

DESIGNING THE PESANTREN CURRICULUM TO COUNTER RADICALISM: Study on Pondok Pesantren Wali Songo Ngabar Ponorogo

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the moderate educational views of the Pondok Pesantren Wali Songo community in Ngabar Ponorogo and their efforts to prevent radical ideology. This is a qualitative research and the subject is the main source of data. The informants are the Kyai (the leader) and the Asâtidh (the teachers) Council in the Pesantren. The results reveals that the Pesantren Wali Songo designed a curriculum that provided a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings. For example, the material of fiqh is embedded with uşûl al-fiqh. In uşûl al-fiqh, there are rules of istinbât al-hukm besides the Quran and hadith such as ijma', qiyas, 'urf, maşlahah al-mursalah, and maqâsid al-shari'ah so that fiqh is flexible. In addition, the Pesantren recruited a board of teachers who had moderate understanding and background in kâffah Islamic ideology. Santri (the students) are protected from information access and certain association which lead to radicalism. In developing moderate Islam, the curriculum there require them to study books that explain the understanding of Islam Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah.

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan tentang pendidikan moderat masyarakat Pondok Pesantren Wali Songo Ngabar Ponorogo dan upaya mereka dalam mencegah masuknya paham radikal. Metode penelitian yang

digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif. Subjek penelitian adalah sumber utama dalam penelitian, juga dapat dikatakan sebagai sumber data. Mereka adalah Pengasuh/kyai dan Dewan guru/asatidz yang ada di pesantren ini. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa Pesantren Wali Songo merancang kurikulum yang memberikan pemahaman yang komprehensif tentang ajaran Islam. Misalkan materi fiqh dimbangi dengan materi ushul fiqh. Dalam mata pelajaran ushul fiqh terdapat kaidah-kaidah *istinbâṭ al-ḥukm* (cara pengambilan hukum) selain dari Al-Qur'an dan hadis seperti *ijmâ'*, *qiyâs*, *'urf*, *maṣlahah al-mursalah*, dan *maqâsid al-shari'ah* sehingga hukum Islam (fiqh) bisa dipahami secara fleksibel. Selain itu, Pesantren Wali Songo melakukan rekrutmen dewan guru yang memiliki pemahaman moderat dan memiliki latar belakang idiologi Islam *kâffah*. Para santri juga diproteksi dari pergaulan dan akses informasi yang mendorong tumbuhnya radikalisme. Pesantren Wali Songo dalam mengembangkan Islam yang moderat adalah melalui kurikulum dilakukan dengan pembelajaran kitab yang membentuk pemahaman *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah*.

Keywords: curriculum; counter radicalism; pesantren

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Introduction

The crisis of ideology faced by Muslim society in Indonesia has an impact on the genesis of religious movements that legitimate violence and terrorism (Ma'arif, Sebastian, and Sholihan 2020). They are usually intolerant of followers of other religions, or of different ideas. Radical Islamic style shows fanaticism and exclusivity, they often force their understanding and consider it to be the most correct. So, the emergence of Islamic radicalism is mainly triggered by the combination of the ruling regime's political repression, crucial socio-economic deprivation, globalisation, and Arabia support (Muzakki 2014, 1). This exclusive attitude breeds radicalism in religion and will be dangerous if it reaches the level of *ghuluw* (transgressing) and *ifrât* (outrageous) when forced upon followers of other religions (Laisa 2014, 2). Those harmful acts include the sweeping action of non-Muslim attributes during the Christmas commemoration, anti-immoral acts i.e. consuming narcotics, Islamic constitutionalism, and claiming others heresy since their understanding is not in line. The more extreme act is bombings in some churches and public facilities in the name

of *jihād* such as the Bali bombing case on October 12, 2002 which killed 200 people committed by Imam Samudra and his colleagues (Tan 2011, 22).

Such attitude certainly cannot be separated from the teaching doctrine. This is also in line with the educational system or from the results of learning the doctrine. From here, it seems that education is the most important entity in shaping one's religious character and attitude.

