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NATIONALISM OF ABDUL HADI AWANG AND IMPACTS ON
NEW MALAYSIA POLITICS

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Abstract

Abdul Hadi Awang is a President of the Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) from 2003 until now. He is known as a charismatic leader, firm and has elements of nationalism in each of his speeches and political media statements. This study justifies the aspects of nationalism in the context of Malay language and social issues of Malays. Does the question arise whether there are elements of nationalism in Abdul Hadi Awang's speech and political statement that can impact the New Malaysian political culture? To answer the question, the researcher will examine these elements and his stand on the ideology of nationalism. The data will collect through the analysis of essential speech texts and political statements of the PAS President by using qualitative methods. The preliminary findings show that there are elements of nationalism Abdul Hadi Awang, which is his firmness on the position of Malay language, which is part of his main speech in the Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) Annual Assembly from 2003 to 2018.

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1. Introduction

Abdul Hadi Awang is a well-known Malay political figure in Malaysia, and he is also famous in the international political arena, which involves the political issues of an Islamic political movement. He is an individual known as Tuan Guru Haji Abdul Hadi Awang, appointed as the President of the Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS) began on September 14, 2003, till now. Abdul Hadi Awang can be justified as a phenomenon because of Malaysian society against the leadership of scholars in the Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS) during the 1980s, which saw Abdul Hadi Awang regarded as an icon of Malay Muslim politician. The selection of Abdul Hadi Awang as the subject of this study is due to his insistence on the issue involving the sovereignty of the Malay language as the national language, and social aspects of the Malays enshrined in each of his policy speech as President of the Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS). This study was conducted to clarify the extent of Abdul Hadi Awang has elements of nationalism championed during his tenure as President of the Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS). The selection theme of nationalism as a discourse of this study is to prove that PAS as a political party in Islamic rooted but also as a party that issues involving Malays in line with the statement of a late of Professor Muhammad (1953) who said The Malaya belongs to the Malays who were all Muslims (Mohamad, 2009).

2. Problem Statement

In this study, the issue of nationalism has been a debate among Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS) leader since 1979. There are among the factors that caused the polemic of the political ideology of nationalism among PAS leaders, such as the begun of Iran's Islamic Revolution, which became a model for reforming Islamic political movements around the world (Abdul Latiff, 2003). Issues that occur in Iran in 1979 that also influence the direction of the political Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS), which leads to the transitional political model of "Ethnonationalism" that PAS leaders who so to Malay nationalism as Dr Burhanuddin Al Helmi, Professor Dr Zulkifli Muhammad and Dato Mohd Asri Muda to "Kepimpinan Ulama" (Leadership of the Ulama'). Shifting political model that causes Dato Mohd Asri Muda to relinquish his position as the 4th President of the Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS) and saw PAS leaders who support the ideology of nationalism rejected altogether by PAS delegates (Wan Teh, 1993). Following the debate, the 5th President of Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS), Rawa (1983, 1984) rejected the ideology of nationalism on his policy speech for two years in PAS Annual Assembly (Muktamar) a row to prove that PAS does not accept any doctrine that contradicts the principles of Islam advocated by PAS during its formation since 1951. Polemical rejection of the ideology of nationalism an expressed by the 6th President of Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS), Dato Fadzil Nor. However, while Abdul Hadi Awang as The 7th PAS president, is consistent with the approach in raising the issue of the sovereignty of the Malay language and social problems involving Malays such as education and culture in each his policy speech at the annual assembly held by PAS. Abdul Hadi Awang's stand on nationalism must look whether his position in line with party policy or he makes nationalism is just a side-by-side agenda to be relevant to PAS's political direction in Malaysia.

In conclusion, the debate ideology of nationalism that occurred in PAS is dependent on the leadership of PAS itself, a political impact on the future direction of PAS in Malaysia's New political culture after the Malaysia 14th General Election. The studies involve the ideology of nationalism in PAS include The Roots and Principles of the SeMalaysia Islamic Party (PAS) Struggle 25 years: Nationalism, Socialism and Islam (Mohamed, 1979); Comparison of Political Thoughts - PAS and UMNO (Abu, 1993); Among the 'Asabiyyah and Nationalism according to the views of Dr. Burhanuddin Al Helmy (Wan Amin, 1997); Perspective on the West and Islam Malay nationalism: a comparative study (Abdullah, 2005); The history of Iran's Islamic Revolution movement and its influence on the Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS) (Ku Shaari, 2009). Therefore, it is essential to study describes the stand Abdul Hadi Awang to the ideology of nationalism political survival of the Malays in Malaysia.

3. Research Questions

- What was Abdul Hadi Awang's position on the part of PAS scholars (Ulama') on The ideology of Nationalism?
- How does Abdul Hadi Awang implement the aspects of nationalism in the Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS)?

