THE ROLE OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE) IN INDONESIA Alimatul Qibtiyah, Ph.D.

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Abstract

Within the discourse of Islamic extremist movement, Muslim women are no longer seen as supporters. There are cases in which women are behind the violent action. Between 1985 and 2010, female bombers committed over 257 suicide attacks (representing about a quarter of the total). In 2017 there are 420 Indonesian returnees from Syria who joined ISIS, 70 percent of them women and children. At least 45 Indonesian women migrant worker has suspected involved at ISIS. Social Media have a big contribution for recruiting the extremist member. The power of social media is to influence netizen by emphasizing feeling instead of thinking which reinforces gender stereotypes that women are more emotional than rational.

Although more women have been actively involved in intolerant activities recently, women's roles as policy shapers, educators, community members and activists in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) have started to be recognized. Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda from UNSCR 1325 also asserts that women's role in CVE is significant important. There is a strong correlation between gender inequality and the status of women and violent conflict. Promoting gender equality is included in the recommendations in the UN's Preventing Violent Extremism Plan of Action. Violent extremism is most effectively countered through increased education, better critical thinking and enhanced opportunities for women. There are at least 23 organizations in Indonesia contribute to a national CVE strategy for Indonesia. One of them is 'Aisyiyah, a woman's wing organization of Muhammadiyah, one of two biggest Islamic organizations in Indonesia. This paper discusses the experience of 'Aisyiyah promoting Peace of Islam through training which encourages women to be an agent of active tolerance. 'Aisyiyah implements active learning and uses media such as religious animation and poster as a training strategy.

Introduction

The issues of violent and extremist ideology have been growing at international and national levels. According to Tibi (Tibi Bassam 2012), extremist ideology can be seen from the level of Islamism which consist of purivication, formalization of religioous belief, anti democrazy, anti system, anti other religious beliefs, anti western, and agree on violent.

Curently within the discourse of Islamic extremist movement, Muslim women are no longer seen as supporters. There are cases in which women are behind the violent action. Between 1985 and 2010, female bombers committed over 257 suicide attacks (representing about a quarter of the total) (Bloom, M. 2011, 2). Ness (Ness, C. 2007) estimates that girls and women now make up 30 to 40 percent of the combatants in numerous ethnic separatist/guerrilla struggles. In 2017 there are 420 Indonesian returnees from Syria who joined ISIS, 70 percent of them women and children (Noor Huda Ismail 2017).

Social Media have a big contribution for recruiting the extremist members. According to Clay Shirky (Clay Shirky 2009), the power of social media is to influence netizen by emphasizing feeling instead of thinking which reinforces gender stereotypes that women are more emotional than rational. There are at least three reasons why women involve in intolerance activity, *first* declining number of male combater, *second* perceiving women only as passive victims reinforces gender stereotypes (Fink, N., Zeiger, S. and Bhulai, R. 2016; OSCE 2013), therefore it will be an effective to use them for reaching the mission, and *third* like in case of women migrant worker they usually face physical and psychological pressure then become vulnerable. A vulnerable person need a someone who can give more intense attention to her/him.

According to Wahid (2008), Indonesian Islam is comprised of diverse streams of thought and activities. Conflict, tension, dialogue, and harmony contribute to this diversity. Nonetheless, Wahid (2008) divides Islamic thought and practices in Indonesia into two orientations: those Muslims who believe that Islam is *izzul Islam wal muslimin* (the winning of Islam and Muslims), and those who believe it is *rahmatan lil'alamin* (mercy for all creatures). Muslims in the first category are orientated towards exclusivism; they are usually made up of members of Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia/DDII, Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia/LDII, Front Pembela Islam/FPI, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia/MMI, Hizbuz Tahrir Indonesia/HTI, and Persatuan Islam/Persis, as well as some

Muhammadiyah followers. Muslims in the second category tend to be more inclusive; they are usually affiliated with NU, Muhammadiyah, al-Washliyyah, Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah/Perti, al-Khairat, and Nahdlatul Wathan. However, it is important to note that a person's affiliation and their orientation towards Islam do not always coincide. For example, not all NU affiliates adopt the more inclusive orientation.

