of collecting donations, the SMART 171 Community as an 'only' local communities in Jatinangor could collect quite big amount of donations in form of blankets, cooking oils, briquettes, etc that this donation was later in September handed in directly by the founder of this community and one of the members to Rayhania, South Turkey, home to about 4 million Palestinian refugees in Turkey.

The reason why the SMART 171 Community could collect a large amount of donation in the short period of time was due to the big name of the founder of SMART 171. She is a famous and

important figure in Universitas Padjadjaran, has a good reputation, and has been concerning about the issue of Palestine since years ago. So when she Announce about the donations collecting through social media, especially Facebook, then donations was quickly gathered. If we see from the SMART 171 community point of view, the donation might not have collected in a large amount since the community is newly established and does not have enough impact to persuade the people.

Aside from handing the donation to the Palestinians refugees, the result of the journey to Turkey will also be a future project in the form of a book about the daily life of refugees and a documenter video. In the future, this project wants to increase the awareness about the issue of Palestine not only to Muslims women but also beyond the circle. This movement divides its target into three. The first target is the Muslims, especially Muslims women. The second is the secular, liberal, and academics people. And, the third target is the non-Muslims

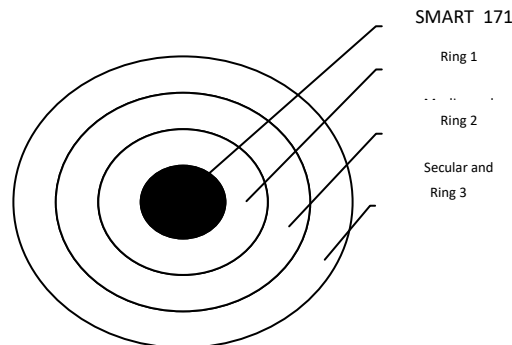


Figure 1 Target Classification by SMART 171

Trough this Turkey Project, the future targets of the SMART 171 Community is no longer only to the Muslims women alone, but also spread to the non-Muslims. Also, for the scope of SMART 171 Community, although its activities are only implemented at the local level, this community hopes that this movement will be spreading throughout the entire Indonesia.

5. CONCLUSION

After the reformation, the condition in Indonesia supports the civil society freedom in carrying out its activities, including religion-based civil society. The Solidarity of Muslimah for Al-Quds Retaken 171 Community is a civil society that focuses on collecting and dissemination of information related to the issue of Palestine. This community was formed and moved by the religion beliefs. Even in doing its persuasion, this community uses religion arguments to attract people towards this movement. Religion as an element of civil society can mobilize the people when there is an issue or a policy considered unfair.

Persuasion by using the arguments of Al-Quran and Hadith can be a quite effective effort when the target of the movement are Muslims and performed where the majority of people are Muslims because Muslims obligation is to obey the command shown on Al-Quran. However, in addition, the persuasion or the civil society must be also supported by figures that can attract people to participate in the movement. In the case of the SMART 171 Community, the figure brought by SMART 171 is the founder of SMART 171, Maimon Herawati, who is a lecturer at the University Padjadaran which has good credibility and reputation. In fact, what SMART 171 does have been implemented before in Indonesia when the religion-based civil society such as NU (Nahdiatul Ulama) did a cooperation with the national anti-corruption institution, Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (In English, Corruption Eradication Commission) to fight Corruption, Collusion, and nepotism. This movement was initiated by Muhammad Abdurrahman Wahid (The National Chairman of Nahdiatul Ulama, then he was elected as The 4th President of Indonesia) and Amien Rais (The person who established Partai Amanat Nasional and also was the spokesperson of Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat). This showed us that the figures are an important instrumental in helping religion-based civil society movement to initiate the Indonesian people to fight corruption, although admittedly this movement could not give a significant result.

With the existence of civil society, an especially religion-based civil society such as the SMART 171 Community, then we can assume that the future of democratization process in Indonesia is largely still determined by the development of civil society. Through the democratization process, civil society will be able to fill the public space between society and the state by interacting with the state independently, both individually and collectively. So, religion-based civil society can also play an important role in the democratization process by using democracy methods, peace, and not anarchy in the activities and accomplishments of political articulation.

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