CONTESTING MORALITY

Youth Piety and Pluralism in Indonesia

MOHAMMAD IQBAL AHNAF

Colophon

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Mohammad Iqbal Ahnaf

Pluralism Working Paper no 10

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Caroline Suransky, Femke Kaulingfreks and Ute Seela

Editors of the *Pluralism Working Paper series*

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Editor's preface

Recent demographics show that Indonesia's futurecould well be shaped by a fast growing youth population.A government census conducted in 2010, shows that over 60 percent of the country's population is younger than 40. At the same time, research suggests that that the social landscape of the country is changing in favour of religious conservatism.A number of surveys show evidence of youth susceptibility to intolerant values and even religious radicalism.

Over the past few years, several reports and workshopsconducted by Gadjah Mada University's Centre for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS) in the context of the International Pluralism Knowledge Program, established that youth may indeed be a critical but often overlooked segment of the population with regard to the experience of(religious) pluralism in Indonesian society. Existing studies on the religious orientation of the youth generally focus onstudents at university level, rather thanon those who are still in high school.

The author of this Pluralism Paper, Mohammad Iqbal Ahnaf, suggests that alack of focus on what happens with teenagers, could lead to the misunderstanding that religious revivalism in Indonesia is mainly produced through the leading university student movements. He suggests that what happens in earlier stages in the education system could be laying important foundations for the growth of religious revivalismin universities. The paper is based on a case study of student life in three prominent public high schools in the city of Yogyakarta on the island of Java and addresses issues of radicalization amongst pious youth. The main research question is: To what extent do Islamist religious organizations influence the radicalization of high school youth, and which factors either support or challenge the process of radicalization? The paper starts with a discussion of the larger social and political context in Indonesia, which is followed by analyses of examples of Islamist influence inthe schools in which the research was conducted. It focuses on different ways in which piety and religious revivalism are mobilized among high school students and discusses the contestation between moderate and revivalist studentsfor control over the school public sphere.

One of the conclusions of the paper is that high schools express a growing interest in the teaching of piety. What Mohammad Iqbal Ahnaf finds alarming about this development, is the point where piety meets with the propagation of religious revivalism and conservatism. He states that "the core of this attitude is an objective that is not only satisfied with inculcating faith at the personal level, but also seeks to make the public sphere more favourable to conservative religious standards, which are often intolerant to diversity." The paper shows different examples of Islamist moral influence in daily student life in high schools and argues in favour of "a free public sphere of expression, which facilitates a constructive competition between moderate alternatives and radical activism".The paper concludes with a discussion of the possible implications of such high school dynamics for the promotion of pluralism among youth and ends with a number of recommendations for actors who want to enhance pluralism.

Caroline Suransky

Chief editor of the *Pluralism Working Paper series* for the Pluralism Knowledge Programme

Contesting Morality Youth Piety and Pluralism in Indonesia

Mohammad Iqbal Ahnaf

Introduction

This paper addresses the issue of radicalization amongst pious youth in Indonesia. The paper is based on a case study of student life in three prominent public high schools in Yogyakarta (a province in the central part of Java, Indonesia's most populous island). The main source of information comes from ethnographic research, which was conducted by Hairus Salim HS, Najib Kailani and Nikmal Azekiyah in 2009. The research is supported by the Centre for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS), Graduate School of the GadjahMada University, to which the writer is affiliated. In 2010, the CRCS held a workshop in which civil society activists were gathered to discuss the problems and challenges of the promotion of pluralism among youth. In addition to the ethnographic research, the outcomes of this workshop also informed this paper. Both the ethnographic research and the workshopare part of the centre's project named the Pluralism Knowledge Program, which is aimed at producing foundational knowledge for strengthening the promotion of pluralism, in the sense of acceptance and respect for diversity, and to encourage constructive interfaith relations.

The main question addressed in this paper is: To what extent do Islamist religious organizations influence the radicalization of high school youth, and which factors either support or challenge the process of radicalization? This paper shows examples of various degrees of Islamist moral enforcement in daily school life. It proposes that the key to a healthy balance in the moral life at school is the availability of a free public sphere of expression, which facilitates a constructive competition between moderate alternatives and radical activism. The paper will start with a discussion of the larger social and political context in Indonesia, in which the topic of this study is embedded, followed by analyses of various examples of Islamist influence at school, and a discussion of the factors, which both enhance and contest that influence. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of such high school dynamics for the promotion of pluralism among youth, and some recommendations for actors involved in the promotion of pluralism.

Youth in Demographic Change and the Shifting Arena of Contestation

These days, Indonesia might be known for its fast growing middle class. However, two additional demographic changes could also shape the country's future; that of a growing youth population, and a changing social landscape, favouring religious conservatism.

The significance of the youth population is shown in the data of the government census agency or *BadanPusatStatistik*(BPS). In 2010, over 60 percent of Indonesia's population was aged under 40. In this group, 28.8 percent was aged between 0 and 14 years, and 32.3 percent aged between 15 and 39 years (BadanPusatStatistik, 2010). As the fertility rate of Indonesia was 2.2 in 2011, this means that the average number of children in families is over 2 (World Bank, 2012). This youthful segment of the country's population is expected to continue growing.