Wahid (2008) explains that Muslims who are exclusive tend to understand Islamic texts like the Qur'an and Hadith in a literal manner, rejecting hermeneutic methods. They also tend to oppose multiculturalism, democracy and gender equality, supporting the Indonesian Islamic State and rejecting syncretism. They are usually rigid in their use of Islamic symbols and define Islam as Arab. Conversely, more inclusive Muslims tend to be open to hermeneutic methods and contextual interpretations of the Islamic texts; they support multiculturalism, pluralism, democracy and gender equality. They tend to be critical of the Indonesian Islamic State and give more attention to substantive issues rather than rigidly use Islamic symbols. They do not define Islam as necessarily Arab. Most inclusive groups were established before Indonesia got independence. In contrast, organizations which tend to be exclusive emerged around the 1970s (Zuly Qodir 2008).

Observation data explained by The National Agency of Counter Terrorism (BNPT) reported that ex-extremist has performed similar with Muhammadiyah's¹ ritual activities. Muhammadiyah is more selective in terms of responding the government's program relating to the issue of radicalism compare to other organization such as Nahdatul Ulama (NU)². This does not mean that

¹ The Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah are the two largest Islamic organisations in Indonesia, with approximately 40 million and 30 million members respectively (Saeed, 2005). Muhammadiyah was established in 1912 and has almost 10 thousand of schools, 171 universities, 2.119 hospitals and 6.118 mosques and other institution. http://www.muhammadiyah.or.id/content-8-det-amal-usaha.html

² Nahdatul Ulama was established in 1926 and has 209.986 schools, 14.350 Kindergarten and 59.650 Majlis Ta'lim (gathering). http://www.nu.or.id/post/read/52377/inilah-puluhan-ribu-amal-usaha-muslimat-nu

Muhammadiyah including 'Aisyiyah³ does not concern on the issue of preventing extreminsm. Based on the organization principles of Muhammadiyah, it does not tell that Muhammadiyah agree with the idea of radicalism and extremism. For example, Muhammadiyah does not agree with the extremist's ideas of anti system and anti goverenment. Extremists believe that Indonesia is unislamic state and appropriate to be attacked. Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah believe Indonesian goverenment is Islamic (Darul Ahdi wasyahadah) and encourages "Cosmopolitant Islam" which is an "awareness that the followers of Muhammadiyah is part of global community who have solidarity and responsibility toward others" (Abdul Mukti, 2016). Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah is non madzab organization, open minded, tolerant whereas extremists' doctrines are more exclusive, close minded and being intolerant as well as violent.

I argue that the core values (manhjad) of Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah promoting peace, inclusism and avoid takfiri or judging others as a kafir or deviant. One of strategies to institusionalize those core values in the community, 'Aisyiyah in National level through Madrasah Perempuan Berkemajuan (MPB) [progressive women school] initiated by the research and developmen of 'Aisyiyah division. This program has been encouraged to be implemeted in lower level acroos states (34 provincies) and 'Aisyiyah branches in abroad. MPB is a strategic and potential program to make a better life in peace and harmony. MPB concists of socialising the core values (manhaj) of Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah, characteristic of progressive women, gender in Islam, feminism and da'wah through media. As mentioned before, Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah tends to be in the second group who see Islam as Rahmatal lil'alamin or Islam as blessing for all creatures. 'Aisyiyah as a women wings of Muhammadiyah organization promoting Peace of Islam through training which encourages women to be an agent of active tolerance. 'Aisyiyah implements active learning and uses media such as religious animation and poster as a training strategy. This paper

³ Women wings of Muhammadiyah which established in 1917 and also has lots of scholls and hospitals and other social and economic organizations.

discusses the 'Aisyiyah's program in promoting peace and preventing violent exstremism in the community.

