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Exploring the Role of Religious Leaders and Religious Organizations in Combating Corruption in Indonesia

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Abstract

Corruption remains a significant issue in Indonesia, hindering development and governance across various sectors. Despite the strong religious character of Indonesian society, the role of religious leaders in combating corruption has yet to produce substantial results. This study aims to analyze the role and challenges faced by religious leaders in reducing corruption, focusing on their influence in anti-corruption movements at the community level. This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data were collected through literature reviews, interviews, and case studies from religious organizations collaborating with the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). Key informants included KPK officials and religious leaders. The findings reveal that while religious leaders possess moral authority and influence within their communities, their involvement in anti-corruption efforts remains limited. The study also identifies several obstacles, such as limited political influence, difficulties in addressing corruption issues, and challenges in effectively communicating anti-corruption messages to the public. Further research is needed to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of religious leaders' involvement and to develop strategies for strengthening their collaboration with state institutions in the fight against corruption.

Keywords: *Corruption Eradication; Religious Leaders; Anti-Corruption Efforts; Community Engagement*

Korupsi tetap menjadi masalah serius di Indonesia yang menghambat perkembangan dan tata kelola di berbagai sektor. Meskipun masyarakat Indonesia dikenal religius, peran pemimpin agama dalam memberantas korupsi belum memberikan dampak yang signifikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran dan tantangan yang dihadapi pemimpin agama dalam upaya mengurangi korupsi, dengan fokus pada pengaruh mereka terhadap gerakan anti-korupsi di tingkat masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui tinjauan literatur, wawancara, dan studi kasus dari organisasi keagamaan yang bekerja sama dengan Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (KPK). Informan utama mencakup pejabat KPK dan pemimpin organisasi keagamaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun pemimpin agama memiliki otoritas moral dan pengaruh dalam komunitas mereka, keterlibatan mereka dalam upaya pemberantasan korupsi masih terbatas. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi berbagai hambatan, seperti keterbatasan pengaruh politik, kesulitan dalam memahami isu korupsi, dan tantangan dalam menyampaikan pesan anti-korupsi agar dapat diterima dengan baik oleh masyarakat luas. Penelitian lanjutan diperlukan untuk mengevaluasi efektivitas jangka panjang dari keterlibatan pemimpin agama serta mengembangkan strategi untuk meningkatkan kolaborasi mereka dengan lembaga negara dalam pemberantasan korupsi.

A. INTRODUCTION

Corruption represents a profound and pervasive issue in Indonesia, severely impeding the nation's development across multiple sectors. Its insidious nature has infiltrated nearly all facets of state administration, manifesting in various forms and practices (A. Atmadjaja & N. Atmadja 2019). Addressing this systemic issue requires more than incremental reforms; it demands a transformative approach capable of generating sustained and meaningful momentum in combating corruption (Qodir 2004).

Indonesia's socio-cultural framework is deeply shaped by religious values, as evidenced by a 2020 Pew Research Center survey, which ranked Indonesia as the most religious country globally, with 96% of respondents affirming the centrality of religion in their lives. Given this context, religion holds substantial potential as a moral compass, positioning religious leaders and organizations as critical agents in advancing moral reform (Pew Research Center 2020). However, despite this strong religious foundation, Indonesia's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) remains stagnant, with a score of 34 in 2023, as reported by Transparency International. This stagnation calls into question the efficacy of religious figures in addressing corruption, particularly in a nation where religious devotion is deeply intertwined with political and cultural identities (Norris and Inglehart 2011).

This study aims to critically examine the roles and challenges faced by religious leaders in Indonesia in their attempts to combat corruption. Despite their influence at the grassroots level and their moral authority, religious leaders have yet to make a significant impact on curbing corrupt practices. This research seeks to investigate the underlying reasons for this apparent ineffectiveness, exploring the barriers religious figures encounter in promoting anti-corruption values. Additionally, the study will assess whether religious leaders and institutions can take a more proactive role in

framing corruption and poverty as interlinked societal enemies, thereby mobilizing concrete actions toward social and moral reform (Qodir 2004).

B. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology with a descriptive approach, focusing on literature pertinent to the research topic. A qualitative method is chosen for its ability to capture the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation, allowing for a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the issue (Creswell 2014). This approach includes observational techniques, analysis of relevant reports, and the development of insights through indirect language. It also clarifies the research design and identifies key participants, namely the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and religious leaders.