The youth could become more and more influenced by the growing piety in Indonesian society. This is apparent for example in the growing youth participation in religious activities, and popular uses of religious fashion and symbols such as the *jilbab* (Indonesian word for the Islamic head cover for women), religious song and greetings. The growth of the middle class also facilitates youth access to education and information technology, which are important for their exposure to bourgeoning religious media, especially on the internet. Understandably, religious themes become an important part of popular culture. Religiously themed movies such as *KetikaCintaBertasbih*/When Love Prays (2009), *Di BawahLindunganKa'bah*/Under the Protection of Ka'bah (2011) and *HafalanSholatDelisa*/Delisa'sSholat Recital (2011) compete with horror comedies in filling the box office list. For parents, increasing religious observance among youth is a welcome change, as it shows that they are concerned with moral issues.

This concern with moral issues is not only enhanced by expressions of popular culture, but also in the area of education. A growing interest in the teaching of piety can be noticed in high schools. What is striking and possibly alarming about this development, is the point where piety meets with the propagation of religious revivalism and conservatism. The core of this attitude is an objective that is not only satisfied with inculcating faith at the personal level, but also seeks to make the public sphere more favourable to conservative religious standards, which are often intolerant to diversity.
A number of surveys show evidence of youth susceptibility to intolerant values and even religious radicalism. In 2009, an independent research institute in Yogyakarta, *LembagaKajian Islam danSosial* (LKiS), or Institute for the Study of Islam and Society, conducted a survey among students in 20 public high schools in the city. It found limited tolerance among the majority of students (69.2%) (Wadjidi, Salim&Kustiningsih, 2009).

This finding is parallel with the 2011 survey by the Goethe Institute on values and ideas among youth in Indonesia, which found a strong emphasis on religious identity over national identity.[1] Of respondents surveyed across the country, 47.5% saw themselves first as Muslim, compared to 40.8 percent respondents who identified themselves first with nationality, and 10.7% with ethnic identity. The same survey also revealed significant support for conservative religious values among youth, represented for example by 49% support for the implementation of the Islamic law of hand cutting for thieves, and 68% for banning alcohol businesses. Although religious piety is certainly not parallel with a tendency toward religious radicalism, there are signs of youth susceptibility to radical ideology. Recently, observers were surprised by a survey of the *LembagaKajian Islam danPerdamaian* (LaKIP), or the Institute for Islamic and Peace Studies, that found high support for religious violence and persecution of minorities among school students. The survey was conducted in 100 high schools in the Jakarta region in 2011, and 48.5 % of students expressed they are willing to take part in violent persecution of minorities (Tempo Interaktif, 2011). For many, these numbers are too high for common sense (Detik, 2011). A survey like this may only give initial evidence of changing values and growing intolerance amongst youth. However, these findings indicate a potential of an alarming time bomb, if not addressed properly.

Unfortunately, this significant change in society is often overlooked, because attention is focused on the two least successful expressions of political Islam: that of the low electoral gains of religious-based political parties, and violent extremism.[2] Exhausted by the inability of Islamic parties to compete with nationalist parties, many Islamists could be motivated to shift the battlefield from high politics to mobilization at the social level. Granted with political freedom, non-party social mobilization is more promising, because it creates less internal conflict and is less susceptible to the need for compromises, which is the case with political parties. Hence, the mobilization of a support base for Islamist recruitment and influence at the social level, especially among youth, could be a priority for revivalist leaders. This society-based activism can be seen as an intermediate objective for preparing the ground for future political mobilization.

For this purpose youth is an appropriate target. Although current *real politik* is not supportive of an extreme sectarian agenda, the continuing growth of religious conservatism among youth could provide

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[1]See Muhtadi (2012) and complete report of the Goethe research on youth in Indonesia and Malaysia, Goethe Institute (2011).
[2]Historically, Islamic parties, even when this category includes inclusive Islamic parties, have never won the majority vote in Indonesia. Nationalist parties like Golkar, Demokrat and the PDIP are expected to continue their dominance. The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) that originates from the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, leaves a sectarian rhetoric aside to attract more votes (for a discussion about the failure of Islamic parties and the turn of the PKS toward a more inclusive rhetoric, see Baswedan, 2004 and Muhtadi 2012). The more extreme expressions of political Islam, especially acts of terrorism, like Jemaah Islamiyah, are unpopular; such organizations are seen by major Muslim groups as a common enemy. This is illustrated by the fact that mainstream Muslim organizations like NU, Muhammadiyah and Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) take part in combating terrorism.

political leadership with an electorate for future religious-based politics, and thus pave the way for making democracy more receptive of Islamist goals. Although totalitarian goals in extreme ideologies, like replacing democracy with an Islamic state, have lost their appeal, so-called "Islamist democrats" emerge as key actors in democracy. They mobilize political resources for Islamization through both political parties and pressure groups. Although small in numbers, these groups are visibly active and vocal. Because of the silence of the majority, they often take on critical roles in shaping public debates and policy making.

The important place of youth in these developments is identified in the outcomes of a study and workshops on pluralism in Indonesia organized by GadjahMada University's Centre for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies (CRCS). In the context of the International Pluralism Knowledge Programme, and with support from Hivos, CRCS established a working group called "the regional team", consisting of prominent NGO activists promoting pluralism. The team assessed the state of pluralism in Indonesia, and found youth as a critical but often overlooked segment of the population, in relation to their interactions with pluralism. This is especially the case with regards to youth at high school age. Existing studies on the changing religious orientation of youth pay more attention to youth at university level, than those in earlier stages of their education. This lack of focus on teenagers could lead to the misunderstanding that religious revivalism is produced through university student movements like *LembagaDakwahKampus* (LDK) or Campus Da'wah Organization and *KesatuanAksiMahasiswa Muslim Indonesia* (KAMMI), or Union of Indonesian Islamic Student Movement. The chain of revivalism at an earlier stage of high school could be vital for the growth of revivalism in universities.

