

MAINSTREAMING MODERATION IN PREVENTING/ COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (P/CVE) IN PESANTRENS IN CENTRAL JAVA

Muhammad Wildan

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

muhammad.wildan@uin-suka.ac.id

Ahmad Muttaqin

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

ahmad.muttaqin@uin-suka.ac.id

Abstract

As religious-violent extremism (RVE) is snowballing, government, authorities, and also Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are trying to seek various approaches from soft to hard measures to eradicate and decrease religious-violent extremism at many levels of society. CISForm, as a study center at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, has quite long been active in preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) through its delicate methods, i.e., mainstreaming moderation in some pesantrens in Yogyakarta and Surakarta, Indonesia. This paper will display the methods, strategies, and responses of the programs that

have been carried out by the university-based research center. Due to the problematic terms or concepts of radicalization and deradicalization, the whole program of CISForm on CVE is termed as mainstreaming moderation instead of deradicalization. This research found that some conservative pesantrens, as dormant entities, should be approached properly through soft measures since hard measures could neither touch nor address the roots of radicalism appropriately. The indirect and soft approaches initiated by CISForm could re-mainstream pesantrens to moderate Islam (wasathiyah).

Keywords: CISForm, Pesantren, Religious-Violent Extremism, Soft Approach, Moderation.

A. Introduction

Although violent religious extremism in Indonesian seems to be decreasing in terms of scale, it is indeed increasing in terms of scope. As widely known, violent religious extremism in the country is rooted in the ideology of *Darul Islam* (DI), which later on became more international and radical under the name *Jama'ah Islamiyah*, JI (ICG Report, 2002). Due to various national and international factors, currently this clandestine organization has split into many factions or splinters such as *Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia* (MMI), *Jamaah Anshorut Tauhid* (JAT), *Jamaah Anshorus Shariah* (JAS), *Jamaah Anshorus Daulah* (JAD), and many other small circles (Jones, 2011; IPAC Report, 2019). In the last two decades, either JI or some of its splinters were involved in various devastating actions in Indonesia, as well as in several other neighboring countries. Reportedly, the authorities also identified many splinter groups which support ISIS (Islamic State) in the

eastern part of Indonesia (IPAC Short Briefing, 2020). These groups share many things in common, especially an ultra-conservative worldview. Even though violent extremism has decreased significantly since 2012, extremism and radical religious worldviews remain scattered in many entities including schools (PPIM, 2017, 2018) and pesantrens, which are traditional boarding schools (Hidayatullah, 2013).

By default, in fact, a pesantren is a neutral educational entity. Indonesian history proves that they have had a very significant role in educating both religious and secular students. Consistent with the pace of re-Islamization and the re-birth of Indonesian Muslims, pesantrens are booming as an alternative institution for moral educational. However, certain pesantrens are indicated as having a connection with various cases of violent extremism in the country. Some pesantrens, famously known as ‘the Ngruki network,’ are among the most vulnerable institutions to use as a means of spreading a conservative and radical worldview (ICG Report, 2002). Some acts of violent extremism in Indonesia, such as the first and second Bali bombings (2002 and 2005), involved pesantren graduates and the conservative religious and radical worldview of the Ngruki pesantren has widely spread in some regions of Surakarta and Yogyakarta.

In the last ten years, the research center at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta Center for the Study of Islam and Social Transformation (CISForm) has been engaged in countering violent extremism, mainly in the greater areas of Surakarta and Yogyakarta. The term “violent extremism” (VE) used in this article refers to UNESCO’s definition: “the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological,

religious or political goals” (UNESCO, 2017). Referring to this notion, we define “religious-violent extremism” (RVE) as religious beliefs and actions by individuals and/or groups who support or employ violence to reach their dream. The meaning of countering violent extremism (CVE) in this paper refers to Khan’s “use of non-coercive means to dissuade individuals or groups from mobilizing towards violence and to mitigate recruitment, support, facilitation or engagement in ideologically motivated terrorism by non-state actors in furtherance of political objectives” (2015).

Understandably, there is already some work on the issue of deradicalization in pesantren. In their field research, for example, Ihsan and Ahmad Fatah (2021) explore some pesantrens in the northern coastal area of Central Java such as Semarang, Kudus, Sarang, and Rembang. This research focuses more on strengthening Pancasila values through Islamic education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*, PAI) in some traditionally-affiliated Islamic boarding schools. Another quite similar work is written by Muazza, Amirul Mukminin, Akhmad Habibi, Marzul Hidayat, and Arif Abidin (2018) based on some pesantrens in Jambi, Sumatra. This study focuses on the existing curriculum, teachers, and facilities of pesantrens. The research found that the government, especially the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) should pay attention to pesantren, especially the curriculums, teachers, and facilities in order to dissociate them from any extreme and/or radical views. Finally, the work of Muhammad Asif, Abdul Najib, M. Ridlwan Hambali, and Faridlatus Sya’adah (2021) focuses on the efforts conducted by Pesantren Al-Anwar 3 in Sarang, Central Java, to counter religiously-driven radicalism in Indonesia. The study found

that the pesantren initiated some efforts in the framework of ideology, Islamic values, and also national values.

