الخفاش من أجل حركة إسلامية
عبر المسار العملي المستقل:
تجربة الحزب الإسلامي الماليزي (PAS)
محمد عرفان حلمي وأحمد علي نور الدين
الطريقة التشريعية القدافية
في تشييع جواهر الغربة:
تعاليمها وتدوينها وتطوريها
عبد الواحد هاشم

Images of Makkah
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Pesantren Resilience:
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Pesantren Resilience: The Path to Prevent Radicalism and Violent Extremism

Irfan Abubakar & Idris Hemay

The phenomena of radicalism and violent extremism in Indonesia, in some cases, cannot be separated from pesantren (Islamic boarding schools); some jihadis (read: terrorists) are pesantren graduates. However, as an educational institution that has rooted in the Indonesia Muslim communities, the majority of pesantren carry the spirit of religious moderation. They have even produced many alumni promoting peaceful, tolerant, and democratic views of Islam. Some pundits have confirmed the moderate character of pesantren. Azyumardi Azra, in his review on the results of the study of the Center for the Study of Religion and Culture (CSRC) and the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM, Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat) UIN Jakarta (The Jakarta Post, 22 December 2019), underlines that pesantren has contributed to fostering the understanding of moderate Islam (wasatiyah). Pesantren is different from Islamic educational institutions in other Muslim countries, such as Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan, etc. In those countries, many madrasahs (Islamic schools) become a place of a breeding ground for a radical
understanding of Islam. The CSRC and PPIM UIN Jakarta’s study (2019) shows that pesantren has “social resilience” which can hinder them from the influence of radical ideology, although they still have some vulnerabilities. Pesantren resilience is resulted by their capacity in empowering their social capitals that have been existed in three social connectivity: social bonding, social bridging, and social linking.

Social Bonding and Pesantren Identity

Pesantren resilience is formed first by the existence of social cohesion by which pesantren have built their social identity. By such identity, pesantren can fortify their community from new identities propagated by radical actors. Traditional pesantren, which most of them affiliate with Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), for example, rely on social cohesion to the figures of charismatic kiai and the learning traditions of classical Islamic textbooks (it is usually called kitab kuning or the yellow book). The social capital of the kiai and kitab kuning are interrelated because the existence of the kiai is determined by their ability to master kitab kuning. Thus, the capability of the kiai in interpreting the classical texts determines the continuity of the kitab kuning book tradition.

Unlike the traditional pesantren, Gontor and its affiliates, known as modern pesantren, rely on their “social bonding” on a set of spiritual values known as the “Panca Jiwa” (Five Spiritual Values), namely: sincerity, modesty, Islamic brotherhood (ukhūwah islāmīyah), independence, and freedom. The Panca Jiwa becomes a philosophical parameter to filter out new ideologies coming from outside, including radical and extremist ideologies. The value of freedom, for example, is a kind of philosophical reference in addressing sectarianism in Islam. Their motto “Gontor Standing on Top and for All Groups” implies respect for non-sectarian attitude. In practice, the leaders of Pesantren Gontor recognize that there is a deviation from the Panca Jiwa in which several Gontor alumni involved in the radical movements—in this case, represented by Abubakar Ba’asyir, a role model of jihadists in Indonesia. The following expression reflects this deviation: “Ba’asyir is indeed a Gontor’s graduate, but Gontor is not Ba’asyir.”

Then, modernist pesantren, which usually affiliate with modernist Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Persis, build their identities based on their organization’s identities. The more obedient pesantren to the referral value of their organizations is, the stronger their
social cohesiveness is. Perhaps because Muhammadiyah pesantren have long been established, such as Darul Arqam Garut, they are relatively able to represent the values of Muhammadiyah in their educational policies. Regarding their affection to the nation, the Muhammadiyah pesantren generally show a certain appreciation for the “Results of Muhammadiyah Congress 2015” in Makassar, which supported the Republic of Indonesia as “Dār al-‘ābdī wa al-shahādah” (the state based on national consensus and binding recognition).

Among the typologies of pesantren, the Salafi pesantren are relatively new in Indonesia Muslim communities. They are characterized by loyalty to the doctrine of Salafism widely inspired and practiced in Saudi Arabia. To face radical and extremist ideologies, the Salafi pesantren generally refer to the bughāṭ doctrine, that Muslims are forbidden to rebel against a legitimate ruler. However, acceptance of this doctrine among Salafists themselves is diverse. Some Salafi schools accept the doctrine of bughāṭ dogmatically, others accept it with certain limitations. Some Salafi Purist pesantren (such as Abu Hurairoh, Mataram, and al-Furqan al-Islamy, Gresik) reject radicalism because it is considered contrary to the bughāṭ doctrine; they also reject any political activism that could potentially risk bughāṭ, including demonstrations against government policies. Meanwhile, Salafi Haraki and Salafi Tanzimi (latter a part of Purist) which are politically oriented, at different levels, accept the bughāṭ doctrines loosely. Salafi Tanzimi pesantren (such as Wahdah Islamiyah/WI Pesantren) and Salafi Haraki pesantren (such as Pesantren al-Salam, Bima) although both reject terrorist ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria), they tend to be more critical to the government and agree to the establishment of the Islamic caliphate.