Manhaj Muhamadiyah-'Aisyiyah

Manhaj Muhammadiyah is a perspective, ideology and strategy to do the da'wah program for Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah. The founder of Muhammadiyah, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan who studied the religious and general knowledge together (Jaenuri, 1981). was known as a great leader who have inclusive attitude, respect others and have many non muslim friends (Fuad Facrudin, 2006). and a hard worker (Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, 1985). Since the establisment, Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah has focused on education, health, social and economic activities. After then it has become the progressive movement (Muhammad Damami, 2004). The Muslim thinkers who inspired the establishment Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah are Muhammad abduh, Jamaludddin al-Afghani, dan Ibnu Taimiyyah.

There are eight manhajs of Muhammadiyah to understand the Islamic teachings employed by Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah namely (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2009):

- 1. The source of Muhammadiyah's manhaj are Al Qur'an dan Sunnah Maqbulah. (الرجوع الى القرآن و السنّة). It employes ijtihad and uses Bayani, Burhani, dan Irfani approaches (MTT PPM, 2000). Bayani means asserting the textual sources from the Qur'an and hadith. Burhani approach focuses on the source from general knowledge such as social and natural scinces and the methological and logical framework for getting knowledge. Last is 'Irfani approach which considering the heart, humanity values and intuition to decide something.
- 2. Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah do not affiliate to a certain Islamic school of thought. It is an independent in term of having fatwa or guidance for community. However, it considers the four mazdahs's teachings (Muhammad Hasyim Mannan, 1995).
- 3. Muhammadiya's Islamic identity is on Moderat-progressive Islam or Wasathiyyah, Modernis-Reformis and its ideology is in the midle, it is not liberal-leftist and also not conservative.

- 4. For aqidah (belief) and ibadah (ritual) Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah backs to the original of Islamic teaching and doing purivication from local cultures.
- 5. Relating to human relations (muamalah) Muhammadiyah is dinamic dan rasionalistic. Contemporary issues are discussed by inviting experts in the fields.
- 6. Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah's attitude and behavior (*akhlak*) refers to the Prophet Muhammad but the styles or forms could be different from the Prophet Muhammada era. It is not necessary wearing niqab for women and long bear for men.
- 7. Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah believes that Indonesia is *Darul Ahdi Wasyahadah*. It means that Indonesia is Islamic country because the basic foundation of Indonesia, Pancasila, is not conrast to the basic principles of Islam. Also because most leaders are muslims, it is belived that the laws also inspired by Islamic Teachings.
- 8. Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah againts Takfiri attitude. It means that judging others as kafir or deviants is not allowed in Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah.

DA'WAH AND MEDIA (PVE-CVE): CREATING SHORT MESSAGES USING MEDIA





The Characteristics of Progressive women

One of the content delivered in MPB is the cahracteristic of progressive women. There are 15 characteristics for progressive muslim women in personal, profesional dan social levels (Alimatul Qibtiyah et.el, 2018). Tabel 1 explaines those characteristics that 'Aisyiyah members should be implemented in thier lives.

Table 1

The Characteristics of Progressive Women

NO	Characterist ics	Example attitudes and behaviors				
1	Engaging	Perform ritual activities, self care; responsible for the assignments, able to work in team, help others;				
2	Muhsin	Self control, honest, fit body, stay healthy, anti corruption, having good integrity				
3	Responsif	Self respect, not delay the work and having good commitment, updating current and strategis issues				
4	Taisir	Not put burdent, not overhelm for make up, for dressing including on putting hijab; not making others in trouble				
5	Respect to women	Feeling self worthy and self dignity; having a good gender sensitive				
6	Love knowledge and science	Love reading, spent time for reading regulerly, having critical thinking, stop hoax; argue based on data, having motivation to develop carrieer and spend time for academic meeting, having family library				
7	Economically independent	Having capability to arrange persoanal and family needs wisely, having an economic creative, avoid loan, good arrangement on spending money, intiate enterprenuer group				
8	Being Involved in Politics	Ready for an active core member in social and profesional organizations, having smart politic awareness, willing to give good ctitique for policy makers, giving enlighment of smart politic in the society				
9	Generous	Always spent some income for charity, care for others, love sharing a goodness, active in social charity organization				