Peace culture is an atmosphere in which there are values of tolerance and acceptance towards other communities. In Islam, tolerance is a product of understanding Islamic theology. Therefore, looking at the potential for peace in Islam community must be seen through their interpretation of Islamic theology related to hot issues triggering violence (Sholeh 2007). After understanding their perspective, the next step is to see the implementation in the form of action such as socialization or education to the society.

One of the educational institutions that specifically teaches the basics of Islam (theology) is *Pondok Pesantren* (or *Pesantren*–Islamic boarding school). It is a traditional Islamic educational institution in Indonesia. *Pesantren* in general, teaches a culture of peace and shows a more moderate Islamic character because in general it is part of the *Sunnī* community that is widely embraced by the Indonesian Muslim (Marzuki, Miftahuddin, and Murdiono 2020).

The moderate character and peaceful culture of *pesantren* cannot be separated from its educational model. Many *pesantren* aim to be flexible, open, but cautious to the outside world (Susanty 2016). The dialogue process illustrated in the books learned there shows its dynamics of thought. Through classical books (people in *pesantren* usually call it *Kitab Kuning*, yellow books), students in *pesantren* discover and study the scholars' diversity of opinions (Baso 2007, 112). The educational system in *pesantren* exposes the students to the "*khilāfiyah*" point of view contained in the classical books. That way, they will learn to be open-minded and accept different opinions. They also can shape their critical thinking skills on new issues.

Besides the educational model explained above, the world of *pesantren* is very respectful toward the community's traditions. History wise, *pesantren* is part of an accommodative form of culture and values of Islamic teachings. It is a combination of the *Zawiyah* tradition (traditional school for spiritual training) developed in the *Padepokan* tradition (Hindu-Buddhist college) in the archipelago for centuries. The meeting between the two different

cultures is a combination of *Zawiyah* substance which contains Islamic teachings and the structure and method of *Padepokan* that has taken root in Archipelago society (Mun'im 2016, 39).

The above description strengthens the initial observations that Pondok Pesantren Wali Songo, Ngabar Ponorogo (henceforth Pesantren Wali Songo) has a distinct character as a cultural heritage. They develop their own tradition in terms of scientific thought, language, and dress code. They are even able to maintain a plurality of understanding on the Islamic Archipelago and Islamic relations with various communities under the principle of tolerance (Observation, Ponorogo, December 11, 2019). Such traditional foundation makes the *pesantren* community accommodate the local traditions without ignoring the substance of Islamic teachings values. In practice, Pesantren Wali Songo, as a Muslim group with *madhhab* (school) of thought, is not only satisfied with the doctrine, but tries to seek its relevance for real life in society. This effort then encouraged Muslims to meet and mingle with local culture.

Seeing the characteristics, this *pesantren* definitely is in contrast to the ideas and thoughts of radical groups that deny local culture because they are considered syncretic (Kadi 2008). It is proven that this *pesantren* rejects Islamic radicalism which is considered to have developed in *pesantren* community. Besides, the social role of Pesantren Wali Songo, both *kyai* and *santri*, is very strategic to be portrayed in the context of diversity interaction, especially related to *ukhuwah waṭāniyah* (nationhood) and *ukhuwah bashariyah* (brotherhood of humanity) (Nurcholis 2019). Through its alumni, they develop and traditionalise a peaceful culture of *pesantren* in the community (Kurniadi 2019).

The previous research results, as observed by Setiawan, that *pesantren* combines the classical and modern curriculum. It is proven to be applied well in the teaching and learning system (Setiawan 2013). Meanwhile, this research discusses *pesantren*'s peaceful culture by developing the attitude of *ukhuwah waṭāniyah* and *ukhuwah bashariyah* in the context of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) and wisdom in responding to local culture in accordance with the teachings of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (Sunni school of thought). This effort can neutralize and minimize the influence of radical understanding, and terrorist movement in the name of *jihād*. The researchers focus the study on how the Pesantren Wali Songo designs the curriculum to counter radicalism.

Method

This is a qualitative research i.e. the process to explore and understand the meaning of individual and group behavior, describe social or humanitarian problems. The data collection relies on participant settings, inductive data analysis, building partial data into themes, and then providing interpretations of the data. The approach in this research is phenomenology because the researchers identify particular phenomenon and study the subject by being directly involved.