Based on the work that came out of this program, this paper will show the reality of the mobilization of piety and religious revivalism among youth at high school level, the contest for control over the school public sphere between moderate and revivalist students, and discuss their implication for the promotion of diversity in Indonesia. It will start with the role of an Islamic student organization called Rohis, in the Islamization of the school public sphere in Yogyakarta.

Rohis: Islamizing Youth within High Schools

In 2010, associates of the CRCS-Hivos Pluralism Knowledge Programme conducted a study on religious activities in three prominent public schools in Yogyakarta. The study is published as a part of CRCS's Pluralism Practice Monograph Series entitled "*PolitikRuangPublikSekolah: NegosiasidanResistensi di SMUN di Yogyakarta*"/Politics for Public Sphere: Negotiation and Resistance in Yogyakarta Public High Schools (Salim, Kailani, Azekiyah 2011)[3] Although the study was conducted in public schools, which are supposed to be neutral with regard to religious life, it found apparent contestations between students' religious and non-religious organizations. Students use various means of the school public arena such as mosques, student activity clubs, student media and billboards, to propagate and enforce norms and standards in the school environments. Although such cases are limited and unrepresentative, they illustrate the reality of school-based propagation of piety.

The study found different stories with regard to the degree of success of religious groups. Islamist students show control over the public arena in one school, while other schools host a dynamic competition between Islamist and non-religious groups of students.

In the successfully Islamized school (anonymously called *Rajawali* school), the Rohis is able to enforce a religious atmosphere in the daily life at school, comparable to that in an Islamic boarding school. The school is known to have an Islamic identity called *Darussalam* (house of peace), which represents the objective to make Islam the standard religious norm in the school's daily environment. This identity is apparent in the use of particular Islamic symbols, such as the wearing of a long wide *jilbab* among female students, and a particular model of trousers for male students; both are popular among puritan and revivalist Muslim groups. Social codes restricting interaction between male and female students are enforced through the prohibition of hand shaking and the use of gender segregation in school events or gatherings. Islamic practices like Qur'anic readings and prayers (*sholat*) are organized as school programs. Furthermore, the Islamic atmosphere is visible through the occupation of public spaces by Islamic messages.

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[3]This is an ethnographic research in three high schools in Yogyakarta. Researchers conducted interviews and a Focused Group Discussion (FGD), which included about 30 students in total. The schools are selected because of the presence of Islamic student organization (Rohis). The three schools demonstrate a variety in terms of the level of success of the Rohis influence. Researchers visited the schools and interviewed students in 2010.

Such an environment is certainly not favourable for those who have different religious believes. The Islamic image of this school makes it unattractive for non-Muslim students, even though as a public school it should be open and provide equal treatment to everyone, regardless of his or her religion. As a result, this creates a process of homogenization of the religious demography of the students, which limits students' experiences with diversity. This lack of interaction with diversity, in addition to the control of the public sphere by revivalist students, could be significant in shaping an exclusive attitude among students.

It is important to note that the Islamization at this school is systematically engineered by Islamist student activists, with the support of the school authorities. The activists work under the organization of a student Islamic activity unit called *Kerohanian Islam* (Rohis), or Islamic Spirituality. One member of Rohis at the Rajawali, who was interviewed for the CRCS research, admitted that the organization has launched a road map for Islamizing the school since 2002 (Salim, Kailani, Azekiyah, 2011: 34).

Rohis is one of various student activity clubs, which are recognized by the school authorities for offering an additional program outside the classroom. Other non-curricular student groups are formed on the basis of the interests of students, such as theatre, adventure, Red Cross, and scientific study groups. Rohis is a common organization at Indonesian schools. Although in many places it has a similar ideology and pattern of activities, it is not structurally organized by means of a leadership position at a general level, beyond the specific schools. Its organisation is independent at every school, even though informal connections with university student movements are usually maintained. The significance and ideology of Rohis therefore varies in different schools. Rohis gained significance in many schools, especially since the introduction of a law on the educational system in 2003, which requires schools to provide religious education based on the religion of students.[4] Islamist activists supported this law, because before its instalment, they found that many Muslim students at Christian schools did not get Islamic courses. Even if they did get courses, these courses were taught by non-Muslim teachers. The law consequently raised a demand for Islamic instructors, which led to the increasing significance of Rohis.

The success of Rohis at the Rajawali School in shaping the public sphere favouring Islamism is made possible by at least three types of activities.

The first is a program called mentoring. This program is a part of the school orientation program for first year students. Rohis recruits new students who will be assembled into groups consisting of about 5 students. Each group is led and supervised by one senior student from Rohis. The instructors, consisting of the Rohis senior activists, organize weekly sessions and personal consultation, aimed at introducing new students with the new living environment of the school, how to cope with difficulties, and more importantly, inculcating Islamic faith. In addition to these weekly sessions, the instructors also follow the daily school life of the participants and educate them with the Islamic moral standards they seek to enforce. This program is carried out during the first half of the new students' first year. Afterwards, Rohis organizes a more advanced mentoring programme, placing students in study circle groups. At this level, they start ideological inculcation by discussing Muslim political issues such as the Israeli-Palestine conflict, and complicated topics such as the thoughts of Islamist ideologues Hassan al-Banna and SayidQutb. The members of the Rohis special task force called *PanitiaKhusus* (*Pansus*) continue the job of ensuring the commitment and loyalties of the new recruits to the values and objectives they promote. Equipped with efficient communication skills, Rohis activists approach junior students individually and make themselves available for personal consultation.