10	Family is a core of	Marriage is part of mandatory, aware of family members as cadres, trust on education to the			
	movement	experts, work-family balance			
11	Resilients	Not easily giving up, not resistant on crtique, try to be the best, having a good conflic management.			
12	Having a good on media literacy	Having good adaptation on new media and technology, understand ethic of conduct for using media and using media for a better life, pay attention for different perspectives, employ an asertif communication			
13	Initiator	Become a reference for others, happy getting crtiques from others and being influencer in society			
14	Not Arrogant	Respect othes, not look down and assault others, humble, giving and prying goodness for other			
15	Egaliter	Having egalitarian perspective and not discrimante others			



Gender in Islam and CVE

There is a strong correlation between gender inequality and the status of women and violent conflict (Oudraat in Fink et al, 2016: 28). Promotion of gender equality was included in the recommendations in the UN's Preventing Violent Extremism Plan of Action (UN, 2015). 'Violent extremism is most effectively countered through increased education, better critical thinking and enhanced

opportunities' for women (Couture, 2014: viii; Iffat Idris with Ayat Abdelaziz, 2017). There is a women's potential for P/CVE in relation to the family – spotting signs of radicalization and delegitimizing extremist narratives – as well in their communities (Majoran, 2015; Calfas, 2016). Women's roles as 'policy shapers, educators, community members and activists' (OSCE, 2013, p. 2; Becky Carter 2013) in countering violent extremism have started to be recognized. Women, peace and security (WPS) agenda from UNSCR 1325 also asserts that women's role in CVE is significant important.

The concept countering violent extremism (CVE) which is PVE is part of CVE is thereby divided into three levels of emphasis (Cameron Sumpter, 2017): Primary preventions aim to dissuade the general population from becoming attracted to extremist narratives, and particularly those who may be susceptible to influence. Secondary interventions more specifically target those identified as having concerning views and may be treading a pathway to violence. And tertiary interventions manage individuals who have been involved in violence and are now either in prison or reintegrating with society. Some key players from civil society in Indonesia are working on CVE in Indonesia named Civil Society against Violent Extremism (C-SAVE). There are at least 23 organizations in Indonesia contribute to a national CVE strategy for Indonesia. They are generally concerned with promoting constructive personal development. It is the ability to gain legitimacy and trust among the people they seek to engage which make civil society organizations potentially more suited to conducting CVE initiatives than security-mandated state agencies. 'Aisyiyah one those groups also concern on promoting Peace of Islam through training which encourages women to be an agent of active tolerance. 'Aisyiyah implements active learning and uses media such as religious animation and poster as a training strategy on the issue of gender and other relevant issues.

There are nine contentious gender issues that have sparked controvercial in the society.

Table 2
The Contentiaous Gender Issues

Gender Issues in Islam on Individual level

- a. Poligamy
- b. Equal Sexsual Rights and Expression
- c. Women's Creation

Gender Issues in Islam on Family level

- a. Equal Rights on Inheritance
- b. Equal Responsibility for Earning Income (Nafakah)
- c. Making Equal Decesion in the Family

Gender Issues in Islam on Community level

- a. Equal Women's Status
- b. Equal Value to be Withness
- c. Women' Leadership

ANIMATION AND PVE-CVE (GENDER ISSUES) HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=12PIMIF-LUE

- Aisyiyah members (author) working together with university- Center for Social Transformation (CISFORM) and PPIM to have a creative work on PVE-CVE through religious Animation. Examples:
 - Pemimpin Perempuan [Women's leadership]
 - Cadar [Niqab]
 - Jilbab Syar'ie [Syar'i veil]
- Please Visit CISFORM on Youtube (40 movies on PVE)



Lesson Learn From MPB [Women's Progressive School]