The research subject is the main source of investigation or data source. It is chosen through purposive sampling technique. The subjects of the study are *Kyai* (the leader) and the Board of *Asâtidh* (the teachers) in Pesantren Wali Songo. This research was conducted in December 2019 to January 2020. The analysis steps taken in this study are:

1. Data collection is done through observation, interviews, and documentation
2. The data is reduced by simplifying the obtained data
3. The data is then collected and presented to obtain clear information about Islamic anti-radicalism education models in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools).
4. After analysis and discussion, the researchers resume the information in order to get definitive conclusions.

Moderate Islamic Education Development Strategy

Moderate Islamic education is basically included in educational value, namely moderate Islam. Therefore, educational system must help students to experience these moderate values and integrated it in their whole lives. To make the educational value effective and successful, Notonagoro provides the steps in learning process (Adisusilo 2013, 72):

1. Educators must first know and understand deeply what values they will teach. They also should be clear with their minds.
2. Educators transform these values by touching students' heart and feelings so that students can see the goodness of the values.
3. Assist students (*santri*) to internalize the values so it becomes a part of life. It means that the values become their nature, attitude, and the basis for behavior.
4. Life attitudes that are in accordance with these values are encouraged to realize them in daily life.

In teaching moderate Islamic values, the things that Pesantren Wali Songo did were through modeling of *Kyai*, curriculum and daily practices. Some strategies in moderate Islamic education are as follows:

1. *Kyai* as a role-model

Exemplary is an ideal exposure that should be followed in this *pesantren*. *Kyai* is a reflection of the behavior followed by students at *Pesantren Wali Songo* (Ihsan 2020). According to Mas'ud, in the world of *pesantren*, modeling, exemplary, *uswah ḥasanah* is interpreted as *tashabbuh*, the process of self-identification in a person, the '*alim*' (Mas'ud 2007).

The field research proves that *kyai*'s role is very important and very influential. He is the sole leader who holds an almost absolute role. The charisma of a *kyai* at *Pesantren Wali Songo* makes him highly respected by their students. Hence, a *kyai* must be a role model for students in *pesantren*. His role is crucial in determining the success of *pesantren*'s education system. His attitude becomes the foundation of students' character.

In *Pesantren Wali Songo*, the exposure of *Kyai*'s moderate attitude is reflected in his teachings and daily behavior. It is shown especially in dealing with problems of daily life, political and cultural situations, and in treating students. One of examples from *Kyai* in showing the moderate values is by holding on to the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). This attitude is shown in responding to differences within *pesantren* and respect others.

According to *Kyai*, if a culture does not cross religion line, it can be practiced/done. On the contrary, if it is not in line with religious teachings, it must be rejected—definitely in a polite and gentle manner. He also explained that if something can still be explained with the correct logic, then it can be continued and be guided without coercion and violence (Ihsan 2020). The persistence of the *kyai* in holding religious principles is always based on the logic of thinking that is suitable with the present values. Moreover, if we are living in a society with many differences, a wise attitude is always emphasized in dealing with all problems including in educating children. These attitudes and views are then modeled and imitated by the students.

Ziemek states that the leadership style shown by *kyai* proves his abilities and radiant personality as a leader of an Islamic boarding school. This, then, also determines the position and quality of a *pesantren* (Ziemek 1997, 138). What needs to be emphasized here is that the figure of *kyai* as

the leader is a picture of *santri* (*pesantren*'s students) in carrying out activities in the dormitory especially in shaping their character.

2. Learning Process: Teaching the values of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah*

In understanding *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah* inherited by *al-salaf al-ṣâliḥ* in *Pesantren Wali Songo*, it was realized through curriculum of the *salaf* books. *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah* covers three aspects in Islam i.e. faith, *shari'ah* (*fiqh*) and morals or *taṣawwuf*. These three aspects become the orientation of *Kitab Kuning* (traditional *Jawi* texts on Islam) taught in the mentioned *pesantren*. The books are written by previous scholars (*salaf*) used as a source of understanding *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah*.