The above works mostly study the efforts of pesantrens for countering radicalism from within Islamic education, curriculum, teachers, and facilities as internal initiatives under the umbrella of a deradicalization program. Unlike the previously mentioned studies, this paper focuses on some conservative and even radical pesantrens in the area of Yogyakarta and greater Surakarta. In doing so, however, this field research also involved some moderate pesantrens to accelerate the dynamism of the programs. Quite similar to Ihsan and Fatah's research method, this paper is based on the data of action research programs deliberately designed for the targeted pesantrens during a period of some years. This study deliberately chose to frame advocacy research as a moderation program rather than deradicalization. Rather than a direct or frontal approach to impose or embed moderate values on pesantren, we, as CISForm researchers, believe that indirect approaches would be more accepted among the pesantrens and more fruitful in terms of program outcomes.

CISForm believes that the kind of conservative and radical worldview that often leads to VE is hard to change. CISForm is also aware that confronting religious conservatism and radicalism with modern-Western values would even "produce" more resistance. CISForm, therefore, employs a soft approach termed as mainstreaming moderate Islam. This article attempts to describe what has been done so far by the study center to reduce religious conservatism and radicalism in some pesantrens, responses from the people in pesantrens, and to what extent the activities effectively reduce VE in the

targeted pesantrens. In the next sub-chapter, we will describe trends of RVE and the problems with reducing its spread in Indonesia, theoretical consideration to handle VE, CISForm’s experiences on mainstreaming moderate Islam as a soft approach in dealing with RVE in programs, activities, and significance, concluding with remarks.

B. The Spread of Religious-Violent Extremism

In the last two decades, Religious-Violent Extremism (RVE) has been a focal point of world scholars, observers, and the media. The 9/11 tragedy of the World Trade Center (WTC) attack was not the ultimate terrorism, but was evoked by and inspired the rise of RVE in other countries. The rise of Al-Qaeda networks in many parts of the world was followed by the upsurge of Islamic State (IS/ISIS) in Iraq-Syria that boosted the ideology of ultra-conservatism and violent actions over almost the entire world. The Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT) asserts that radical Islam has increased significantly around the globe in the last two decades. The IPT report from March 2016 clearly records the escalation of both attacks and casualties as follows:

TIME PERIOD	2001-2006	2007-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015	TOTAL
Attacks	302	493	1,440	2,930	10,088
Fatalities	2,508	3,284	9,537	28,708	79,244

Table 1: The Increase of Global Radical Islamism

Although the report suggests the Middle East and Africa as the most vulnerable terrain of radicalism, the IPT also

predicts the escalation of radicalism in Southeast Asia. The report even warns Indonesia as the next terrain for radicalism in 2016-2017 (Emerson & Hoekstra, 2016).

In Indonesia, RVE in the name of Islam is blossoming. In terms of scale, radicalism seems to be decreasing, but increasing in terms of scope. This is to say that VE is presently more frequent, but with fewer casualties as compared to those that happened in the early 2000s.

TIME PERIOD	2000-2005	2006-2010	2011-2015	2016-2019	TOTAL
Attacks	22	1	4	12	39
Fatalities	232	9	5	51	297
Injuries	1,047	53	41	90	1,231

Table 2: The Cases of Radical Islamism in Indonesia (compiled from many different sources)

Based on Oliver Roy’s conviction that “Islamic radicalism is a global phenomenon but shaped by local peculiarities,” (Roy, 2006) it seems that some drivers of radicalism and RVE still lie in each society, such as Western hegemony over Muslim countries, lack of democratization, poor justice system, poverty, lower-levels of education, political, cultural, and religious identity, etc. (Zeiger, 2016, p.3). Religious values, in many cases, have become the last trigger and legitimation of RVE when it meets a related context (Mursalin & Katsir, 2010, pp. 255-290).

Based on some studies, the most vulnerable groups exposed to radicalism, which potentially leads to RVE, are youths (PPIM 2017, 2018, Alvares Research Institute,

2018). Initially, radical ideology was widely spread among pesantrens, especially those within “the Ngruki network”. Following the split of JI (Jamaah Islamiyah) and the emergence of *Jamaah Anshorud Daulah* (JAD), currently some allegedly radical pesantrens are split into JI pesantrens and JAD pesantrens. In addition, widespread violent extremism online and through social media has shifted the spread of extremism narratives into mosques and public schools. Currently, some perpetrators of violent extremism in the country are influenced by preachers in mosques and teachers at schools since some pesantrens still hold conservative and/or extreme worldviews. It is therefore worth noting the vulnerability of youths at school exposed to RVE as seen through the socio-religious dynamic of the school leaders. From their research in various Islamic schools in Semarang, Central Java, Brooks et al. show that that “principals’ personal experiences and beliefs are central to the ways that socio-religious thinking and practices are manifest in their school” (2020).

Although some studies have been conducted to see the degree of alleged radicalism of some pesantrens, many have found that, in terms of the subject matter of Islamic teachings in some allegedly pro VE pesantrens, there are not any radical views. As noted by Raihani (2012), moderate Islam and a multicultural education are inherent parts of a pesantren education. The pesantren curriculum that provides comprehensive Islamic teaching as a tool to counter radicalism has also been studied by Suradi et al., (2021). It is not quite convincing, however, to conclude that current radicalism in Indonesia has nothing to do with pesantren. Some recent violent actions in Indonesia clearly suggest that there is a

connection between radicalism and pesantren. If several pesantrens could not be considered as a nest for radicals, it might be true to consider that some radical *ustadz* (religious scholars) have made use of the pesantren to spread their ideologies. Certain social movements (*harakah*) are widely spread within pesantrens.