4. Purpose of the Study

- 4.1. The objective of this study is to identify the extent of nationalism elements in Abdul Hadi Awang's thoughts.
- 4.2. To explain Abdul Hadi Awang's role, approach, and implementation in ensuring the elements of nationalism are in line with the will of Islam, which is the basis of the political party of the Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS).

5. Research Methods

- 5.1. The methodology of this study is a qualitative study, and this research strategy is a Retrospective historical chronology.
- 5.2. The technique of this study is to use the documentation analysis comprising the fully texts of the PAS presidential keynote address by Abdul Hadi Awang as the President of PAS from 2003 until 2018.

6. Findings

The following perspectives can explain the definition of nationalism; First, the definition of Nationalism by the Western perspective. Second, the definition of nationalism in the Islamic perspective and the third, from the perspective of the meaning of Malay nationalism.

6.1. The definition of nationalism by a Western perspective

Nationalism as an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining the power and personality of its rights for a group of people. Therefore, most of the group thought that a real race is likely to be the next nation nationalism is correlated with three things; self-determination, an assertion of individuality, and distinctiveness of the nation (Smith, 1971). Besides, Nationalism means the identity of the group that collectively and emotional have been consolidated to become one people, and make the nation as a source of reference as well as to highlight the national identity as national identity (Jones, 1988). Nationalism justified as a state of mind that permeates into the soul as the spirit of the majority of the people. This ideology also recognizes the country as a superior form of organization and the nation as the basis of all life and culture to build economic strength. Therefore, human loyalty is focused on people because their survival depends on the welfare of the nation itself (Kohn, 1968). Conclusions from the definition of nationalism by Western perspective make it clear that this doctrine is the basis of non-religion as a basis for the unification of Western nationalism instead of base taking into the language, cultures, regions, and nations. Nations and regions are central to the existence of such nationalism by supporters of Kohn (1968) and Smith (1971) clearly states that human differences than others with different religious beliefs did not lie but to his native land, language, and culture.

6.2. The definition of nationalism in Islamic perspectives

The description of nationalism by *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (Muslim Brotherhood) is referring to nationalism, and that brought the success that led to the unity of Muslims. According to the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin*, the nationalism that regions to the success or *al-Wataniyyah al-Falah*, referring to the generation of Muslims will come to continue the struggle of Muslims who previously were many achieving success in upholding Islam and nationalism that led to the unity of Muslims or *al-Wataniyyah al-Ummah* is Muslims mutual welfare and benefit of always giving each other. *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* rejected any definition of nationalism that led to the effort to revive the practices of *Jahiliyyah*, leaving the principles of Islam merely to exalt the glory of a people and oppress another people, triggering a schism among Muslims and destroy the symbols and rituals of Islam, thus, the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* classify nationalism such as *al-Wataniyyah al-Hizbiyyah* of nationalism that led to the error and injustice (Abdullah, 2005). Nationalism in Islam refers to a political ideology that holds that the state is very important or practicing the belief that one nation is naturally superior to all other countries. Nationalism can also be defined as the sentiments or feelings or consciousness of the people for certain territories which are referred to as national liberation policies and may reflect the country as a united society under a recognized government or as a large group of people with the same or historical history (Ushama, 2011). Al Banna (1998) describes the definition of nationalism with five things: *al-Wataniyyah al-Hanin*, which means compassion is the spirit of the loving homeland that exists naturally or naturally in every human being, and it is strongly encouraged by Islam. *Al-Wataniyyah al-Hurriyyah al-Izzah*, which means grandeur and independence, is the duty of liberating the homeland from foreign power by placing the freedom and nobility of the people. *Al-Wataniyyah al-Mujtama'* which means community liberty with the effort to unite the people for mutual benefit and *al-Wataniyyah al-Hizbiyyah* means nationalism that drives racial and racial traits to groups then instigated and humiliated to bring disunity, this is the kind of nationalism that prohibited in Islam (Wan Amin, 1997;

Abdullah, 2005). Al Maududi explained that nationalism is a trait that supports a person against his nation without destroying other countries and if the individual still loves his homeland, that nationalism accepted by Islam (Wan Amin, 1997).

6.3. Definition of nationalism in a Malay perspective

The definition of nationalism from the perspective of Malay much discussed by Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmi by explaining that Malay nationalism (National Malay) defines the land wither regardless of different races and nations, but it is an assimilation policy towards immigrant to Malaya has an identity and clear and distinctive personality known at the international level. Malays National Concept is not designed to provoke hostility between races but is the basis of a broad national unity (Hassan, 1986). Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmi explained that Malay nationalism or nationality must be adapted to the domestic politics of Islam as Malays must immediately to geodesy the world to happiness and the pleasure of God in the Hereafter (Wan Amin, 1997).