Madarasah Perempuan Berkamjuan (MPB)- [Women's Progressive School] was initiated by the previous leader at the Division of Research and Development of 'Aisyiyah (2010-2015). Author is the current leader (2015-2020) have continued this program. On December 2016, there was the first National Training of Trainer (TOT) for MPB which was consisted of 40 participants from 16 provincies across the country. This program was sequite sucessful. Because of limited fund, the committee, the Division of Research and Development of 'Aisyiyah at national level did not provide hotel and transport. Although all participants were self funded they were antusiatic joining this program. During a reflection session, fasilitator emplyed The Most Significant Change (MSC) Method. One participant repoted that she was surprised that Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah have decided monogamy marriage in their Fatwa division [Tarjeh and Tajdid Division]- and finally she understood and accepted fasilitator expalnation. Fasilitator explained that the prophet Muhammad was not polygamy until the first wife, Khodijah passed away and he did not give consent to Ali Bin Abi Tholib, Fatimah's husband wanted to marry other women. The Hadith, which advocates limitations of polygamy, reads as follows:

Narrated by Al-Miswar bin Makhrama: I heard Allah's Apostle who was on the pulpit, saying, "Banu Hisham bin Al-Mughira have requested me to allow them to marry their daughter to Ali bin Abu Talib, but I don't give permission, and will not give permission unless 'Ali bin Abi Talib divorces my daughter in order to marry their daughter, because Fatima is a part of my body, and I hate what she hates to see, and what hurts her, hurts me"(Bukhari, 2011c, p. 62:157).

It means that most of the Prophet Muhammad's life is monogamy, it is around 25 years and he did not happy in his polygamous life.

Another participant from South Sulawesi also reported her change. She said that before participating this event she though that Khilafah System is accepetable in Indonesia, in fact Muhammadiyah does not agree. Because

Muhammaadiyah in its manhaj implements *Darul Ahdi was Syahadah* which believe that Indonesia is Islamic country because majority leaders are muslim therefore when they make law, Islamic teaching inspired the process of making the lawa. Besides all principles in Pancasila, the official ideology of the Indonesian state, means 'five principles': monotheism, humanitarianism, unity, democracy and justice, are not conflic with Islamic teaching.

At the end of November, MPB was also conducted at Lampung, Sumatra, West part of Indonesia. From pre-test and post-test it is clearly seen the change. Participants who advocated moderate and progressive views were to some degree close to the feminist positions.

Table 3
Pre-Test and Post-Test

Gender Issues	Concervative		Moderate		Progresive	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Women's Status	5	0	64	48	31	52
Women Natural Given	17	0	22	4	61	96
(kodrat)						
Women's roles	0	0	14	4	86	96
Women's leadership	11	4	89	52	0	42
Inheritance	56	16	42	56	2	28
Witness	64	16	8	36	28	48
Women's Creation	28	4	17	4	56	92
Polygamy	6	0	61	16	33	84
The Rights of Sexsual	14	0	11	4	75	90
Expression						
Making Decesion in Family	3	0	8	8	89	92

Based on the reflection from the partisipants also from the pre-test and post-test, in can be concluded that MPB could change the mind set of participant. The change is from gender bias into gender sensitive. As disscussed previously that the more gender sensitive they are, the more peaceful and the more progressive they are. Therfore, step by step the world peace which have a better life for all human creatures which no hate speech and hate spine each other can be achieved.

Conclusion

Based on the previous findings and discussion, it can be concluded that Muhammadiyah's manhaj are inclusive, tolerant, open minded and strenthening a great nationalism. So, it is not true that Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah tend to have manhajs or teachings which lead to extremism or radicalism. Although it cannot be avoided that the member of Muhammadiyah-'Aisyiyah have difffrent level of understaniding on Islamism. The problem cames from the socialization of Muhammadiyah's Manhaj which still have not done massively. MPB is one of the ways for scalling down the idea of progressive Islam perceive by Muhammadiya-'Aisyiyah. Based on the evaluation, MPB works well and need to be implemented broadly. This is a prove that a woman can be an agent of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) as well as Countering Violent Extremins (CVE).

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