To enhance the depth of the analysis, interviews were conducted with officials from the Directorate of Community Participation Development at the KPK, providing additional data on the institutional relationships between the KPK and religious leaders in Indonesia. The research also involved an extensive literature review, analyzing reports, academic journals, and prior studies concerning the involvement of religious leaders in anti-corruption efforts. This mixed-method approach ensures a robust and holistic understanding of the KPK's initiatives in engaging religious institutions in anti-corruption campaigns.

The study further includes case analysis of religious institutions and organizations that have collaborated with the KPK, such as the Indonesian Church Association, the Institute for Human Resource Development Studies, the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama, Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia, and the Head of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion, Jambi Province.

The research framework is grounded in the theoretical contributions of Priyono (2018), who identified three core dimensions that influence the role of religious leaders in disseminating anti-corruption messages within a theological context, particularly in Islam. The first dimension, Discourse Transmission, refers to the modification of anti-corruption messages to ensure they are appropriately conveyed and comprehended by the public. The second dimension, Participatory Advocacy, emphasizes the sustained involvement of religious leaders in anti-corruption efforts in collaboration with state institutions such as the KPK and civil society actors. The third dimension, Barriers to Cross-Partnership Communication, underscores the need for enhanced communication across societal sectors to foster collective action against corruption (Priyono 2018). This framework is consistent with Schumaker's (1995) theory, which posits that successful anti-corruption initiatives require multi-sectoral collaboration, as no single entity can effectively tackle corruption in isolation. By fostering cross-sector cohesion and solidarity, the anti-corruption movement can organically grow and exert a more substantial impact..

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The preventive role that has been carried out by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), such as educating and socializing anti-corruption values to the wider community, has quite serious challenges. Currently, many critics believe that the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) dominates the enforcement aspect rather than prevention and supervision work. Even though prevention work is very important so that the risk of corruption can be minimized as early as possible. For this reason, in making efforts to provide education on anti-corruption values, the Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) can take an approach through religious leaders and religious organizations in Indonesia. If we look at the periodization of KPK leadership before 2019 -

2023, the KPK has carried out several collaborations with religious leaders in Indonesia, but in the previous period it was still minimal, for example in 2015 there was only one (1) agenda for the involvement of religious organizations, namely with Muhammadiyah Youth for prevention outreach. anti-corruption among da'wah cadres and preachers. Apart from that, in 2018 one of the KPK Commissioners also actively attended the Indonesian Church Association (PGI) event, Percasmi, as a resource person regarding anti-corruption (Vallen 2021). It is important in starting the discussion in this article to see how the collaboration between The Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) and religious leaders and organizations are involved in eradicating corruption. Therefore, we can find out what challenges have been faced by religious leaders or organizations in their involvement in eradicating corruption.

1. A Look Back at The KPK's Collaboration with Religious Leader

Currently, the Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) has an organizational structure in its bureaucracy, namely the Directorate of Development and Community Participation which has the task of internalizing anti-corruption values and campaigns, especially involving the community in general. The target of this unit is the wider community who are members of various components that exist in society, one of which is religious leaders. The existence of religious-based community organizations is a strategic partner for sowing anti-corruption ideas so that they are more "grounded" and accepted by religious communities. This cannot be separated from the context of Indonesian society which is categorized as "cultural-traditional" where religious institutions still have strong influence and authority in determining people's attitudes and behavior (Norris and Ronald Inglehart 2011) so that the awareness and wisdom of state administrators is needed to can see these social facts before

launching a program that involves the participation of the Indonesian people so that the original aims and objectives can be achieved.

Formal legal relations, for example, by making a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreement No. 229 of 2019 between the KPK and the Muhammadiyah Central Management in Yogyakarta on July 18 2019. The point of the agreement is to reaffirm the commitment of the Muhammadiyah Central Management together with the KPK to disseminate anti-corruption values in Muhammadiyah members and the general public also involve the spirit of meritocracy in Muhammadiyah's da'wah charity which is in line with the KPK's commitment by establishing an 'Anti-Corruption Madrasah' as the parent of good governance that meets the standards of both institutions.