Historically, pesantrens are traditional educational institutions in Indonesia and they are the oldest Islamic educational institutions in the country that greatly contribute to the literacy and cultural literacy of the society (Qomar, 2005, p. xiii). Many great Indonesian scholars and statesmen graduated from pesantren. Originally, pesantrens tend to be moderate in terms of ideology based on the reference books within them (Kosim, 2006, pp. 843-847). However, there are some rather newly-founded pesantrens that tend to be conservative and even radical due to the influence of Middle Eastern countries. This CISForm program was deliberately chosen to restore pesantren as fully educational institutions and no more as the media for social movement activities.

C. Moderation as the Approach to Prevent/Counter Violent Extremism (P/CVE)

Many cases of VE in Indonesia have caused the government, policy makers, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to be actively engaged in countering its dangerous threat. The more people are exposed to the threat, the more different kinds of approaches and treatments should be developed. In general, there are two types of approaches toward VE, specifically hard and soft measures. While hard

measures are mostly employed by the state's apparatus as a quick response to violent actions, soft measures are used mostly by CSOs as preventive actions geared towards the most vulnerable groups in society.

In Indonesia, the common term for violent ideology and actions is "radicalism" and the programs and actions employed to tackle radicalism, terrorism, and RVE are described as "deradicalization." In academic discourses, many terms are used for deradicalism such as *disengagement*, *reintegration*, *rehabilitation*, *re-education*, *desistance*, *deprogramming*, *disaffiliation*, and *debiasing*, indicating that the terms and concepts are complicated (Koehler, 2017, p. 2). Along with the rejections of some Muslim communities toward the use of the terms radicalism and deradicalization, many CSOs nowadays tend to employ Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE). Such an alternative term could be employed by the government and CSOs as this entails three different approaches: primary, secondary, and tertiary (Sumpter, 2017, p. 113).

Primary intervention aims to deter the general population from becoming attracted to extremist narratives. Again, the most vulnerable group is young people. This is proven by the widespread extremism narratives among university students and senior high schools (Alvara Research Institute 2018; PPIM 2017, 2018). Among some extreme narratives widely spread among the youths are the necessity of *khilafah*, the necessity of implementing Shariah, and the interpretation of jihad as war, for example.

Secondary intervention more specifically targets those identified as having concerning views that may be a

stepping stone towards violent extremism. Among these vulnerable groups are the families of radicals, returnees, deportees, and those associated with some allegedly radical pesantrens such as JI or JAD. To some extent, this last group already possesses an extreme ideology which could lead them into violent extremism.

Finally, tertiary interventions manage individuals who have been involved in violent extremism and are now either in prison or in society. Within this group are *jihadist* or ex-combatants, returnees, etc. Although this group may not be so big, it is very dangerous as they could be involved again in certain acts of violent extremism. There are not many CSOs involved in this intervention as most have been conducted by the state apparatus, i.e., the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT).

This advocacy research focuses more on secondary intervention. Our main target is the pesantren that could be categorized as conservative and radical. As far as researchers are concerned, there are some pesantrens in the area of Greater Solo (Solo Raya) which could be categorized as conservative or even extremist which are included in ICG Report's as the "Ngruki Network" (2002). Some other moderate pesantrens, however, were included in this advocacy research as significant to keep the discussion dynamic within advocacy research. Although the term "Ngruki network" is quite debatable, CISForm bases its assessment on the fact that some alumni of Pondok Ngruki and its network were involved in some devastating bombings in Indonesia (Noor, 2007, p. 16).

Many people generally believe that religious interpretation is among the main drivers for extremism and radicalism, State agencies and CSOs, therefore, tend to conduct P/CVE programs as an effort to re-mainstream the Islam of the conservatives or radicals. Daniel Kohler (2015, p. 127) notes that:

Large scale state-funded deradicalization programs in Indonesia, Yemen (“Religious Dialogue Committee” since 2002), as well as Saudi Arabia’s counselling program (since 2003) have received widespread international attention as they include theological (i.e., ideological) debate and challenge for incarcerated Islamist terrorists.

CISForm researchers, however, regard that such a direct, face-to-face dialogue and debate would be ineffective to implement in pesantren. Such a confrontational approach would even trigger Islamists into an endless debate about the religious interpretations of *khilafa*, *jihâd*, and *hijrah*, as CISForm believes that pesantren people are religiously literate. Therefore, challenging them about Islam and its interpretation would only produce a kind of resistance among them.

The whole program of CISForm on CVE is branded as mainstreaming moderation instead of deradicalization. This is also based on the fact that the term contains two conceptual problems; (1) this concept of deradicalization assumes that all radicals commit violence, and (2) the concept of is only appropriate for people who have committed violence (for healing), not prevention. In general, therefore, this term is quite problematic because it seems as if deradicalization

solves all problems of violence in the name of religion (a one-size-fits-all approach). Accordingly, many approaches and concepts should be made to suit at the empirical level (Clutterbuck, 2015).