However, in the context of support for democracy, Salafi pesantren are generally ambivalent. The Salafi Tanzimi and Haraki pesantren, although they support the establishment of the caliphate, accept democracy—to some degree. While the Salafi Purist pesantren, although they reject ISIS and reject the establishment of the caliphate, they do not support democracy.

**National Orientation of Pesantren**

Another characteristic of pesantren resilience is the ability to balance between preserving their identities and building social connections with different groups ideologically. As a result, pesantren from all typologies...
accept relationships with non-Muslim groups, but with certain restrictions: the relationships do not fuse the faith (‘aqīdah), do not interfere with each other, and do not compromise the ethics of food and clothing. Encounters with non-Muslims are not prohibited, but it is not encouraged. Also, the programs held to encounter with non-Muslims are very limited. Among those few, the Muhammadiyah’s pesantren, Darul Arqam Garut, West Java, allows their students to visit the churches as part of a field study in Sociology, and traditional pesantren in Pandegelang, An-Nizhomiyiah Pandeglang, Banten, works with the community of Catholic church.

The ability of pesantren to embrace diversity is varied and limited within the framework of their theological preference and culture. Pesantren Gontor, for example, although they do not encourage the experience of physical encounters to non-Muslims, they introduce the diversity of religions to senior students through the teaching of Kitāb al-Adyān (The Religions) written by Mahmud Yunus, an Indonesian education expert. Salafi pesantren generally do not encourage the strengthening of nationalism and tolerance. There is a tendency to reject the democratic system among the Salafi Purist Pesantren; this can potentially erode the national identity. Even though they prohibit bughāt (rebellion or disobedience to the legitimate ruler), there is no guarantee that their students will commit to the doctrine of bughāt whenever there are an opportunity and movement to replace the democratic system to the Islamic-based political system. Hence, amidst those limits of national commitments, many figures recommend the strengthening of national values in pesantren. Fadly Azhar, a representative from the Directorate of Diniyah Education and Pesantren of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), in a review of this study (December 2019), considers that the Ministry should facilitate training on strengthening national outlook (wawasan kebangsaan) and equality in Pesantren. Fadly Azhar also said that radicalism and extremism are not merely religious issues, but partly related to the problem of social-economic injustice and inequality.

Therefore, while the attitudes of pesantren which are relatively tolerant towards non-Muslims, they generally have a negative attitude towards Shi’ites and Ahmadis. No pesantren have initiated a dialogue about Shi’ites and Ahmadis. Generally, they tend to depart from negative prejudice for those Muslim minority groups in Indonesia. Even the Pesantren Gontor, which has ukhūwah islāmiyah (Islamic
brotherhood) values and religious freedom, does not show a positive attitude towards Shi’ites and Ahmadis. Furthermore, pesantren having agenda to purify Islamic teachings such as the Salafi pesantren will naturally be more negative attitudes towards Muslim minority groups considered heretical.

**Relationship with the State**

The integration of pesantren into the national education system is the crucial factor that distinguishes pesantren from Islamic educational institutions in other Muslim countries whom they tend to be more vulnerable to radical understanding (Azra et.al., 2006). This study confirms Azra's observations and founds that pesantren resilience is also determined by the constructive relationships between pesantren and the state. Their harmonized relationships with the state create a protective factor, even though their ability for “social bridging” is frail. The “social link” with the government is manifested in the form of integration of pesantren into the national education system; it can strengthen the protective factors existed in pesantren. For example, Pondok Modern Tazakka, Batang, Central Java, get *mu'ādalah* (certification) from the MORA in 2016; then the government asked them to develop modules for conflict resolution training to Afghanistan’s Islamic preachers who had a comparative study in Indonesia.

One significant implication of “social linking” is the implementation of the government curriculum in pesantren. The majority of pesantren teach their students the subject of Civic Education (*PKN, Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan*). Some modernist pesantren offer sociology and Islamic Education (*PAI, Pendidikan Agama Islam*) subjects. Some pesantren are wittingly made PKN as a lesson to counter radical narratives. However, in some other pesantren, PKN is seen as merely a formal requirement to obtain recognition from the government. In latter pesantren, they do not provide a certified teacher to teach PKN, but they just provide modules or textbooks to be read by students. Azyumardi Azra worries that the pesantren’s relationship with the government is merely a formality. Therefore, Azra, as quoted by *The Jakarta Post*, 22 December 2019, also emphasizes that the government should monitor the “hidden curriculum” in pesantren, an informal curriculum carried out by certain religious orientations driven by pesantren leaders; it is not available in the official curriculum. Ahmad
Zayadi, a former Director of Diniyah and Pesantren, acknowledges that the MORA had tried to monitor the pesantren’s curriculum. However, this task could not only be borne by this Ministry, but it must entangle other government institutions, particularly BNPT (National Counterterrorism Agency) (The Jakarta Post, December 22, 2019).