Here are some books learned in *Pesantren Wali Songo*; in the field of 'Aqîdah: 'Aqîdat al-'Awâm, *Kifâyat al-'Awâm*, *Jawhar al-Tawḥîd*, and *Nûr al-Zalâm*; in the field of Jurisprudence: *Safînat al-Najâh*, *Fath al-Qarîb*, *Fath al-Mu'in*, *Sullam al-Tawfîq*, *Kâshifat al-Sajâ*, and *Fath al-Wahhâb*; in the field of Sufism: *Adâb al-'Âlim wa al-Muta'allim*, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, *Taysir al-Khallâq*, *Akhlâq al-Banayn*, *Minhâj al-'Âbidîn*, *Irshâd al-'Ibâd*, *al-Adhkâr*, *'Iẓat al-Nâshi'in*, *al-Tahliyât wa al-Targhîb al-Fitr Fatwâ li al-Nawawî*, and *'Umdat al-Sâlik wa 'Idat al-Nâsik*.

The contents of the books complete one another and at the same time shape students' personality. It also teaches the true Islamic monotheism, Islamic law (*fiqh*), and the morality of a typical Islamic boarding school. The books cover various fields of Islam and its disciplines. The broad scope forms an inclusive, substantive, and comprehensive understanding. Knowledge learned from these books is immediately practiced in *pesantren* environment and directly monitored by *kyai* or teachers.

It is optimal to teach about Islam through *Kitab Kuning* written by scholars of *Salaf*. Almost all aspects of Islam are written in the books, for instance: the Quran, 'aqîdah, *fiqh*, *tafsîr* (Quranic exegesis), hadith, *târikkh* (history), language, Sufism to social ethics and culture (*mu'âmalah*). Simultaneously the contents of the books were applied in *pesantren* daily life shown through *kyai/ustâdh*'s habits. It is expected that students have broad understanding, attitude and behavior with consideration of their in-depth religious knowledge. So, they have an open horizon, inclusive and wise attitude in responding to the problems they face, especially in the religious field.

The plurality of thought the books studied at the mentioned *pesantren* is a separate phenomenon for the formation of students' views and personalities in facing reality within society. Furthermore, there is also dialogue among various disciplines, for example *fiqh* and *uṣūl al-fiqh*, monotheism and *Sufism*, *târikh* (history) and *mu'âmalat*, and Arabic and interpretation (hadith or the Quran). All disciplines complement each other.

3. National education insight

National education is one of pillars of moderate Islamic character. Nationalist insight is one's view on the nation and state. If we are to break down the meaning of nationality insight; insight is views, reviews, visions, sensory responses. In other terms, insight means understanding or belief about a matter, perspective, method of review and method of sensory response. Meanwhile, nationality comes from the word 'nation' defined as a group of people who are the descendants of the same ancestors (Azra 2016, 83). The term nationality is generally associated with characteristics of people which has elements in the form of brotherhood, ancestry, customs, history, and government system. Thus, nationality is the development result of a dynamic sense of nationalism in achieving the ideal nation. The national insight finally gave a concept of nationalism, namely national thoughts, where a nation has ideals of life and national goals.

Indonesia is a country that consists of various ethnicity, race, nation, culture, religion, and language. With that in mind, to prevent the emergence of radical ideas and strengthen the character of moderate Islam, it is necessary to instill a nationalist insight. The goal is for the students to have a knowledge horizon about the differences exist in Indonesia and to strengthen sense of nationalism. From here the students can play an active role in a pluralistic society and contribute to create conducive atmosphere and take part in achieving national goals.

4. Practice of Habituation

a. Habituation of Islamic traditions

Besides teaching Islamic values through curriculum in *pesantren* environment, it is also carried out through efforts to actualize Islamic values in daily life (Zainiyati 2016). Islamic values in daily life are embodied in the traditions that developed inside and outside *pesantren*. Among the traditions performed at Pesantren Wali Songo are reading of *Tahlil* (praying for the deceased person) and *Istighâthah* (asking for God's help). These traditions are a form of actualization of Islamic teachings that have existed since the

period of *Wali Songo* (nine preacher in Java island) and still remain. The tradition that developed in society then gained legitimacy from the *pesantren*

In the study of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, the issue of tradition (*al-furū'*) received considerable attention. Among the four popular schools of jurisprudence (Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī, and Ḥanbalī), two of them (Ḥanafī and Mālikī) use tradition as the foundation of *istinbāt* and see it as a basic principle of foothold of the pilgrimage, as long as the tradition is in line with the certain texts (*naṣṣ qat'ī*). In Shāfi'ī school (*al-furū'*), it is also noted that there are no texts or other bases in the form of *ijmā'* or *qiyās* which can be used as a basis for conducting *ijtihad*. The same thing applies to Ḥanbalī (Mas'ud 2010).