Among faith-based Muslim organizations in Indonesia, the terms “radical, radicalization, and deradicalization” have stimulated public controversy. The debate has even caused polarization among Muslim communities in which supporter groups tend to use the terms for their own political interest by accusing the opposite ones as radicals that need to be deradicalized. On the other side, the opposing groups tend to regard the supporter group as the ones who get money from the government or international agencies for their projects to discredit their fellow Muslims and to degrade their religiosity. Due to such a situation, the Ministry of Religious Affairs promoted the term “*Moderasi Beragama*”/Religious Moderation (2019), which is regarded as a neutral concept that has already been deeply rooted in religious ideas and practices for a long time in Indonesia.

Additional criticism toward the terms radicalization and deradicalization, both on the discourse and practices level, also came from the leader of the Central Board of Muhammadiyah, Haedar Nashir. During the inauguration of his professorship in sociology at the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta, Nashir criticized the massive usage of the term by state agencies and state officers, as well as the mainstream media that tends to simplify the fact and only targets Muslim groups. In fact, as Nashir noted, radicalization also appears in other areas of life such as ideology, politics, economy, and culture:

“Indonesia, after the reformation, has actually experienced radicalization and exposure to radicalism under the power of ideology and the new system of liberalism and capitalism, which is more than just religious radicalism in national life. When radicalism is interpreted as extreme and harsh views and orientations in one pendulum leading to many problems which are detrimental to the lives of the people and contradicts the spirit of independence in 1945, it can be concluded that ideological, political, economic, and cultural radicalism are as problematic as religious radicalism or extremism for the future of Indonesia. Therefore, moderation is needed to become a strategic reference in dealing with radicalism in Indonesia as an alternative way of deradicalization, in order to be in line with Pancasila as the middle ideology and moderate character of the Indonesian nation” (Nashir, 2019, p. 70).

In terms of religious moderation, when looking at the core of the model of “returning the perpetrators of extreme actions” as conceived by Koehler and Horgan (2017), the core values to be instilled are “moderate souls” as taught by Islam as *tawâsuth* (moderate), *tawâzun* (balanced, proportional), and *tasâmuh* (tolerant). In the Indonesian context, this spirit is reflected in the ideology of Pancasila, which Douglas Ramage (1995) calls the ideology of tolerance. Thus, a smoother term for the “deradicalization” program is the moderation of Islamic thought and action. For this reason, programs to “restore the thoughts and actions of extreme practitioners” are moderation programs, not deradicalization.

D. CISForm and Mainstreaming Moderation

In an effort to reduce this resistance, CISForm tends to conduct advocacy on alternative topics. CISForm, therefore, organized workshops for pesantren people on other topics such as developing libraries, active learning, and leadership rather than on Islam in order to refocus them more on education. Basically, this approach is adopted from management science which allows total involvement of the participants to reconsider some surrounding issues and reformulate their policies (Ihuah, 2014, p. 21). CISForm believes that such a persuasive and indirect approach will be more productive to avoid any conflicts with the subject of the programs.

Such an indirect approach focuses more on the gradual awareness of the participants. As far as CISForm is concerned, such a soft approach could be conducted for the purpose of: 1) diversion of ideological and political focus, and 2) gradual change of attitude and behavior. Through library development for example, CISForm aims at providing better library management and book collections for pesantrens. Such a library improvement could hopefully give alternative reading materials for pesantren people, teachers (*ustadz*), and students (*santri*). As far as CISForm is concerned, the library collections of some conservative and radical pesantrens are mostly classical Arabic books on theology and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). There are only a few books on other aspects of Islam such as economics, education, arts, etc. For this reason, therefore, CISForm provided the above noted collections in the pesantrens as alternative references.

In the same way, active learning workshops for pesantren are also necessary. This approach is chosen based on the fact that teachers in pesantren (*ustadz*) play a central role in the educational process through what is known as teacher-centered learning (TCL). The program is aimed at diverting the aforementioned method to student-centered learning (SCL). This approach is taken as a continuation of the previous approach, the usage of the library collection. Such an approach is necessary to make a democratic classroom. Once students have enough, or more, knowledge on any aspects of Islam, the discussion in class will be more fruitful and will not be dominated by teachers. Based on the fact that the process of radicalization (or Islamic activism) could happen formally in class or informally outside of class, such an approach is necessary to give the students more chances for dynamic dialogue. As Septi Gumindari and Ilman Nafi'a (2020, p. 58) underline, practical learning such as discussion, role-play, tutorials, and field trips is obviously important. All these activities could be done within the framework of student-centered learning (SCL).

Finally, a leadership workshop for the pesantren community is also significant. As common in traditional society or communities, a leader tends to take complete responsibility for deciding on any policies. In pesantren, the leaders mostly decide all the policies without having much consideration or input from other colleagues. In many cases, students were mobilized to join some mass demonstrations in Solo City on certain national issues. Based on a conversation with an informant in a pesantren, such decisions were made only by a pesantren leader without any consideration from others. In fact,

the decision to mobilize the students in some demonstrations in Solo had been opposed by some young teachers, but this could not prevent the actions. Such a workshop, therefore, is necessary to give alternatives for *ustadz* in decision making, from personal to collegial leadership.