Not only with the Muhammadiyah Central Management, as a fairly large religious-based community organization such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) has also made an MoU agreement No. 273 of 2019, the essence of which mentions involving the Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) in the education and counseling program for NU cadres as sources of anti-corruption material at 72 NU Islamic boarding school branches. The formal regulations achieved are the first step towards a more plural understanding of anti-corruption, not limited to constitutional aspects but also touching on religious morals that have been regulated by each religion. Based on the author's research, 20 KPK collaboration activities were found in carrying out activities with religious leaders or religious organizations in Indonesia spread across several provinces over the past five years, which the author obtained based on notes in the annual report on performance officially published by the KPK and interview staff in charge of these activities in the following table.

Table 1. Number of Collaborations Between the Corruption Eradication Committee and Religious Leaders and Religious Organization 2019-2023

Year	Number of KPK work agendas with religious leaders	Information religious organizations
2019	13	Coordination with Lakpesdam PBNU, February 18 & March 20, 2019, at Lakpesdam PBNU & KPK
		Coordination with PGI (Indonesian Church Association) February 19, 2019, at the KPK Building
		Coordination with MAK (Anti-Corruption Madrasah) February 22, 2019, at the KPK building
		Coordination with IDEI (Islamic Economic Dai Association) March 12 & April 4, 2019, at the KPK building
		Workshop on Anti-Corruption Dai April 4, 2019, at the KPK Building Jl. HR. Rasuna Said Kav. C1 (KPK C-1)
		NU Mover Cadre Islamic Boarding School 24-26 April 2019 at the KPK C-1 building
		Workshop on Anti-Corruption Dai April 4, 2019, at the KPK C-1 building

Year	Number of KPK work agendas with religious leaders	Information religious organizations
		<p><i>Takmir</i> (in Arabic context) Workshop at the BUMN KL Mosque on April 30, 2019, at the KPK C-1 building</p> <p>PERADAH Coordination (Hindu Youth) May 9, 2019, at the PERADAH Manggarai Secretariat, South Jakarta</p> <p>Coordination with PBNU for Education 23 & 27 May 2019 at the PBNU & KPK buildings</p> <p>Synergy of Dakwah of Islamic Organizations and Takmir of Mosques May 20, 2019, at the KPK Merah Putih building</p> <p>The National Service Fellowship (Christian PNS Communication Forum) August 3, 2019, at the KPK C-1 building</p> <p>PPWK (Educational Development of Scholarly Insights) Lakpesdam PBNU August 6, 2019, at the Bina Santri Mandiri Parung Institute</p>
2020	0	There were no activities involving religious organizations or religious leaders that year.
2021	0	There were no activities involving religious organizations or religious leaders that year.

Year	Number of KPK work agendas with religious leaders	Information religious organizations
2022	2	Islamic Boarding Schools (Pondok Pesantren) throughout Banten Province
		Maluku Protestant Church.
2023 (until July)	5	Indonesian Ulama Forum
		Zion Church
		Office of the Ministry of Religion Representative of North Maluku Province
		Provincial Office of the Ministry of Religion West Papua
		Office of the Ministry of Religion Representative of Southeast Sulawesi Province

Source: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 KPK Annual Report Documents and personal interviews

Throughout 2019, the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) has carried out anti-corruption programs involving religious leaders or religious organizations, one of which is through a program known as "Religious Communities Against Corruption" which aims to strengthen synergy between the Corruption Eradication Committee and religious leaders. Not only targeting prominent religious figures but also targeting people/congregations who regularly worship together in their respective places of worship. It was recorded that 13 religious organizations visited

the KPK and 4 Islamic boarding schools in East Java were visited by the KPK during the anti-corruption community public discussion road-show. The Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) also attended the invitation as a resource person for the Indonesian Mosque Council (DMI) event to speak before the managers of mosque takmirs throughout Indonesia at the Attin TMII Mosque on 20 May 2019. The frequency of the Corruption Eradication Committee's involvement in various events with religious leaders is a positive signal for the organic dissemination of anti-corruption values in Indonesian society, where the majority have strong religious attitudes.

However, the description above is not always directly proportional to the KPK's realization of implementing follow-up programs, especially regarding religious leaders. It should be noted that in 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic occurred which resulted in the absence of a face-to-face work agenda like the previous year and this affected the intensity of KPK activities that have moved services online via online zoom meetings. Apart from the pandemic, every year the vision of the KPK leadership also influences the focus of activities which are the concentration of the Directorate of Community Development and Participation. For example, in 2020 the Corruption Eradication Committee leadership focused on collaborating with state and private universities to develop anti-corruption material guidelines in the independent learning curriculum (MBKM) formula. Likewise, in 2021, where post-pandemic economic recovery is of particular concern to the government, the Corruption Eradication Commission will focus its attention on Business Entities. State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) and Regional-Owned Enterprises (BUMD) to normalize corporate governance to remain clean and healthy from exposure to corruption.