Through these systematic programs and tactics, Rohis plays an important role in the rise of new-born Muslims among students. The testimony of a Rohis female activist below, as cited by Salim, Kailani&Azekiyah (2011), illustrates this role. With 34 others she serves as a member of the *Pansus* promoting Islamist values among students. Each of them mentors 9 students.

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[4]The substance of the 2003 Sisdiknas law is actually not new. Before the introduction of this law, religious education in school had its legal basis in the joint decree of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 1989, schools were required to provide religious education for students, based on their religions. The decree, which then became a law (No. 2, 2003), was controversial and ineffective because of the opposition of human rights activists and non-Muslim schools, being unwilling to provide Islamic teaching for Muslim students. The opposition of non-Muslim schools to the law is not necessarily ideological. As Muslims are the majority, non-Muslim schools have more Muslim students than the other way around. Consequently, this will raise the financial burden of non-Muslim schools for providing Islamic courses. This background gave significance to the 2003 Sisdiknas law, because it served as the governments answer to the debate, in favour of the enforcement of religious education in schools. This law encouraged a more serious enforcement of the mandate for schools to provide religious education, based on the students' religious background. Human rights activists rejected state's enforcement of religious education in schools. For a discussion about the law, see Syaddad (2010).

Before studying at this school, before choosing the school, I was informed about its Islamic image. Initially I was hesitant to attend the school because I intended to be a naughty girl. However, the Pansus sisters persuaded me to change that intention. My Pansus senior is a very kind person. When I did a wrongdoing during orientation sessions she was the one responsible for it. Since then I was committed to be a good person (Salim, Kailani&Azekiyah 2011: 41).

The second program is called *Mabit* (*MalamBinaImandanTakwa*), through which Rohis brings students to a retreat area for a few days. The stated goal of this program is to strengthen the faith and spirituality of students. However, in practice this could also serve the Rohis interest of recruiting new activists for the organization. The topics in the program therefore include political issues and are delivered by senior activists of the Rohis connection at the university and Islamist student movements such as the KAMMI and the LDK. Wajidi (2011) describes the activity of *mabit* as follows:

This *[mabit]* program usually takes place during the weekends. It can be said that *mabit* is a place for more intensive sessions following the mentoring program at school. It gathers students in a place for a few days, for Islamic training. The subjects include instruction and guidance from religious teachers (normally delivered by alumni), about norms and religious practices, ethics in social relations (especially about dating) and current Muslim political issues at the national and international level. An important element of the program is a session called self-evaluation (*muhasabah*). Conducted in the late evening, the session is hosted by a religious teacher from the Rohis alumni, whose task it is to raise emotional and spiritual intelligence. This is followed with movie screenings about hard work, discipline, and Muslim solidarity (Wajidi 2011: 100).

The third key element of the Rohis influence in schools is a program called *KhadamulUmmahYaumiya* (KUY), or "the guardians of public daily life". This is another operating body of the Rohis, similar to Pansus, which is tasked with enforcing Islamic moral standards and ensuring that student activities and daily life reflect the school's proclaimed Islamic identity as *Darussalam* (House of Islam). The KUY's role includes mobilizing students to participate in Islamic rituals, filling public information spaces with Islamic postings, and enforcing restriction in the interaction between male and female students. A member of the Rohiswho, interviewed for the CRCS research, admitted that Rohis has "underground" units identifying dating students. Members of the unit individually approach the pairs and encourage them to leave this alleged un-Islamic practice.

A comic posted on the wall magazine of the Rajawali school. This comic illustrates the positive and fun aspects of jilbab and the policy restricting hand shaking between male and female students. The comic was made by Rohis activists to express their negative perception of these practices. It illustrates the method of Rohis in defining school public life, based on the moral standards they promote (Pictures come from Zalim, Kailani, Azekiyah 2011: 33).

The role of KUY illustrates the move of Rohis from an emphasis on Islamization at a personal level to an emphasis on structural Islamization of the school public life. Rohis is not only successful in creating "new born" Muslims among students, but also in persuading the school authorities to adopt the moral standards it promotes in the school management. The moral propagation of the Rohis is not possible without the support from the school authorities. A notable example of this support is the school policy of gender segregation and the restriction of the role of female students in singing contests, based on the view that Islam prohibits women to expose their voice to the public (non-*Muhrim*). The biggest achievement of the Rohis is probably its success in persuading the teachers to include student participation in the Rohis study circles into the curriculum grading system. This essentially transforms the Rohis activities from an extra-curricular program to becoming part of the formal school curriculum.

Certainly Rohis is not always successful in its attempts to enforce morality. A good example is the presence of female Muslim students who do not wear *jilbab*. Although *jilbab* has been the practice of the majority, some female students are allowed to leave their hair uncovered. The Rohis cannot make *jilbab* obligatory. Nonetheless, Rohis finds softer, more subtle methods to enforce *jilbab*, through creating an environment that makes the situation uncomfortable for those who does not wear *jilbab*.