CISForm believes that such an approach could gradually change the minds of conservative and radical people, even though the fact that direct approaches as adopted by the National Agency of Counter Terrorism (BNPT) and some other NGOs, which could be considered as deradicalization, face much resistance among Muslims, especially conservatives and radicals. They believe that only a few Muslims could be considered as radical, therefore, deradicalization programs tend to typify common Muslims as radicals. Another objection of some conservatives is their belief that radicalization and deradicalization efforts stem from projects designed to defeat or destroy Islam. Therefore, such a secondary approach of CVE is risky and should be reconsidered by the doers. The targets of the projects are mostly pesantrens in Greater Solo and some from Yogyakarta, notably with the understanding that in Solo and surrounding towns, some conservative and even allegedly radical pesantrens flourish (Wildan, 2013, p. 190).

E. Moderation Programs and Activities

In the last ten years, CISForm has been focusing on programs of mainstreaming moderation. In doing so, CISForm implemented a soft approach as the method to achieve its goals. As efforts were made from the periphery to the center, the method absolutely required patience through

persistent efforts of multiple years and a long-term project. CISForm therefore conducted several activities as part of such mainstreaming moderation, namely: (1) pesantren library management training; (2) workshops on active learning; (3) leadership workshops for pesantren *ustadz/ustadzah*; and (4) workshops on Social Advocacy.

1. Library Development

In 2010, CISForm organized Library Management Training for some pesantrens in Solo as the first programs in the framework of P/CVE. The program was chosen for several reasons. *First*, most pesantren libraries were not managed by professional librarians or persons who had studied library science; most of them were religious teachers or even administrators who were appointed by the *kyai* (the leader of the pesantren). As a result, the capacities of the “librarians” were far from adequate to develop the libraries. The pesantren librarians, therefore, should receive training on how to manage the library properly.

Second, the fact that most book collections in the pesantren libraries were limited and less varied. There was even a tendency to be very selective in choosing the collection based on their advantages and disadvantages. Subjectivity of the *kyai* and ideological reasons influenced the selection process. Books of teaching materials dominated the collection; while enrichment books were very rare, occasionally even wholly absent. Therefore, in addition to the training management for the librarians, CISForm also donated books to the libraries. The books

were dedicated to open up wider horizons for the students and *ustadz* in the pesantrens.

2. Active Learning

In 2011, CISForm also conducted workshops on Active Learning for *ustadz/ustadzah* as one of the strategies in the P/CVE program. This program was conducted due partly to the assumption that the classical model of education in some pesantrens potentially formed *santri* into extremists or radicals. This assumption was based on the fact that some of the perpetrators of terrorism were alumni of these pesantrens. This fact led to a question about the model of education that had created a breeding ground for radical thought and action.

The above anxiety was supported by other facts found by CISForm, namely that: (1) most teachers at pesantrens had not graduated from university; usually they were from *ma'had 'aly* (the higher education of pesantren); (2) most *ustadz* were not trained as educators, so they were lacking in pedagogical (the educational science of being a teacher) skills and were less able to educate their students properly; (3) pesantren teachers did not master active teaching methods so that they tended to use traditional methods. In general, most pesantrens applied teacher-centered learning, where *ustadz* were the center of religious knowledge and authority; and (4) some teachers still had narrow-minded views, especially about the diversity of Islamic teachings.

The active learning workshops were given to *ustadz* of pesantrens to transform their teaching method from

teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning. In addition to the workshops, CISForm also donated hundreds of books on teaching methods and teaching materials from various perspectives. The purposes of this activity were to improve the knowledge of *ustadz* about the variations in teaching methods and to foster awareness among the *ustadz* on the importance of new developments in methods for effective teaching.

3. Leadership

In 2012, CISForm conducted capacity building on leadership in pesantrens as the third soft approach of the P/CVE program. One of the main reasons for choosing this program was largely the association of the prevailing systems and management of some pesantrens. In most pesantrens, senior *ustadz* tended to have a tremendous role in determining various strategic policies. In this regard, senior *ustadz* had more capability and authority to determine the direction of their pesantrens. In general, the pesantren leadership problems were usually centered on certain senior *ustadz*. This was quite problematic since they should decide certain important things that were not taken collegially. Based on these conditions, CISForm organized leadership workshops for *ustadz* and pesantren leaders as a tool for promoting a democratic and egalitarian model of leadership, as well as introducing management modernization in pesantren.

The expected goals of the training were: (1) the emergence of collegial leadership in pesantren, where

power and authority could be shared among leaders and officials of the pesantrens; (2) the development of an inclusive attitude, which in turn would increase the degree of toleration toward a variety of differences in the pesantren; (3) the emergence of desire among the pesantren leaders to broaden their intellectual and religious horizons, especially in the form of moderate Islam and peace; (4) The increasing skill of good leadership in pesantren; (5) The development of a moderate point of view among the pesantren leaders, community, and surrounding societies.