6.4. The elements of nationalism in the context of upholding the Malay language

Awang (2004) is a strict individual regarding the sovereignty of Bahasa Melayu as a national language, as enshrined in Article 152, the Federal Constitution. According to him, Bahasa Melayu should also be the medium of instruction for all levels of education in the country. This stance based on several factors, including his objection to the implementation of inconsistent educational policies in upholding *Bahasa Melayu* as the medium of instruction and knowledge language. PAS presidential policy speech in the 50th PAS Annual Assembly, he stated that;

By inserting fine needles national education policy anti-Jawi writing, anti-Islamic and anti use of Bahasa Melayu. All these properties do not reflect the spirit and substance of the Malay culture espoused to be the core of the national culture. The Malay language as the language of instruction in schools and institutions of higher education began to be replaced by English. All the developments in education was an anti-national policy implementation notlonger hidden. (Awang, 2004, p. 5)

Similarly, in the PAS presidential policy speech at the 52nd PAS Annual Assembly, Awang (2006) reiterated the same stance as stating that;

PAS reiterated that oppose the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English. The BN government failed to care about the fate of hundreds of thousands of children, particularly in rural Malays, who lost interest in the study of science and technology because they do not understand the teaching of science in English. Instead, UMNO / BN steps to begin the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English at the university level as well. The BN government should listen to the advice of experts to study the language and its implications. (p. 7)

Awang (2007) repeated the same stand in the 53rd PAS Annual Assembly stating that,

After the crippling of Jawi texts that resulted in the existence of blind and ignorant religion, there was a policy of using English in replaced of Bahasa Melayu, fully as the medium of teaching for Mathematics and Science, beginning in 2007 in the national education system till the university level. (p. 6)

Awang (2009) also criticized the actions of the Barisan Nasional Government when delivering the PAS presidential policy speech at the 55th PAS Annual Assembly, explaining that,

UMNO also continued to weaken the Malay Language system and its role in knowledge over the past few decades, after the Malay Language with Jawi writing of knowledge in the Southeast Asian region. The role of UMNO leaders in drafting the National Language Act 1967 by changing the text of the Malay language from Jawi writing to roman writing. (p. 5)

During the 58th PAS Annual Assembly, Awang (2012) stressed PAS's commitment to upholding the Malay Language as a national language by stating that;

The role of the national language that is the spirit of the nation must be reinforced into the language of knowledge and administration of the nation as well as the unity of the people, with the mother tongue to all races and promote foreign language learning to gain useful knowledge from anywhere. (p. 8)

The last call by Awang (2016) in urging stakeholders to uphold the Malay language during the 62nd PAS Annual Assembly by affirming that;

We (PAS) do not rule out the importance of English or Chinese Mandarin, French, Japanese, etc. But the main principles of Science, Mathematics, Technology, Design, and ICT learning must be implemented in their native language. (p. 7)

6.5. The elements of nationalism in the context of Malay culture, social and economic

In addition to highlighting the aspects of Malay nationalism on Malay language, Awang (2005) also showed his firmness on Malay cultural and social issues. In his policy speech at 51st PAS Annual Assembly, he stated that the intention to create a moral and ethical society as enshrined in the fourth challenge of Vision 2020 would not have been successful if spiritual development neglected due to the failure of the UMNO-led government to develop a family-based institution of religion (Islam). He also blamed the government led by UMNO / BN, which often blame the parent that caused the moral decline and an increase in crime among teenagers, especially the Malays. He also made it more,

While a family is just a tiny institution in a larger community and nation. In another sense, the environment that exists in one country has a major impact on personal development in a family. Consciousness the leadership of the nation must take the responsibility of creating an ethical and righteous environment. (Awang, 2005, p. 9)

In recommendations to members of PAS women's wing in the 52nd PAS presidential policy speech on PAS Annual Assembly, he once again suggested the role of Muslim women in confronting and engaging in social problems that occur among the Malays in particular, his said,

Restoring the family institution by re-emphasizing the role of parenting in particular noble role of women as mothers, should be an important issue that needs to highlight. Is not the fundamental strength of society and civilization is the family? (Awang, 2006, p. 6)

In addition, Abdul Hadi Awang also highlighted his concern for the socio-economic status of the Malay community, since he assumed the post of President of PAS from 2003 until now, the national economy and socio-economic based of the people became the essence and stressed the need of the Government's leaders the needs of the people's lives and welfare especially during the 58th PAS Annual Assembly, he also has demonstrated a solution to the people economic crisis who rectify existing economic philosophy to the financial situation and prosperity of the people and the country. Secondly, to reestablish moral and holistic economic performance by having legislation that can prevent wastage, leakage, malpractice, and corruption and thirdly, to make a thorough assessment of national treasures to be more beneficial to the people and transparent and just for all citizens. In the 59th PAS Annual Assembly, he also reiterated his stand on the governance that the Government has to implement in specially formulating a more equitable and sustainable financial system for the benefit of the people and the financial market ecosystems in the country. Criticism of Abdul Hadi Awang against malpractice and leakage is also expressed by blasphemous government leaders who are not prudent in the country's financial governance.