In the connection between culture or tradition and religion at least according to Bagir there is a positive view, namely as a source of wisdom and as a legacy of divine wisdom (Bagir 2015, 177). The tradition that developed in *pesantren* particularly and society in general is a source of local wisdom to realize harmonization of life in the community (Ma'arif 2019).

Pesantren Wali Songo which has long historical roots in society, especially the surrounding traditionalist communities, in teaching Islamic values cannot be separated from the struggle of tradition. This traditional approach is proven successful in instilling Islam peacefully in the surrounding community, which is coming to seep in peacefully and slowly but surely. Festival activities “*solawat* and *qasidah*” from “*karawitan*” to “*tambourine*”, and almsgiving to “*walimahan*”, constitute the conversion of pre-Islamic values into new Islamic values.

b. Habituation through commemoration of national holidays

Commemoration of national holidays is the most appropriate momentum to instill the spirit of nationalism to students. National holidays at *Pesantren Wali Songo* are usually commemorated by holding a flag raising ceremony. Some national commemorations celebrated there are the Proclamation of Independence of the Republic of Indonesia every August 17, Heroes' Day, and *Santri* Day. These are done to reminisce the struggles of the heroes (Nurcholis 2019).

Ceremony like these for radical groups is considered *ḥarām*. They say that it is respecting inanimate objects, thus, it is *shirk*. This assumption was deemed wrong by the *Pesantren Wali Songo* community, because respecting the flag is essentially respecting the heroes who have sacrificed everything and even their lives in order to gain independence. The Red and White Flag (*Sang Merah Putih*, Indonesian flag) shows that independence has been

achieved. Here is the significance of honoring the flag with a sense of obligation in maintaining independence and filling it with positive actions for nation building.

c. Regional organization activities

The regional organizations (known as *orda-organisasi daerah*) in Pesantren Wali Songo are students based on their respective regions. The aim is to introduce the potential of the respective regions of the *santri*. Besides, Orda functions as a place to learn together and to facilitate learning of certain materials according to the schedule determined by the *pesantren*, for example *khiṭābah* exercises (speeches), recitation of *zhibā'*, *Mawlid* of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH which is scheduled on every Friday night and Tuesday night (Marjuni 2020). These activities are carried out so the students are no longer awkward when directly involved in the community. For new students, this is very useful because they can practice their confidence. As a result, they have to be coercive so they want to make a speech in front of friends.

The Conception of Pesantren Society on Understanding Religious Radicalism

The radical understanding of religion according to *pesantren's Kyai* is primarily a model that is not in line with moderate Islamic understanding which is more likely tolerant toward differences (Ihsan 2020). As stated by *Ustādh Toha* in an interview, radicalism is a textual understanding, exclusive and often uses instruments of violence in delivering the teachings. This is different from what was developed at the Pesantren Wali Songo where Islam is taught in a friendly manner (Toha 2019).

Abdullah states that radical actions in Islam are mostly caused by Muslim interpretations of the Quran and the Sunnah which are textual, scriptural and rigid. They are not interpreted contextually which involve the historicity of the text and its dimensions. The verses that tend to lead to acts of violence, such as verses about *kufri*, *shirk* and *jihād*. They are often interpreted as they are, regardless of their sociological and historical context. In its extreme example, such tendencies have prevented some Muslims from being able to clearly understand the messages of the Quran as a divine instrument that provides a true guide to moral and ethical values for human life (Abdullah 2016, 21).

Based on some of explanations above, radical ideology in Islam often arises from a narrow view and understanding on Islamic teachings. For example the teachings about *jihād*, relations with non-Muslims, the enactment of Islamic law, acceptance of the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (*Undang-Undang Dasar 1945*) as the basis of the State, as well as greetings to different religions.