How could school aged students carry out such a systematic social engineering? Here it is important to note the connection between the Rohis and Islamist student movements at the university level, such as the KAMMI and the LDK. Its expansion goes back to the 1980s, when former President Soeharto adopted friendlier policies towards Islam, by tolerating non-political and non-violent expressions of Islam. Previously repressed by Soeharto's anti-political Islam policy of *asastunggal*, Islamist groups took what Wajidi calls "*jalanmelingkar*" towards Islamizing Indonesia, by focusing on education and *da'wah* activities. Additionally, Soeharto's policy of restricting political activism at universities through a policy called NKK/BKK (Normalization of Campus Life / Bodies for the Coordination of Student Affairs) in 1978, motivated Islamist student activists to focus on religious programmes at mosques (Wajidi 2011: 95-96). While Islamist movements were able to take advantage of Soeharto's tolerance of educational and religious activities, more moderate traditionalist Muslims from NahdlatulUlama, led by Abdurrahman Wahid, were consistently seen by Soeharto as political opposition. Soeharto controlled student activities at schools by allowing only one student association, named OSIS. Access for activism of external Muslim student organizations under NahdlatulUlama and Muhammadiyah was restricted. As a result, Islamist students dominated religious activities at universities. They expanded their domination to high schools through the religious activity unit of the OSIS, that is Rohis (Wajidi 2011: 96). Islamist university groups encouraged their activists to return to their high schools to establish *dakwah* organizations in their former schools. With continuous support from university activists, the Rohis gained significance in many schools.

Given this long established root, the influence of Rohis is expected to continue unless there is a significant challenge from more moderate student groups. As shown in the following discussion, such a challenge is not inexistent, although it is not always enough to compete with the more organized Rohis activism.

Contesting Moral Enforcement

The Rohis achievement at the Rajawali School illustrates a successful story of school-based Islamization. However, this success does not go completely unchallenged. Many perceive the moral dominance of Rohis at school as too aggressive. Also, concern exists about the restrictions in student affairs, especially those with regard to gender segregation, discrimination and limitation of creative expressions, such as singing contests and art performances. This is well illustrated in an open letter written by a mother of a student, quoted by Wajidi (2011). The mother publicly expresses her disappointment with the school policy of restricting female students to sing in a singing festival. The policy was promoted by the Rohis, based on their understanding that Islam prohibits women to expose their voice to the public. What concerns the mother most is the fact that such a discriminating policy was implemented with the support of the school authority. She writes:

> I send my child to this public school (not private religious one, or the one that is exclusive for male) with the hope that she will have the opportunity to interact with those who have a different background (religion, ethnicity, gender and economic level). I do not oppose the religious training of Rohis because we are also a Muslim

family. But as Muslims we want to implement our religion as a blessing for all in the Universe (*rahmatanlil 'alamin*) (Wajidi 2011: 91).

However, such protests from parents are rare. Internal dynamics within the school are a more important factor in the success or failure of Islamist moral enforcement. When alternative voices or activities are allowed in the school public sphere, there will be contestations of control over that public sphere. Such contests are indeed not absent in the Rajawali School. Opposition to the Rohis moral enforcement comes from a number of student activity units including theatre, adventuring and journalism clubs. Students from these units are not happy with the identification with and formation of a dominant culture based on one religion. They want the school to return to its status as a public school, not a religious one. These groups of students compete with the powerful Rohis, which controls other student activity units, including the Scientific Club and Student Red Cross (the name was Islamized by Rohis with a new name, Student Red Crescent, to avoid identification with the Christian symbol of the Cross). At the Rajawali School the contestation between these Islamist, and more moderate student groups, went as far as demarcating the boundaries of their physical spaces on the floors of the school buildings – the colour white belonging to the religious groups and the colour red representing the more moderate secular student organizations. The school provides offices for student activity units in one location. Coincidentally, the location divides into two sides, which have two different colours on the floor. The Red Crescent and Scientific Study units controlled by Rohis use rooms with the white colour floor, and the students from the theatre, journalism and adventure clubs occupy rooms at the red colour side. Interestingly, the school authorities allowed such a spatial demarcation, which intensifiesthe polarization of student life based on moral issues. Those students who identify with Rohis are portrayed as good students, and those on the opposing side are described as rebellious.

Different colours on the floor in the area of the offices of student activity units, illustrating spatial demarcation (picture from Salim, Kailani, Azekiyah 2011: 49)

The more moderate groups express their resistance to Islamic dominant culture in various ways. The observations of Salim, Kailani and Azekiyah (2011) at the Rajawali School describe how some students reject wearing *jilbab* or choose to wear a model of *jilbab* that is smaller than the standard model promoted by the Rohis. At another occasion, the journalism student club publicized a report arguing that the school academic success was hindered by the moral standards being enforced at the school. Understanding the danger of such an opposing discourse, the Rohis soon responded with a lengthy report published on its bulletin. It skilfully claimed that the values, which Rohis introduces, do not come from the school, but from Islam, thus suggesting that those who oppose these values are against Islam. The limited space gained by the moderate students at the Rajawali School can seemingly not compete with the influence of the Rohis activism, which controls the public space and is supported by the school authorities. However, the example of the Rajawali School shows that when diverse views are each given fair space of expression, Islamist mobilization cannot go with ease. This proves the importance of a neutral or free public sphere for the contestation of Islamist mobilization at schools.