6.6. Implications for New Malaysian politics

Based on the discussion of Abdul Hadi Awang nationalism elements in the context of *Bahasa Melayu* as the national language and the language of knowledge, also in the context of the cultural, social and socio-economic of the Malays, Abdul Hadi Awang has shown that he is a *Malay ethnonationalism* who is very close the people of the Malays, the Malay language and this country. In his keynote address as President of PAS at the 62nd PAS Annual Assembly in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Abdul Hadi has introduced a conceptual solution to the crisis that hit the country especially in education, economics, and national administration by justifying the Maturity and Prosperous Political Culture that has seven principles, namely; *First*, politics is the principle. *Second*, the politics of da'wah and the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. *Third*, the Islamic-based political solution. *Fourth*, the legislative priority to the people. *Fifth*, the politics of peace and diplomacy. *Sixth*, pure politics is not the politics of perception and *seventh*, rational politics, and professionalism. Based on the seven principles of Maturity and Prosperity Political Culture (BPMS) has been used as a guide to Abdul Hadi Awang to lead PAS in the 14th General Election by

witnessing PAS to obtain over 2.04 million votes or 18% of the popular vote, having 18 members of the House of Representatives, gaining 89 seats the State Assembly House in Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Pahang, remains the government in Kelantan and Terengganu dominate.

Therefore, based on these elements, Awang (2016) is consistent with his aspect of nationalism towards Malay Language (First Principle of BPMS), cultural, social and socio-economic Malay (Fourth Principle of BPMS) in addressing the direction of the new political culture of Malaysia after the 14th Malaysia General Election. As he spoke in the 64th PAS Annual Assembly that,

PAS consistently chooses a wisely democratic approach, through a Muwajahah Silmiyyah (Peaceful Approach) to achieve the purpose of establishing PAS which practiced in the PAS Constitution (Clause 5);

- i. To striving for its existence in this country is a society and government that implemented in its values of Islamic life and its laws toward the pleasure of Allah;*
- ii. To maintain the purity of Islam, independence and state sovereignty. (Awang, 2016, p. 8)*

7. Conclusion

Abdul Hadi Awang was the leading political figure in Malaysia by showing elements of nationalism, which he fought during his posting to the PAS president from 2013 until now. He was supposed to be called the Malay ethnonationalism because of his firmness on the sovereignty of the Malay language as a national language, which must be mastered by all levels of the people of the country; accordingly, the Malay Language maintained as the medium of instruction in all levels of education. He also expressed the solution to the problem of economic and social upheaval and the people, especially the Malays, with wise solutions according to Islam. His consistency in improving the ability of the Malays to face challenges must observe from a positive perspective. The most radical idea presented by Abdul Hadi Awang in expressing his nationalism was the proposal to establish a Unity Government post 12th Malaysian General Election. The plan displayed as a result of the tense political climate and the economic turmoil that is facing the country, especially a Malays Privilege. He worried the current political tensions to escalate into an uncontrollable atmosphere. Racial politics and the approach of the authorities to the iron claws will cause endless strife until the problems of the economic downturn are unmanageable. Not only political parties but also the ordinary people to suffer significant losses. The concept of 'unity government' demands that the BN share power with Pakatan Rakyat at the federal level. Each ministry jointly governed, and the policies must action by collective and consensus. It is not a situation in which Pakatan Rakyat sits under the BN rule. The Pakatan Rakyat component parties do not join the BN but remain in the Pakatan Rakyat coalition. However, the proposal was rejected unanimously in the Pakatan Rakyat Presidential Council and described the proposal as Abdul Hadi Awang's personal opinion. The culmination of Abdul Hadi Awang's elements of nationalism stance was during a demonstration in protest of the ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) by the Malaysian Government led by the Pakatan Harapan on December 8, 2018. Enforcement Authority reported two hundred thousand Malaysian people from the variety of socio-economic backgrounds, especially Malays, to attend the rally organized by the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) and UMNO in collaboration with 40 Islamic NGOs. At

the rally, speech by Abdul Hadi Awang stressed that the Malaysian Government's move to ratify the ICERD seemed to violate the "red light" and violate the principles of peace, prosperity, and well-being among the people of the country. The rectify action also challenged the institution of the Malay Rulers and the attempt to change the Federal Constitution for over five decades. Abdul Hadi Awang is a Malay leader who has a firm idea of nationalism.

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