4. Social Advocacy

The last program organized by CISForm was workshops on social advocacy in 2014. We focused on social advocacy because we knew that some unpopular governmental policies could elicit the rise of disappointment among Muslims, which could lead to confrontation or even conflict as some radical groups often use violence to find a social solution. The workshops were worthwhile for both the radical groups and the government. For radical groups, they could voice their opinions freely and orderly without being considered unlawful. While on side of the government and the people who were fond of a peaceful strategy without violence, the social advocacy way was more acceptable. Therefore, social advocacy workshops are urgently needed by the pesantrens to empower them in making persuasive communication and other important mechanisms that can effectively influence policy makers. The training

program also provided technical provisions on how to plan for advocacy and choosing the right strategy.

The materials delivered in the social advocacy training included: philosophy of advocacy, non-litigation advocacy, networking advocacy, media advocacy, and negotiation techniques. During the training, participants learned by doing the ideas, concepts, and theory of social advocacy as well as hearing advocacy experiences from the practitioners. Participants of the training were target groups ranging from conservative to radical ones. The training was conducted in Surakarta and Yogyakarta and organized in four batches, two batches in each city.

The results of the training programs were: (1) a number of *ustadz* and activists of Islamic organizations participated in the training to learn the theory and practice of social advocacy; (2) participants learned social advocacy, which originated from the Western secular world. Interestingly, there was no resistance during the training from the participants who usually criticize some things coming from the West and/or secular countries; (3) participants understood the benefits of social advocacy and citizenship, namely the importance of obeying the rule of law of the state. At the beginning, they claimed a lack of democracy and law of secular countries, but in the end, they were convinced that the strategy of social advocacy in the legal corridor was worthy to advocate their interests and aspirations. (4) Through direct interaction with practitioners of social advocacy during the training, participants also learned the effectiveness and the benefits of a moderate

Islamic perspective on social actions. The discussions during the training included uncommon issues and topics such as modern education, gender equality, and so on. Even though these things could not be used as an indicator of changes in the vision of participants, at least the exchange of ideas during the training included fruitful input and worthwhile reflections from the *ustadz*, *pesantren* leaders, and Islamic organizations.

F. Significance and Lessons Learned

To determine the significance of CISForm's P/CVE program, the institution did a follow up study in 2015 and 2016. The study was designed to evaluate the result and impact of the program on both participants and *pesantrens*, as well as to grasp further expectations for CISForm programming.

1. Research Methods and Process

The purposes of the follow up study were: (1) to assess the effectiveness of CISForm's CVE programs for both participants and *pesantrens*; (2) to explore the current condition of the CISForm training and workshop alumni; and (3) to explore the possibility for developing further cooperative programs that could be organized by CISForm and the alumni.

Among the outputs of the study, a comprehensive report was produced on the benefits of the program for both alumni and *pesantren* stakeholders; whereas the main outcome was to obtain data and information for the preparation of future programs. Another outcome

was a comprehensive, descriptive evaluation of the CVE program that could possibly be replicated in other areas, not only in Greater Solo, but other areas prone to radicalism. Both the output and the outcome of the study were equally important for future CVE programs.

The follow up study implemented a mixed method for collecting data. Using questionnaires, the quantitative method was applied to obtain a projection-shaped figure on the value of the usefulness of the CVE programs. No fewer than 125 CVE program alumni were purposively selected as the sample and they constituted about 30% of the total population (374). The following table describes the distribution of the sample:

No	Workshops / Training Program	Alumni	
		Population	Sample
1	Library	35	12
2	Active Learning	150	50
3	Leadership	107	36
4	Social Advocacy	82	27
Total		374	125

Table 2. Population and Sample based on the Program

The preferred pesantrens chosen to be involved in the study were those prone to radicalism and conservatism. Combined with the number of alumni from each pesantren, the proportion of samples follows (the original pesantren names are hidden):

No.	Pesantrens	Number of Alumni	
		Population	Sample
1	Pesantren A	47	28
2	Pesantren B	15	9
3	Pesantren C	34	20
4	Pesantren D	21	13
5	Pesantren E	32	19
6	Pesantren F	12	7
7	Pesantren G	42	25
8	Pesantren H	11	7
Total		374	125

Table 3. Population and Sample Based of Pesantren Origin

In addition to the quantitative method, the study also implemented qualitative methods to crosscheck the quantitative data in order to gain a more comprehensive explanation about the advantages and disadvantages of the program. We collected the qualitative data in three ways: two focus group discussions (FGD) with program alumni in which one was for *ustadz* (male pesantren teachers) alumni and one involved *ustadzah* (female pesantren teachers); interviews with key persons, mainly pesantren leaders, and observation (site visits) to the pesantrens. We visited 8 participant pesantren from the program, both for interviews with pesantren leaders and to observe teaching and learning situations, as well as to check the library collection. Among the topics discussed in the FGD were the benefits and the efficacy of the program for those involved. During the FGD we also asked for evaluations of CISForm's previous activities

and recommendations for future programs. We asked the pesantren leaders about the benefits of the program and the role of the alumni program in pesantren leadership. The qualitative data were then descriptively analyzed from a P/ CVE program perspective.