In 2022 and 2023, the KPK will again include religious figures as cooperation partners which will provide excellent intensification. Based on

information received from an official from the Directorate of Community Empowerment and Participation, the KPK clarified that the cooperation program being established by the KPK is transactional in nature, meaning that it is hoped that there will be a mutually beneficial relationship between the two parties.

2. The Role of Religious Leaders in Eradicating Corruption

Indonesia is a country where the population still believes in traditional symbols, especially religious figures. The presence of these religious leaders also become public opinion leaders who exist in society to provide guidance regarding material and immaterial needs related to personal and social life, where members of a religious association definitely have a tendency to personify certain figures which are usually embedded in the figure of religious leaders (Mujani 2007). Therefore, considering that Indonesian society in anthropological categories is still traditional-charismatic (Widhyharto et al. 2013) the presence of traditional figures, in this case religious leaders in Indonesia, is important for penetrating anti-corruption issues to the grassroots level so that they can achieve widespread collective awareness.

Based on the author's exploratory observations, Indonesian people strongly believe in the religious authorities/bodies that are growing in Indonesia. Take for example the religion of Islam, specifically in Indonesia we know of two large social and community organizations that were born from Muslim parents, namely Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, where according to Ustadz Adi Hidayat these two mass organizations are the wings that protect Indonesia from the threat of division and disintegration. In line with this statement, Ustadz Abdul Somad said that without Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, the Republic of Indonesia would not stand as tall as it does now because these two organizations play the role of being the basic pillars that strengthen social unity among

Muslims who are the majority. The existence of these two organizations provides its own characteristics in viewing the relationship between the state and religion because in the Indonesian context the relationship created is a symbiotic mutualism, which means a positive relationship that reciprocally provides goodness to each other. This portrait differentiates the role of religious leaders in Indonesia in injecting anti-corruption values which are being intensified by the government through the Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK), in this case the anti-corruption campaign. So we come to a point of contact which brings our discussion to the role of religious leaders in eradicating corruption, namely as follows:

a. *Create Educational Anti-Corruption Activities*

It is important to emphasize from the start that the Indonesian people are actually more obedient to the calls of religious organizations and religious leaders than to the official state apparatus, in this case the KPK (Qodir 2004). On the one hand, this fact creates a dilemma because it limits the scope for activities of KPK officers to exert influence, but on the other hand it also provides a good opportunity for the involvement of religious leaders in anti-corruption programs organized by the KPK. Departing from this reality, collaboration with elements of civil society characterized by religious identity is an attractive answer for the dissemination of anti-corruption messages to grow optimally at the grassroots level of Indonesian society (Widhyarto et al. 2013).

Anti-corruption educational activities initiated by the Corruption Eradication Committee's Directorate of Education and Community Participation Development are aimed at all Indonesian people so that they are able to play a preventive role in the corruption mitigation aspect (Johnson and Dion KPK Interview 2023). This activity in the form of a seminar also targets elements and religious leaders in Indonesia who are members of several institutional organizations officially recognized by the

government so that the Corruption Eradication Committee is able to carry out regular evaluations and monitoring to record responses that emerge from the results of this collaboration. As stated by the Deputy Chair of Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia Bali Province, Pasek Agung Setiabudi, who explained that Hindus who live in Bali welcomed the anti-corruption educational seminar held at the PHDI Bali office in April 2023. According to Pasek, the seminar was a positive communication vehicle for government officials, in this case the Corruption Eradication Commission, to synergize with Balinese Hindu religious leaders, which would later be passed on as a spiritual message to the Balinese Hindu community, especially those who joined the PHDI organization. He also appreciated that government institutions still realize the importance of collaboration with religious leaders so that the government's message regarding anti-corruption can resonate quickly and precisely through religious leaders' channels and is more easily accepted than conveying it directly to the public.