The importance of fair space of expression is evident in two other schools visited by the CRCS researchers. One of the schools is anonymously called Merak School in the research report. Rohis is also active at this school, where it runs activities similar to that at the Rajawali school, such as mentoring, study circles (*halaqah*) and *mabit*. A student interviewed for the CRCS's research said that at some point in the past, Rohis was able to enforce morality at the Merak School, like it does at the Rajawali school. But this development did not continue for long, because the school allowed student diversity (especially in terms of faith) to grow. Rohis was forced to adjust its activities. It continued to promote *jilbab*, but could not enforce social pressure against those who chose not to wear *jilbab*. Without support from the school authorities, Rohis could not promote sanctions on those who do not participate in its activities. Interestingly, the diverse environment at the Merak School proved more powerful than the influence of Rohis. This environment seemed to make members of the Rohis organization to become more open minded.

The situation at another school, anonymously called Merpati School, is even more encouraging when it comes to tolerating diversity. Diversity at this school has made Rohis moderate in their relationship with religious others. The Rohis' *mabit* program, which serves as a means for inculcating Islamist ideology at the Rajawali School, became a positive interfaith event at the Merpati School. Although the program is titled with Islamic words (*dakwah*), it is inclusive of religious difference. For the program, the Rohis invited non-Muslim students to take part in some of the *mabit* program activities through an event called "*SepedaDakwa*" (Dakwah Biking). A biking tour was organized for new students. The arrangement of the route provided stops in respect to religious diversity. The organizers posted senior students at each spot to give personal consultation based on their religious backgrounds. The tour ended at a village outside the city. While Rohis organized their Islamic sessions, non-Muslim students conducted separate activities. This was the only separate program with regards to religious affiliation. Other than that, interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim students took place naturally. The impact of the allowance of diversity at this school is incredibly encouraging. Propagation of Islamic piety still takes place, but it is carried out in a moderate and tolerant way. In this case, Islamic propagation organized by the Rohis is moderate and respectful of diversity.

The key for this moderation is the schools' policy, which allows diversity in student activities. In the Merpati school, for example, the school administration allows 26 student activity units ranging from a theatre group, a scientific study club, language clubs, sport clubs, to even a Catholic study club (Salim, Kailani, &Azekiyah 2011: 71). This variety of activity options available to students, does not allow a dominant control of public life in school by a particular religious group, like it can be noticed in the Rajawali school. This situation forces the Islamic student unit (Rohis) to adjust its methods to promote piety in order to suit the diverse character of the students. The Rohis in the Merpati school turn to moderate rhetoric and inclusive activities to maintain its relevance.

Moral Panic and Pluralist Neglect

Despite the contestation of Islamist influences in certain schools, two reasons can be noted for the continuation of revivalist faith inculcation at schools and the ways in which it is promoted at the Rajawali School. These reasons are moral panic and pluralist neglect.

Two paradoxical situations lead to moral panic, raising the demand for religious teachings at schools. On the one hand, like elsewhere, religion is increasingly important in Indonesian daily life. On the other hand, parents feel they are faced with issues of moral decline among youth. Religiously pious families are frustrated with repeated news items on brawls, drug use, porn access and pre-marital pregnancies. They are confronted with a present day reality in which school students do not only watch, but also make porn videos among themselves. For others, the panic is not only about moral issues but also ideological ones. They hear about aggressive Christian missionaries targeting children and youth from religious teachers. Furthermore, they fear the influence of so-called religious liberalism, which they perceive as being harmful to their Muslim faith. These developments, combined with the development of a consumerist culture, raise the status of religious teaching to a priority level.

Schools respond to this by offering an educational environment that does not only promise intelligence but also piety. This leads to the flourishing of high quality schools provided by religious foundations throughout the country - which often profile themselves as following international standards. Even though these schools are generally expensive, they are relatively accessible to the growing middle class in urban communities. Pious and morally panicking families feel they cannot leave their children in a perceived hostile and demoralizing environment. Busy and financially capable middle class families choose to spend money on this type of education rather than risking their children at uncertain hands.

The question is: who offers this type of education? Traditionally, many people send their children to Islamic boarding schools (*pesantrens*) for religious education and security. Most *pesantrens* are organized by mainstream moderate Muslim organizations like NadhatulUlama (NU) and Muhamadiyah. However, these two institutions are often unready to compete with emerging new religious, social and educational institutions which are equipped with advanced managerial skills and financial support. Many religious schools managed by these traditional Muslim forces lag behind the new forces. This is especially true for those schools managed by the NU's educational organization called *Ma'arif*. Many of these schools struggle to survive. The situation of the educational institutions of Muhamadiyah is generally better than those under NU. However, there has also been a concern among moderate Muslim groups, including internal Muhammadiyah leaders, for the increasing influence of Islamist groups within Muhammadiyah schools. In 2006, the organization issued an instruction denouncing the use of its religious and educational institution for political purpose, specifically those from the Islamist *PartaiKeadilan Sejahtera* (PKS) or Prosperous Justice Party (Muhammadiyah 2006).

The significance of new religious educational institutions actually reflects the changing religious landscape in Indonesia. The inability of the traditional Muslim organizations to adapt to new demands, signals a break in existing bonds between individual Muslims and traditional organizations, and connects them to new smaller religious institutions or congregations.

Certainly, these new institutions have diverse ideological orientations; but it is undeniable that many of them are revivalist, emphasizing religious identity over other more inclusive identities. The propagation of this orientation at school level could be critical in shaping the future social landscape of Indonesia.