The doctrine of reviewing the Quran and the Sunnah is more intended as a command to return to the roots of early Islam and the authentic practices of the Prophet. This is then understood by the radicals as returning to Islam in a *kâffah* way, namely an obsession back to the past as a whole without seeing the socio-cultural changes that have been experienced by Muslim societies today (Hakim 2016).

The construction of radical understanding which is based on textual interpretation is what later gets its enthusiasm in the doctrine of *jihād* to fight for *kâffah* Islam. In the name of *jihād*, according to radicalism, a person is justified in carrying out radical actions. *Jihād* becomes an ideology and an instrument that moves to take radical action in order to change the secular order into an Islamic order (Saifullah 2014).

According to KH. Heru, *jihād* in Islam is a command that has been stipulated in *sharia* (Heru 2019). In reality, it is understood in a varied way by the community, including religious educators (*kyai* and *ustâdh/ustâdhah*). This difference in understanding *jihād* is actually influenced by the level of religious mastery, experience, knowledge, and social conditions.

In the view of the *kyai* of Pesantren Wali Songo, *jihād* should not only be understood narrowly as war, but also interpreted in a broad sense encompasses all activities that demonstrate the struggle for God, especially in the field of education to educate Muslims. Meanwhile *jihād* in the sense of war is understood only when Muslims are attacked by the enemy (Nurcholis 2019).

Meanwhile, the *ustâdh/ustâdhah* (teachers) of Pesantren Wali Songo state that social relations with non-Muslims, such as trading, dealing, associating, making friends, etc. in principle, is no problem. In terms of choosing Muslim leaders, it needs to be understood that Indonesia is using a democratic system that everyone has the right to become a leader both Muslim and non-Muslim. However, Muslims should choose leaders who are Muslim while having leadership characteristics that are in accordance with Islamic teachings namely mandate, honesty, fairness and always prioritize

the people (Ihsan 2020). However, it is different from the view of the radicals, that the implementation of Islamic *sharia* is the state ideology, is deemed necessary as an effort to run Islamic *kâffah* (as a whole). The reason is because by implementing Islamic *sharia* as the basis of the state, all problems can be solved by returning to the Quran and Sunnah. According to them, the Quran and Sunnah has covered all aspects of life (Masduqi 2012, 82).

Another teacher said, although Indonesia is not an Islamic state, it is a safe and peaceful country where people live the Islamic teaching values. So, the state does not have to implement Islamic teaching as the basis. What is more important is that the people live the Islamic values and the law is not substantively against Islamic teachings. Considering that our country consists of various religions, ethnicities, and cultures, it is impossible to accept Islam as the sole principle because it will be rejected by non-Muslim groups. Muslims must realize, for the unity and integrity of Indonesia, they must not force Islamic law into the state's principles (Nahrowi 2020).

Regarding the implementation of *khilâfah* system forced by radicals, the *Kyai* of Pesantren Wali Songo believes that Indonesia does not need such system, because in Islamic sources there is no government system that governs the country (Ihsan 2020). Although in Islamic history there is a *khilâfah* phenomenon, but there is no standard concept of *khilâfah*, for example the *al-Khulafâ' al-Râshidûn* government system. In their journey, the system was different in appointing a caliph, for example Caliph Abû Bakr was chosen through a consensus agreement, Caliph 'Umar was chosen through the mandate of Abû Bakr, the Caliph 'Uthmân was chosen through a team (*ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd*), Caliph 'Alî was chosen by acclamation or majority of the people. The *khilâfah* system then continued on the period of the Umayyads, then to the Abbasids who tended to be monarchical (hereditary in the royal system). Thus, in principle, the caliph leadership system in Islamic teachings is not found.

Indonesia is a democratic state. Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution is the right basis to unite various religious, ethnic, culture and island in the frame of the Republic of Indonesia. Therefore, we can say that the emergence of radicalism in Indonesia is caused by a narrow, textual, scriptural, and rigid understanding without looking at the historical and socio-cultural aspects. Such understanding triggers violation and even terrorism. They tend to have a few insight on the verses containing the

sword (*jihād*), disbelief (*takfīr*), and *tashrīk*. They prefer to choose pro-war verses than the ones which explain about peacefulness.