A similar role is also carried out by the Regional Office of Religion of the Ministry of Religion of Jambi Province, which took part in organizing anti-corruption seminars with the Corruption Eradication Committee for interfaith leaders who live in Jambi which was held in early 2023. According to Thaif, the Head of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion, Jambi, explained that the KPK's efforts in organizing seminars were the result of a derivative program carried out between the Ministry of Religion and the KPK. According to Thaif, the seminar activities held in Jambi have a new spirit because if so far we have seen that anti-corruption activities are dominated by students or the urban middle class, in Jambi it turns out that there is a diversification of participants, with the number of religious leaders being the largest among other professions. This fact is perceived as a positive signal that there has been a unified frequency of understanding regarding the dangers of corruption and the importance of social solidarity between religious leaders in order to completely eradicate the crime of

corruption. What happened in Jambi confirms that there is still room for broad and wide participation regarding the distribution of anti-corruption values.

b. Publication of Anti-Corruption Module Writing Versions of Six Religions in Indonesia

Apart from carrying out temporary seminar activities, religious leaders also play a role in other forms of activities that are more permanent, namely the publication of anti-corruption modules whose material contains moral and spiritual ethical teachings against corruption contained in the six religions in Indonesia, namely; Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. In this context, the Corruption Eradication Commission does not carelessly take written references because this is related to the sacredness of religious authority in formulating the internal teachings of each religion to be synergized with the anti-corruption spirit and values that were initiated by the Corruption Eradication Commission. Therefore, the Corruption Eradication Commission completely handed over the process of writing the contents and content of the anti-corruption module to figures from six religions in Indonesia, where the selection of religious leaders tasked with writing was also based on their associations connected to existing and representative religious organizations at the community level.

This publication activity is a crucial role played by religious leaders because it helps expand the literature on corruption based on a religious perspective in Indonesia. This is a strong signal that religious leaders honestly still pay great interest and attention to public issues (Interview with Abi Setyo Nugroho Lakpesdam PBNU 2023). Based on this awareness, they voluntarily took a more active form of participation, namely writing anti-corruption modules so that they could continue relevant to the spirit of eradicating corruption which is also the main concentration agenda of the anti-corruption commission. The presence of the publication of writings

inspired by religious teachings in Indonesia has made efforts to prevent corruption in Indonesia more plural because it has succeeded in presenting the theology of religious dogma as a basis for social power ideas within the framework of the Indonesian religious community to work together to fight corruption at its roots.

In perfecting the role of religious leaders in preventing corruption in Indonesia, the efforts taken are not only focused on "festivals of activities" but also on aspects of the publication of ideas and literacy of anti-corruption ideas whose source of inspiration is the doctrine of good teachings contained in each religion. As is known, the Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) has published an Anti-Corruption Guide Module whose material content consists of six religious teachings in Indonesia, namely; Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism. In this published edition, the various commandments of each religion are explained in full to avoid corrupt behavior such as stealing, lying and betrayal. The availability of anti-corruption ideas from the six religions in Indonesia combined with a complete commitment to preventing corruption is projected to be able to become a great aspiration and a strong spirit of encouragement to create an ideal anti-corruption order based on religious norms and rationality regarding the negative impacts of corruption.

c. Become an Anti-Corruption Educator

Becoming an anti-corruption instructor is one of the strategic participations of religious leaders in collaborating to teach anti-corruption values to their congregation. Considering that the KPK's human resources and material infrastructure are limited and it is impossible to reach all levels of society. In 2016, the Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) formed anti-corruption counselors as a group of individuals from the community who registered to be trained as counselors tasked with enforcing anti-corruption education and prevention efforts.

Based on data recorded up to July 2023, the Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK) has 2,665 anti-corruption counselors. Of this number, 79 of them are individuals with professional backgrounds as religious leaders such as; ustadz, kiyai, priest, priest, and pastor. This is a sign that religious leaders want to participate in the internalization of anti-corruption campaigns in an inclusive manner by including religious figures to convey theological content in preventing corruption, but currently their numbers are still minimal compared to other professional backgrounds. In terms of the percentage of anti-corruption counselors who have a religious background, it is 3.7%, this figure is still small and far from ideal projections. The presence of extension officers who are not religious leaders is also a critical note regarding the nature of KPK relations at the basic level.