2. Finding of the Study: CVE Soft Approach is Effective

A majority of the alumni (66.9%) from the CISForm CVE programs were pesantren *ustadz* who, at the time, held strategic positions in their respective pesantrens, ranging from administrators (9.2%), caregivers of Islamic boarding schools (16.9%), homeroom teachers (24.6%), pesantren leaders (10%), to the Board of Trustees of the pesantrens (6.2%). The remainder were ordinary *ustadz* (27.7%) and others (5.4%). The strategic position of the majority of alumni in their pesantrens is a valuable asset because they massively disseminate and implement the skills and knowledge they got in the workshops and training.

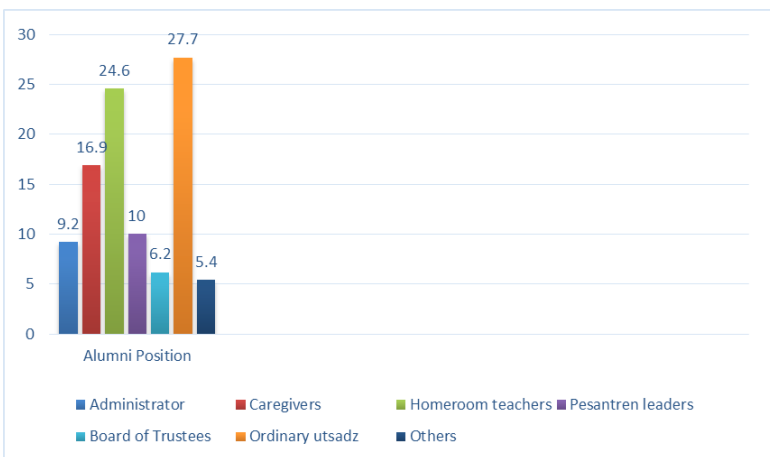


Figure 1. Current Positions of the Alumni

Of the four CISForm training and workshop programs, 60% of participants stated that the programs changed their mindsets towards better activities in their pesantren with the following order: active learning workshops (26.2 %), leadership training (20%), social advocacy workshops (10%), and library training (3.1%). Having seen the value and benefit of the programs, 62.3% of the participants acknowledge that the CISForm programs were very helpful in supporting the activities of the *ustadz* and pesantrens. 87.7% of the participants even claimed that the training programs and workshops changed participants in terms of mindset (4.6%), school management (3.1%), leadership (3.1), teaching (30%), pattern of relationships with friends and other institutions (9.2%), skill for mentoring (3.1%), while 39.2% respondents stated they experienced changes in more than one aspect. The majority (77.7%) of participants also claimed that they have applied the knowledge and skills they gained in the workshops and training.

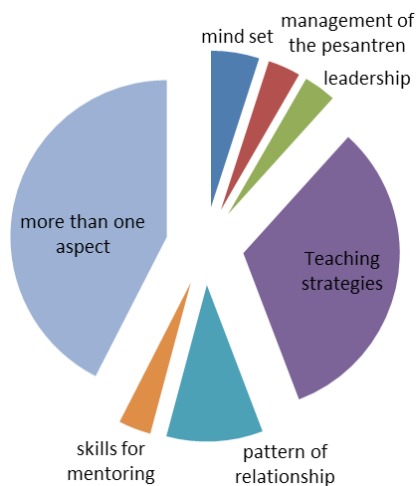


Figure 2. Aspect changes after the workshops and training

The workshop and training programs conducted by CISForm were designed to not only increase the capacity of the participants individually, but with the expectation that the *ustadz* and *ustadzah* participating in the programs would become agents of change for the betterment of their respective pesantrens. The follow-up study shows that participants of the programs have contributed significantly for better changes in their pesantrens. The study reveals data showing that all of the internal stakeholders of the pesantrens provided significant support to the efforts by the program alumni, namely, 75.4% of the pesantren leaders and 72.3% of the peer-partners. 83.1% of the *santri* are pleased with the increase in knowledge and skills among the *ustadz* and *ustadzah* after participating in CISForm programs.

Although individually and institutionally the workshops and training programs of CISForm inspired significant change, it does not mean that the program alumni faced no barriers in implementing what they learned in their pesantrens. A number of alumni stated that they still faced obstacles in the process of dissemination and application. 13.8% of the alumni declared that the obstacles were due to the absence of partners, so they felt as if they were “single-fighters”, while 2.3% of the alumni stated the obstacles were due to minimum support from pesantren leaders. The biggest challenges, however, came from internal factors of the alumni themselves, in which about 21.5% of the alumni continued to doubt their abilities in practicing the knowledge and skills gained in the workshops and training.

Indications of participant satisfaction with a program can be measured by their enthusiasm to participate in similar programs proposed by an institution. Based on such an argument, no less than 85.5% of the CISForm program alumni expressed their interest to participate in similar activities at other times. Only 3.1% of the alumni stated they were no longer interested. The remaining 5.7% said they had not decided and 5.7% did not respond at all. Many alumni even proposed training or workshops to be organized by CISForm in the future on such topics as entrepreneurship, counseling methods, and information technology, among others.

We heard the following from interviews with pesantren leaders: “The CISForm program has provided an opportunity for ustadz, ustadzah, as well as middle lower pesantren leaders, to learn about active learning strategies, leadership, library management, social advocacy, and much more” (Leader Pesantren C). Another pesantren leader also testified that “The CISForm program has made it easier for me as a pesantren leader to mold leaders in my pesantren” (Leader Pesantren E).