Pesantren's Efforts to Counter Radicalism

Pondok Pesantren as a religious education institution always plays a strategic role, especially in influencing the mindset, knowledge, understanding, and religious behavior of Indonesian Muslim communities (Fahham 2015). Through the education system, *pesantren* uses it as a tool for overall cultural and social transformation in people's lives, not only in the field of religion (*tafaqquh fi al-dīn*), but in all aspects of life (Bizawie 2014; Dhofier 2011).

Pesantren is considered populist and can be seen as a miniature of community. Students learn to socialize inside and outside *pesantren* environment (Nuryanti 2014, 82). As a miniature of community, it has dynamics in dealing with social change (Mas'ud 2010). Amid the social change and the tug of religious influence, *pesantren* has a role in shaping the religious character of the *santri* and society in general, especially amid the growth of radical movement.

Pesantren Wali Songo develops a moderate understanding of Islam by following the teachings of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* which characterize *tawāzun*, *tawassut*, and *tasāmuḥ*. They are confronted with the problem of radicalism that develops in a society which is in sharp contrast to the character and traditions of *pesantren* (Saiful 2019).

It is important for them to build the mindset and behavior of religious students who carry out preventive efforts towards radical understandings. The efforts made by the *pesantren* in protecting students are as follows:

1. through the curriculum

The curriculum is the main capital in building the mindset and behavior of the community, especially students who will dive into the community. The curriculum at *Pesantren* Wali Songo is basically fundamental and has the potential to be interpreted radically, especially those that rely on the subjects of faith, *fiqh*, and interpretation (Nurcholis 2019). These three subjects provide knowledge to respond to the social conditions as well as the construction of religious understanding which has the tendency for radicalism, especially in discussing the issue of *jihād*, infidelity and Islamic law. If it is understood dogmatically and radically, it

will have the potential for radicalism. On the contrary, if understood contextually or moderately, it can minimize the radicalism mindset.

In counteracting a radical understanding, there needs to be a counterweight to comprehensively understand the teachings of Islam. In Pesantren Wali Songo, the subject has received a balance. For example, *fiqh* is balanced by *uṣūl al-fiqh*. In *uṣūl al-fiqh*, there are the rules of *istinbāt al-ḥukm* (how to make law) apart from the Quran and the hadith such as *ijmā'*, *qiyās*, *'urf*, *maṣlahah al-mursalah*, and *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*. So, there is a flexibility in understanding Islamic law (*fiqh*), because there are rules that align between text and reality.

In the teaching of faith, according to Al-Makassary to ward off radical understanding, it should be balanced with moral material (Al-Makassary 2011). By studying morals, students are taught how to behave and relate well with fellow human beings (*ḥabl min al-nās*). From here, then the attitudes and movements of a person will be tolerant with people of different religions.

In studying *tafsīr*, students require a set of knowledge in interpreting the Quran and the hadith. It includes the science of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, *asbāb al-wurūd*, *nāsikh-mansūkh*, history, *qirā'at*, *muṣtalaḥ al-ḥadīth*, *rijāl al-ḥadīth* besides *mantiq* and *bayān*, even *uṣūl al-fiqh*. With this set of knowledge, it is hoped that the Quran and hadith can be comprehensively understood and intact, so that it can be substantially implemented in daily life according to the time conditions (*ṣāliḥ li kulli zamān*) based on the text history.

2. Recruitment of *Ustādh* (teachers)

The next effort in protecting students from radical understanding in Pesantren Wali Songo is in the selection of teachers, especially those teaching in formal schools. Meanwhile, the *kyai* teaching in the halls are recruited from senior students, graduates and *kyai* from other institutions. In terms of recruiting religious teachers, Pesantren Wali Songo bases on the competence and educational background especially the alliance or "ideology" (Ihsan 2020). Educators (teachers) are recruited from those who have the understanding of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* and do not have radicalism understanding.

Religious understanding is often associated with the views and attitudes of a person or group that is influenced by religious teachings in seeing the problems (Masduqi 2012; Eliraz 2007). The religious and educational background of a teacher becomes important to consider in

order to protect students from radicalism. According to Ihsan, If they found a radical *kyai* (those who have activities outside *pesantren* which are part of Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Front Pembela Islam, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia etc.) then the institution will have special treatment to face that, for the sake of students (Ihsan 2020).