The author obtained information from religious leaders who also participated as KPK anti-corruption instructors, namely Pasek Agung Setiabudi as Deputy Chair of PHDI Bali, who explained that after the anti-corruption educational seminar activities, there were 15 PHDI members who registered to become KPK anti-corruption instructors, these 15 people were prominent figures. a religion that has charisma and authority among Balinese Hindus. Apart from that, Thaif, as Head of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion, Jambi, stated that there are approximately 20 religious leaders in Jambi who are officially registered as part and members of the KPK anti-corruption counselors. This shows that there is participation of religious leaders to be involved as anti-corruption instructors, but quantitatively the amount of awareness and participation of religious leaders who want to be involved as anti-corruption instructors for the Corruption Eradication Committee is still very low.

3. Challenges of Religious Leaders in the Corruption Eradication Movement

Quoting Koentjaraningrat (1984) regarding efforts to eradicate corruption that can be carried out optimally, it may be far from expectations

considering that the core of the corruption problem is at the level of moral ethical values that exist with material sources which result in the creation of corruption crimes. In the development process, of course, the role of active participation that has been demonstrated previously does not always run smoothly in implementation. The problems faced by actors, in this case religious leaders, in negotiating anti-corruption material are often not directly proportional to the initial idealization. There are also challenges faced by religious leaders in disseminating anti-corruption messages organically in Indonesian society, as explained by (Priyono 2018) as follows:

a. There is Minimal Interaction Between the Corruption Eradication Commissions and Religious Leaders or Religious Organizations

Although religious leaders have significant moral and spiritual influence, they do not have enough political or economic influence to change powerful systems or acts of corruption at the government or business level. So far, religious leaders have only touched on the psychological aspects of the public with moral appeals and religious values to help fight corruption. It needs to be acknowledged that this does not have a strong enough influence to shape a citizen's anti-corruption behavior. The limited space for religious leaders in Indonesia to exercise influence optimally is a big job in eradicating corruption. Revolutionary efforts are needed to be able to increase the level of indoctrination of anti-corruption teachings from theological to sociological in nature so that society, regardless of differences in sectarian identity, is able to communally understand and realize that corruption is a common enemy that must be eradicated.

In fact, the contribution of religious leaders can resonate optimally if it involves solid and consistent institutional tools demonstrated by state institutions. Take, for example, the religious moderation project initiated by Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, who at that time was the Minister of Religion of

the Republic of Indonesia, together with other elements of religious leadership, who were able to formulate a dictum entitled "Islam Nusantara" as a product of thought and feeling that differentiated it from other thought terminologies that threatened the plurality of the nation in which what is meant is "Radical Islam". This is what is needed in the anti-corruption issue so that it can move up a class and reach a more encouraging stage in efforts to eradicate corruption optimally in Indonesia.

The relationship that is built between religious leaders and the anti-corruption commission apparatus should be of an organic solidarity characterized by tolerance shared by both parties so that they are able to bridge the differences that exist between the two by targeting common goals that are more important and greater (Hamzah 2006). Thanks to the organic solidarity that is created, there is great potential to be able to become an element that neutralizes the structural and institutional challenges that occur between religious leaders and the anti-corruption commission. Because whether we realize it or not, the communication bottleneck that arises comes from the selective attitude of each party to collaborate more optimally both in quantity and quality and this bottleneck means that sustainable cooperation between religious leaders and the corruption eradication commission has not been fully framed (Priyono 2018). Through this solid collaboration, the authors sees that the challenges that hinder neat and neat communication between the two partners will be resolved well and realistically.

b. Dilemma in Understanding the Problem of Corruption

Not all religious leaders are free from unethical behavior. Some of them are also involved in corruption or improper behavior. This can make it difficult for religious communities to voice corruption issues with full credibility (Yahya et al. 2015). Not to mention that religious leaders such as kyai who are leaders of Islamic boarding schools often receive assistance in the form of monetary donations from politicians whose exact source of the

aid funds is not yet known. It could be that the kyai received assistance from money obtained from corruption to finance Islamic boarding school operations or even enjoyed it personally as a form of gift and expression of gratitude, even though in reality it was still doubtful or still had a "gray" status to be interpreted as pure assistance (Pbnu Lakpesdam Interview 2023). This is where religious leaders experience a dilemma because on the one hand they enjoy the status quo while on the other hand they demand progressiveness and dynamic movement away from conservative attitudes and behavior patterns which actually foster the seeds of corruption.