Piety or Radicalization

Undeniably, growing religious piety in itself should not be a matter of concern. Many would see this as the answer to moral panic in relation to youth behaviour,[5] which is becoming more common in Indonesian society these days, especially with regard to a fear of demoralization, drug misuse, access to pornography and pre-marital sex. What is alarming however, is the attempt to enforce a certain version of moral standards, in a way that discriminates others. The *SepedaDakwah* program of Rohis at the Merpati School, elaborated above, shows that inculcating piety does not have to be carried out forcefully by dominating the public sphere in a way that limits interactions with diversity. Similar stories also come from other places.

Najib Kailani, one of the authors of a CRCS' monograph on this subject, has been studying Islamic activism at schools in the last few years. He found that some of the Rohis activists are moderate and critical of the Rohis promotion of intolerance. Exemplary is the story of a female Rohis activist named Azekiya. She is a new born Muslim who became very committed to Islam. She wears long *jilbab*, a typical fashion for female Islamist activists, and like other Rohis members, she did not have a relationship with a boy. But unlike most Rohis activists who seek to Islamize the school public life, Azekiya is more interested in promoting the Islamic values at an individual level. She is academically successful and has a good relationship with diverse students, including members of her school band group who are often portrayed as bad boys. Kailani also found such a moderate and open character in a Salafi group, in which the women wear a chador. Challenging the exclusive and intolerant ideology promoted by the Rohis leadership, these pious girls are not always suspicious of the West. They dream of pursuing further studies in the West, use Facebook and tolerate Valentine Day celebrations, even though they are often described by Islamists as being part of a Jewish conspiracy (Kailani 2010). Their behaviour is in contrast to the Islamist totalitarian perspective that suspects the West as inherently anti-Islam, perceiving everything that comes from the West, especially ideas and knowledge, as harmful to Islam.

Although these girls are members of Islamist groups like Rohis and Salafi, they may represent a larger segment of society, that is interested in liberalization in youth life. Many people concerned with demoralization support the enforcement of religious values in public life, while at the same timet they are not necessarily supportive of radical groups, especially those with totalitarian ideologies and a violent character. This is indicated for example by the 2007 survey of the Indonesian Survey

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[5]The term "moral panic" was introduced in Europe in the 1970's by Stanley Cohen, to describe a public reaction of fear to manifestations of deviant and/or subversive social groups in society. Since, it is often used to identify a worried reaction of older generations on a changing moral attitude of youth groups, who seem to be either radicalizing, or morally adrift. Cohen refers to moral panic as a "condition, episode, person or group of persons, which emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests" (Cohen 1973: 9)

Institute/LembagaSurvei Indonesia LSI), which found a different level of support for Islamist values and Islamist organizations. Support for Islamist values like the enforcement of *jilbab*, the restriction of male and female relations, and the enforcement of Islamic law, likestoning for adultery, range from 25 percent to 40 percent. This is in contrast to the declining support for radical Islamist groups like the Islamic Defenders' Front (FPI), HizbutTahrir Indonesia (HTI) and Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, which range from 4 (for HTI) percent to 13 percent (for FPI) (LembagaSurvei Indonesia 2007). Because of the limited alternatives for the expression of piety, many often feel they are trapped between being radical or liberal. Those who are committed to piety often find themselves in the segment portrayed as radical. Such a polarization is certainly unhelpful because, as is evident in the personalities of the girls mentioned above, being pious does not have to mean to be radical. What is important therefore, is to support alternatives which may create more moderate or tolerant expressions of piety.

Pluralist Neglect

Another factor stimulating the expansion of revivalist ideologies at schools, is the lack of attention of pluralist advocates for educational and religious sectors. It is widely known that advocacies for pluralism are largely focused on intellectual and legal aspects. This is reflected in the proceeding of the CRCS workshop in Yogyakarta in 2009, which brought pluralism activists from different places. Major programs in the area of pluralism target the educated elite and a middle level audience through book publications, journals, seminars, and trainings. Another focus area is advocacy for minority groups and counter-discourses against religious radicalism. These programs aim to create public awareness of the importance of respect for religious diversity.
However, what is often missing is an involvement in the daily life of religious communities. A popular statement saying "pluralists talk in seminars, radicals preach at mosques" reflects this situation. Efforts aimed at promoting diversity among youth should not stop at curriculum reform. A more focussed intervention, in the form of providing or supporting moderate teachers, may be crucial. A good example of such involvement is a program of the *LembagaKajiandanSosial* (LKiS) or Institute for Islamic and Social Studies in Yogyakarta called "*megalamipluralisme*" (experiencing pluralism). The program aims to promote pluralism among high school students, beyond discourse at an intellectual level. It makes students personally experience, and not only discuss, religious diversity, through workshops on writing and documentary production. This program started with the promotion of skills in writing, photography and video making, and through these activities seeds were planted for pluralism, by establishing creativity clubs among students and connecting them to similar clubs in other places (Wajidi 2011: 109-113).

Interventions at the practical level of education institutions should be a priority, because this could be the real battlefield between inclusive and exclusive forces. Moderate groups have to compete with more rooted Islamists, who started investments in this area since they gained the political opportunity in 1980s. Student organizations of moderate Muslim organizations, such as IkatanPelajarNahdlatulUlama (IPNU), IkatanPelajarPuteriNahdlatulUlama (IPPNU) and IkatanRemajaMuhammadiyah (IRM), should get more support to claim their role at schools. They should be encouraged to play a role not only at a political level but also to take part in religious sessions.