From the FGD we collected testimonies from the alumni, such as: “thank you CISForm for inviting me as a participant in the enlightening workshop and training program; please invite me again if CISForm conducts another program”. Another participant said: “I do hope that this is not the final CISForm program I can participate in.” One of the participants suggested: “I think the program I joined was just the elementary stage, and it was so fruitful for my job. I therefore suggest

that CISForm provides the next level of workshop and training.” Another participant also proposed: “It is important to build a network of program alumni and I hope CISForm can be the consultant and mentor for developing pesantren.”

Based on the above testimonies from interviews and FGD, it can be summed up that: (1) the pesantren leaders and the alumni of the programs were very appreciative of CISForm’s involvement for empowering *ustadz* and *ustadzah*; (2) the participants gained many benefits from the programs; (3) the participants expected further programs in addition to the training and workshops, such as the establishment of a forum or network for the alumni, the development of systematic follow-up activities post-training/workshops programs including tiered training programs, and they also expected CISForm to be their consultant in developing their pesantrens.

The study also uncovered a variety of input, suggestions, and expectations to CISForm from the alumni. Most of the alumni gave advice based on the benefits of the training/workshops they attended, such as CISForm should conduct regular training for pesantrens and to intensify the relationship between CISForm and the pesantrens, but there were also suggestions based on “inconvenient” experiences of the participants stemming from their religious mindsets, such as the suggestion to minimize the involvement of women, filtering the program from liberal speakers, as well as separating the male participants from the females. Such suggestions show that the dichotomous

view of public and domestic roles for men and women continues to grow in certain pesantrens, as well as the view of the “danger” of liberal thought.

It can be said that the soft approach by CISForm in its CVE programs on mainstreaming moderate Islam produced some important findings. *First*, based on the participants’ enthusiasm and eagerness to participate in future programs, the soft approach of CVE programs as undertaken by CISForm through various training activities and workshops for pesantrens and *ustadz* was successful. *Secondly*, the success of the program indicates that the most effective way for CVE is soft approaches through direct assistance to target groups. The mentoring and advocating programs were done thematically based on the need of pesantrens and *ustadz* for training and workshops suitable for everyday activities in the pesantrens. *Thirdly*, the positive appreciation of participants towards CISForm, regarding both its program and as an institution, indicates that CISForm has been trusted by pesantrens associated with or stigmatized as a “nest” of radicals. While other institutions faced difficulties to access these pesantrens, CISForm holds a strategic position and good relationship to be able to carry out programs of mainstreaming moderate Islam. This also proves that the soft approach is effective to build trust and to avoid unexpected confrontation.

G. Conclusion

In general, radical groups tend to be exclusive. They hold their understanding as the truth and regard others

opposing their opinion as the enemy of the truth. This attitude sees things in binary opposition and considers collisions between their point of view with that of another as something normal, not even excluding when the confrontation goes beyond the discourse level, but into open conflict. Such a conflict will be considered *jihâd nahi munkar* (fighting bad and evil). For this reason, radical groups often take violent ways in their search for a social solution. The problem is even worse due to the fact that: (1) radicalism has become a speculative solution and an alternative to solve problems of the radical groups; (2) the way some Muslim groups tend to respond to issues is regarded by the news media as undermining Muslim thought with demonstrations and violence. It seems that violence has become the ultimate weapon of the radicals to reach their goals. Based on these problems, CISForm tried to divert such radical tendencies by practicing diplomacy, negotiation, and countering opinions in politer ways and avoiding violent actions through social advocacy training for pesantren activists.

CISForm programs to re-mainstream moderation through different programs are significant among P/CVE approaches. In general, pesantrens, including the hardliners, are quite accommodative in their response to CISForm programs by involving some of their *ustadz* as participants. Some salafi pesantrens, however, responded quite negatively to the programs. One interesting point is that some female teachers (*ustadzah*) also eagerly participated in the programs and discussions, even those wearing *niqab*.

Based on the explanation above, some conclusions can be drawn. *First*, radicalism in the name of religion is a

growing problem that has not even shown any indication to end, so P/CVE efforts need to continue. *Second*, the CVE programs that are most often carried out are dominated by hard approaches. Such approaches have not been able to touch the roots of radicalism, but remain curative with some preventive efforts, and could not properly address the root of radicalism. *Third*, moderation programs such as the P/CVE approaches as practiced by CISForm in a number of pesantrens and conservative-radical Muslim groups in Surakarta and surrounding areas proved to be acceptable and have been running for several years. *Fourth*, the evaluation of the moderation programs implemented by CISForm shows that the approach has succeeded in changing both the mindset and the practice of key actors in pesantrens and conservative Muslim groups. The approaches are indirectly able to shift their orientation from radical to more moderate tendencies.

We believe that if such an approach or measure is taken not only by NGOs, but also by the government, many conservative or even radical pesantrens would transform into more accommodative pesantrens. It could be also said that such soft approaches could be one way to re-mainstream pesantrens into the original tradition of pesantren as the guardian of peaceful teachings of Islam. Our perspective is shared by Ronald Lukens-Bull (2008, p.12) in stating that pesantren should return to premiere institutions for teaching and training Indonesian religious leaders.

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