This dilemma is a challenge for religious leaders in their efforts to disseminate anti-corruption values in society. It is still not fully understood which areas are "private" problems and "public" problems, especially regarding the issue of corruption which is a tangled thread experienced by religious leaders. Moreover, the daily operations of their religious activities are also funded independently and sometimes such donor assistance is interpreted as a stimulus for their missionary deeds. This attitude makes it difficult for religious leaders to move smoothly in disseminating anti-corruption messages in society, especially their respective congregations/people (Zelekha and Avnimelech 2023). Here, excellent awareness is needed by religious leaders to be able to realize this dilemma and handle it seriously so that it can be resolved before the anti-corruption moral distribution process takes place.

If religious leaders have found a clear line of departure between giving "gifts" and giving "gratuities" which leads to criminal acts of corruption because the source of the donation allocation comes from suspicious aspects, especially when handed over from public officials or politicians. Religious leaders in principle It is necessary to be selective in receiving assistance and it is also necessary to investigate the origin of the source of funds, whether it is pure charity or even bribery. Of course, it would be unfortunate if religious leaders turned out to receive assistance

originating from corrupt practices for the purposes of religious da'wah and broadcasting because it would later set a bad precedent in anti-corruption campaigns involving religious leaders. Purity of these conditions can be an affirmative step to overcome challenges in the form of dilemmas in understanding the problem of corruption and religious leaders can be fully aware of carrying out preventive efforts and the role of eradicating corruption at the level of preventive aspects on a more massive scale (Zelekha and Avnimelech 2023).

c. The Issue is Difficult to Become a Populist Narrative

The issue of anti-corruption is known as an elitist issue and is unable to reach the understanding of the general public. This fact makes the issue of anti-corruption difficult to package into a populist narrative such as the issue of identity politics, so that in the mainstream of public conversation it is rare to find discussions about anti-corruption. If this transformation cannot be made, then the issue of anti-corruption will forever remain an elite issue that is unable to reach the understanding of the general public. This issue also targets the packaging process or delivery of anti-corruption messages in a more flexible and flexible manner so as to provide a "down to earth" impression in its downstreaming.

It must be acknowledged that the Indonesian Church Association (PGI) also believes in this challenge in consistently spreading the anti-corruption message to internal Christians. According to Pastor Henrek Lokra, anti-corruption issues require good reasoning and cognitive abilities so that information about corruption can be processed completely and become useful knowledge for someone. He emphasized that we need to think of solutions that are right on target to make this anti-corruption issue feel closer and more relevant to people's daily lives. Sometimes we need an attractive package so that the anti-corruption issue can continue to attract public attention, not only focused on certain groups but also the entire Indonesian nation (Abdulkareem, Zuhaira, and Ye-Zhuang 2017).

Furthermore, intensive efforts are needed to make the anti-corruption issue a major concern for the entire community in general. There should be no segregation that arises due to low understanding of this issue which practically makes the position of the anti-corruption issue at an elitist level and does not reach the subconscious of all Indonesian people (Hamzah 2006). At this point, religious leaders are also expected to be able to wrap the anti-corruption message in a breath based on religious teachings so that it can be accepted more easily by the public. It is believed that synchronizing anti-corruption messages along with religious messages will make it easier to achieve better cognitive understanding of the public because it also brings an emotional aspect to the educational effort (Qodir 2004).

D. CONCLUSION

In summary, this study highlights the significant role that religious leaders in Indonesia could play in the fight against corruption. Despite the strong religious foundation of Indonesian society, the effectiveness of religious leaders in curbing corruption has been limited. The research demonstrates that while religious leaders possess moral authority and influence at the grassroots level, their impact on anti-corruption efforts remains insufficient. The study underscores the need for more active and structured engagement of religious institutions in addressing corruption as a societal issue intertwined with poverty. Furthermore, collaboration between religious figures and state institutions, such as the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), is vital to creating a more unified and effective anti-corruption movement.

However, this research has certain limitations. First, it relies heavily on qualitative data, which, while providing in-depth insights, may lack generalizability across the diverse regions of Indonesia. Additionally, the study focuses mainly on formal religious organizations and does not

explore informal or smaller religious groups that may also play a crucial role in anti-corruption efforts. Lastly, the research does not thoroughly examine the long-term outcomes of the collaborations between religious institutions and the KPK, which limits the ability to assess the sustainability of such efforts.

Future research should address these limitations by including a broader range of religious actors and examining their roles in different socio-political contexts. Moreover, quantitative studies could be conducted to measure the tangible impact of religious leaders on public attitudes toward corruption. Additionally, longitudinal research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of religious leaders' involvement in anti-corruption campaigns over time.

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