The Establishment of Pesantren Resilience

The establishment of resilience in pesantren aims to strengthen the pesantren by eliminating vulnerable risk factors usually originated from four factors: connections with radical actors or networks; the exposure to access radical information through the internet; indoctrinated pedagogy in teaching religion; and the acceptance of radical groups’ propaganda that Muslim is being victimized.

Facing the above risk factors, pesantren generally carry out “resilience-building” which still refers to the existed social capital. They prevent their members from contacting radical movements and ideas, at the same time trying to delegitimize radical ideologies.

The *kiai*, in traditional pesantren (including Dayah in Aceh), always warn their students to stay away from radical organizations and movements; HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia) is on the list of warned organization. Also, *kiai* play a role in contextualizing the interpretations of the *kitab kuning*, where they dig up verses of the *kitab kuning* that can be used to delegitimize radical interpretations on the Quran and the Hadith. In Pesantren Gontor which has been established around for almost a century, there is a tendency that they keep staying with their social capital and do not consider urgent to carry out new initiatives for “resilience-building” in their pesantren. The managements of Pesantren Gontor seem to believe that “resilience-building” is inherent in their efforts to maintain the quality of their education program namely Kulliyatul Mu’allimin al-Islamiyyah (KMI), a level of education that is formally equivalent to senior high school. There is also an attempt to screen the sources of students’ reading materials; sources of readings that contradict the doctrine of Ahlusunnah wal Jama’a’ah are forbidden. However, survey data shows that respondents from the Pesantren Gontor and its affiliates still quite agree with the obligation for Muslims to establish the Islamic caliphate (37%).

The Muhammadiyah and Persis’s pesantren also do not perform transformative programs, but they support the government in socializing
counter-radicalism or strengthening of national outlook. However, the finding also shows that there are still a lot of respondents from modernist pesantren who sympathize with the establishment of Islamic caliphate; respectively, Muhammadiyah's pesantren (41%), and Persis's pesantren (54%).

Some Salafi Purist pesantren do not conduct any resilience programs in countering radicalism, except they only maximize the bughāt doctrine to delegitimize radical ideology. This doctrine is considered influential in countering the propaganda of the caliphate where there is a strong tendency among the Salafi Purist pesantren to reject the idea of the caliphate (77%). Some others, like Wahdah Islamiyah's pesantren, adopt programs offered by the government. However, they are still ambivalent regarding national commitments.

Although some pesantren monitor over reading materials and digital media accessed by their students, yet the programs conducted intentionally to reduce prejudice and hatred for other groups with different identities are very limited. The pesantren pedagogy generally does not emphasize the importance of critical thinking in evaluating information, especially related to religion. In many pesantren, especially Salafi pesantren, memorization (hafalan or tahfiz) is the main priority in learning processes. Pesantren resilience for the long term will be mainly determined by the development of critical thinking traditions of students, still without diminishing the identity of pesantren. Amidst hoaxes and expressions of hatred flooding in digital communication, the students given critical thinking teaching are expected to be able to distinguish factual information and provocative rhetoric.

**Closing Remarks**

Pesantren, from various typologies, have empowered their social capital to bear up from the influence of radical ideology. The stronger of pesantren builds their social identity, the stronger their resistance from the push and pull factors of radicalization is.

However, such socio-religious identities alone are not enough for pesantren to build up their resilience; they need to balance and adapt their identity with national identity within the framework of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. The more pesantren experience in dialogue and finding a coexistence between Islam and national identities is, the higher the resilience to radicalism and violent extremism is.
To a certain degree, some pesantren with adequate resilience, such as pesantren affiliated with NU, have instead blurred the dividing line between both identities; they have placed the values of love the nation (ḥub al-waṭān) as an important component of the pesantren identity.

Efforts to harmonize the micro identity of pesantren and macro national identity have not been possible without involving the state’s institutions in developing an integrated national education system. Pesantren has been considered as one of the pivotal factors in such national educational integration, and the active involvement of pesantren in the processes of developing the national education system has increasingly strengthened their resilience in dealing with radicalism and violent extremism. This study has tried to analyze the factors of pesantren resilience to radicalism and violent extremism. Policymakers are expected to understand the framework of social relations (social bonding, social bridging, and social linking) as determining factors in pesantren resilience. Therefore, efforts conducted by the government to increase the national commitment of pesantren, for example, need to be based on understanding and sensitivity to each typology of pesantren and how they build relationships with different social groups and with the government.

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