Outside the school, an important arena for youth is popular media. Youth media is a perfect reflection of pluralist neglect in this crucial arena of social mobilization. Popular media targeting youth with revivalist tendencies is very easy to find. Notable publications of this type of media are *Annida, Elfata, Gaul Islam* and a publishing house named *Forum Linkar Pena*. These media promote a trendy and modern Islamic life style as an alternative to popular culture media like *Gadis*, *Aneka* and *Hai* that are often portrayed as liberal, hedonistic and unethical. The level of ideological content in these Islamic media outlets is varying. *Gaul Islam,* for example, has a very strong political content, delivered in easy language, accessible for youth. Led by a former activist of an Islamist organization, HizbutTahrir Indonesia, the online media routinely attacks capitalism and promotes Islamic supremacy in governance and economic affairs. *Gaul Islam* reaches its audience through its network radio, called *Voice of Islam,* and regular trainings for young Muslims across the country. Other media like *Annida and Forum Linkar Pena* are less political, even though they help strengthening youth identity based on religion.

Ironically, more moderate Islamic media are almost absent. Among the rare initiatives of moderate Islamic media targeting youth audience, is a writing club in Yogyakarta named *Komunitas Mata Pena*. Run by young Muslim activists educated in traditional *pesantren* associated with NahdlatulUlama, this

community publishes novels about daily life in *pesantren* and organizes writing trainings at schools in various cities in Java.

However, support for such moderate media is limited. Compared to the expanding network of Islamist media like *Gaul Islam*, its current influence is limited. The revivalist Islamic media still stand as a major alternative for popular culture media. The availability of moderate religious media for a youth audience could therefore be an important breakthrough for pluralism promotion.

Moderate Alternatives of Piety

A major issue, which was raised by the participants of the CRCS's workshop on pluralism promotion in Yogyakarta in 2010, is the problem of the silent majority. The contestation between moderate and revivalist groups among youth reflects this problem. The majority of moderate youth are under-represented by the more organized and vocal Islamist school organizations and media. The lack of moderate alternatives to respond to moral panic leads to the polarizing options of being either religious and exclusive or being liberal and secular. The limited attention that pluralist advocates give to practical levels of school and youth daily life, adds to a situation in which the silent, less militant and divided moderate majority is being overshadowed by the public influence of Islamist activists, who are more vocal and organized. The silent or less vocal majority of Muslim groups could challenge radical Islamization by providing more moderate alternatives, in order to meet the interest in moral and religious education.

The various degrees of Islamist influence in the three schools indicates that the success of Islamist mobilization among youth depends to a great extent on the lack of viable alternatives, rather than on their activism and the ideology they offer. This is reflected in the contrasting stories regarding Islamist mobilization at the Rajawali and Merpati schools, as discussed earlier. The success of the Islamist Rohis in dominating the public sphere of the Rajawali School, is made possible by their control of the school structure through the enforcement of moral codes, which limit contesting voices. The support of school authorities is important in this structural enforcement of morality. In contrast, the more neutral position of school authorities at the Merpati School, allowing a diverse and free public sphere, limits the ability of Islamist mobilization. As students see more alternatives, the revivalist model of Islamism, as promoted by the Rohis at the Rajawali School, becomes less attractive. This forced the Rohis at the Merpati School to adjust to a diverse audience by becoming moderate and inclusive. The situation outside of school is not different. Limited options of alternative religious moderate media and youth activities seem to increase the significance of Islamist activism.

Recommendations

In conclusion, it is worth restating that piety or Islamization in itself should not be a matter of concern. In these times of an increasingly modernized society and trends of consumerism among youth, education promoting religious adherence and morality can be of major interest in Indonesian society. A moderate promotion of piety could be key in challenging the radicalization among youth. The answer to radicalization is most likely not to challenge religiosity, but to promote moderate expressions of religiosity. The availability of moderate alternatives for religious activities could be critical in challenging the significance of radical Islamism. As suggested by the experience of the Merpati school, where the Islamist Rohis is unable to take control of the school public life, moderate alternatives could also challenge the key factor for Islamist success, which is the structural support of school authorities for moral enforcement, resulting in limits to freedom and diversity.

Based on these findings, we recommend the following actions:

1. Pluralist NGOs, such as LKiS in Yogyakarta, Fahmina in Cirebon, and LAPAR in Makassar, need to be more involved in youth daily life, both at school level and beyond. It is important to move beyond the promotion of religious tolerance to a more practical level, for example by promoting creativity skills that could be used to encourage respect for diversity. Moreover, moderate or pluralist NGOs shouldprovide alternative religious sessions at schools, in response to moral panic among parents.
2. Such programs should also be carried out outside schools, because radical propaganda is more prevalent outside schools through media and religious study circles. Pluralist NGOs need to create and support moderate religious media, that are accessible for youth. Excellent skills in advanced information technology are a key to provide alternative religious media which respect diversity.
3. It is important for pluralist NGOs and academics to persuade the government to ensure a free public sphere at schools. They need to collaborate with the government to make and/or enforce regulations, which require the school management to be neutral with regard to religion. This could help the government to develop strategies in response to school authorities that implement policies in favour of certain religious groups.
4. Moderate mainstream organizations (especially NU and Muhammadiyah) need to support their student organizations like IPPNU, IPPNU, and IRM, to intensify their activities at public schools. Support should also come from moderate university student movements like PergerakanMahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII) and IkatanMahasiswaMuhammadiyah (IMM).

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