3. Protection through association and access of information

Pesantren is a subculture, as termed Abdurrahman Wahid, which has its own traditions and relationships (Wahid 1999, 13). The patterns of association and traditions that exist in *pesantren* are separate from general community. The values developed in *pesantren* are designed by *kyai* or founders. So, the character of *pesantren* is sourced from *kyai*'s understanding. These values are then developed in the process of association in *pesantren* (Suyudi and Rahmatullah 2017). The values are based on the understanding of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* which has moderate character, so the contrary values cannot be accepted in this *pesantren*, especially radicalism.

As we know that *pesantren* is a place for students to study Islam. The pattern of association in *pesantren* cannot be separated from the existence of students. The patterns of students association in the Pesantren Wali Songo are inseparable from a number of factors surrounding them, including *kyai*, religious teachers, other students, and the environment. In the learning process, these factors will interact one another, so there are various interactions within *pesantren*, both between students and *kyai*, students and fellow students, and also students with the environment. Interactions in this *pesantren* are individual and group.

In the process of social relationship in Pesantren Wali Songo, students basically influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include words, deeds, or behavior and personality. This internal factor cannot be separated from external factors. While external factors are the family environment, boarding schools and the wider community that has helped shape the personality of the students.

The next process, the behavior of Pesantren Wali Songo students are also influenced by the innate personality, namely the one carried by *santri* before he enter the *pesantren*. Also, it is affected by interaction developed and enforced by the *pesantren* managers, based on both written and unwritten rules (Pesantren Wali Songo association). In practice, this last social pattern requires time for the students to adapt.

In the association, to prevent radical understanding, *pesantren* detects students' behavior through daily activities such as in learning activity with religious teachers and *kyai*. This detection is not difficult. Social interaction with the *kyai* and religious teachers in *pesantren* is a must. *Santri* as knowledge seeker, while the educators (*kyai* and religious teachers) as the knowledge carrier. Students must abide by the various norms, rules, and values in *pesantren* either the values contained in the book or in the form of advice of *kyai*. This way, it is expected to easily detect radicalism and how to prevent and foster it.

Pesantren Wali Songo as an Islamic institution based on *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah*, who has a moderate character and mission to support the national development by providing flexible human resources, definitely rejects radical ideas, especially those that lead to rejection of the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Pesantren Wali Songo firmly prevents students who were detected having radical understandings so as to have moderate attitudes and views.

Furthermore, effort to prevent radicalism in the aforementioned *pesantren* is by monitoring the media developed in the school. It is by selecting the readings, references and information. The *kyai* were instructed to be careful in giving information media to the students and not to let the material contain radicalism, even in the radio. The radio owned by *pesantren* was established to provide good information and at the same time as a propaganda media that develops ideas including the teachings delivered by the *kyai* in conveying Islamic understandings which are *rahmat li al-'âlamîn*. With these media, Pesantren Wali Songo counters radicalism by developing *ubudiyah*, *mu'âmalah*, humanism, ethics (morals) in society, harmony, tolerance, mutual respect among fellow members of society despite differences, nationalism and how to be good citizens.

Conclusion

Pesantren Wali Songo designed a curriculum providing a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings. For example, the material of *fiqh* is connected to *uṣūl al-fiqh*. In the subject, there are rules of *istinbāt al-ḥukm* (how to make the law) apart from the Quran and hadith such as *ijmâ'*, *qiyâs*, *'urf*, *maṣlahah al-mursalah*, and *maqâsid al-sharî'ah* so that we understand that Islamic law (*fiqh*) is flexible, because there are rules that harmonize text and reality. In addition, the *pesantren* recruited a board of

teachers who had a moderate understanding and background in Islamic ideology. In developing moderate Islam, they do it through a curriculum by studying books that teach the understanding of Islam *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah* and habituation through activities that form the character of moderate Islam.

In developing moderate Islamic values, the most important thing is to teach *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah* understanding through modeling by the *kyai*, curriculum, and habituation. Curriculum wise, it is done by learning books that form the understanding of Islam *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah* and habituation through activities that form a moderate Islamic character.

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