

Empowering Educational Actors and Institutions to Promote
Religious Moderation in Preventing Violent Extremism - **CONVEY Indonesia**

Policy Brief Series

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This Policy Brief Series is made as part of CONVEY Indonesia project conducted by PPIM UIN Jakarta and UNDP Indonesia.

CONVEY Indonesia is aimed to promote peace in Indonesia and prevent extremism with violence and radicalism through a set of research, surveys, policy advocacy and public interactions based on the potency of religious education. CONVEY Indonesia project covers issues on tolerance, diversity and nonviolence among youth.

Contemporary Hijrah Movement in Indonesia

Preface

The hijrah movement in Indonesia lately is related to the religious conservatism trend, which has become a global phenomenon in the last decade. This movement offers a new lifestyle, considered to bring inner peace and build ukhuwah (brotherhood). The branding of the contemporary hijrah movement has also changed along with public figures such as artists who have also promoted Hijrah as a new lifestyle in accordance with Sharia. However, this does not wholly abandon modern life. Some Hijrah movements are formed because of the similarity of hobbies and backgrounds that make this movement have its own magnet for its followers. These are later deemed incapable of facilitating mainstream Islamic movements such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah.

Based on a survey of the Hijrah movement conducted by the IDN Research Institute, it was found that 72.8% of individuals who join the Hijrah movement were from the youth group or what is often referred to as millennials (Noormega, 2019). The millennial group who joined the majority hijrah group just wanted to learn about Islam and felt thirsty for knowledge about Islam. From the preliminary search results of this study, it was found that there were more than 50 Hijrah communities spread across two cities, Jakarta and Bandung. Therefore, this group has a diverse number of followers. Meanwhile, the easiest way to see how much influence the Hijrah community has is by looking at the number of followers on social media. Among the 50 communities studied in this preliminary research, it was revealed that the community with the most followers was SHIFT or Pemuda Hijrah in Bandung, with around 2 million followers on Instagram; followed by the Kajian Musawarah with 870 thousand followers; and The Strangers Al-Ghuroba with 120 thousand followers. Furthermore, the five hijrah communities were investigated based on various considerations, including SHIFT or Pemuda Hijrah, Kajian Musawarah, The Strangers Al-Ghuroba, Terang Jakarta, and Yuk Ngaji.

The emergence of hijrah movements in Indonesia cannot be denied at the same time as the increasing threat of Islamic radicalism. It underlies concerns that exclusive interpretations among hijrah groups will provide more significant support for extreme religious interpretations, threatening Indonesia's diversity. In particular, the followers of this hijrah movement are the majority of them who do not

have a qualified understanding of religion, so they tend to taqlid (follow without critically analyzing the truth) towards Ustaz (the religious teacher). In addition, a study conducted by Hew Wai Weng on the YukNgaji hijrah community found that in the hijrah movement, there were efforts to spread the idea of a caliphate. It is what makes calling this movement a "strategy to normalize religious radicalism" (Weng, 2018).

Thus, it is crucial to understand this hijrah movement, especially in terms of motivation and the basis for millennial interest in the movement; the meaning of Hijrah; taught values and norms; teaching dissemination strategies; and the diversity of the spectrum hijrah movement. In addition, no study describes in detail the hijrah movement and its typology. Knowledge of these matters will be able to make policymakers or supporters of religious moderation determine attitudes and take appropriate steps in responding to this movement. In addition, it can also be obtained an explanation of the "backwardness" of the two largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, namely Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, in adopting an attractive da'wah method for millennials.

The output of this research will scrutinize deeper into the Hijrah movement to develop a capacity-building program for moderate youth. In this way, the possibility of spreading ideas contrary to the values of religious moderation will be prevented and balanced with reasonable efforts to spread the concept of religious moderation. This is a preventive action to maintain religious moderation, as well as a narrative counter for the narratives that spread Islamic exclusivity along with the growing Hijrah community in Indonesia.

Research question

Four main questions will be answered in this study, namely:

1 What is the typology and spectrum of the hijrah movement in Indonesia? Do different groups also have differences in agendas, taught norms and values, religious affiliation, religious references, and practices?

2 How do Hijrah groups understand and respond to contemporary issues such as democracy, statehood, pluralism, and efforts to fight religious extremism?

3 How do the Hijrah groups view the role of women and issues related to women?

4 What strategies are used by hijrah groups to attract followers from millennials?

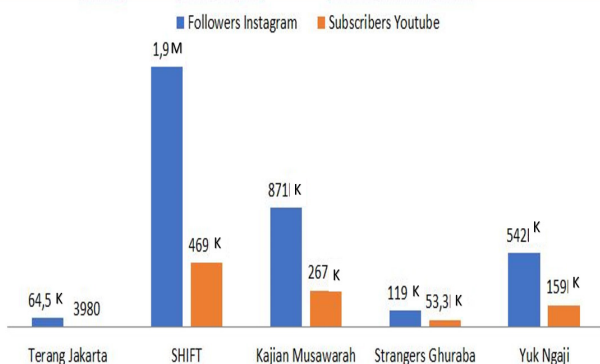
Research Method



Findings

The following is a diagram showing the number of Instagram followers and YouTube subscribers of several hijrah communities in Indonesia (as of 31 October 2020), including Terang Jakarta, SHIFT or Pemuda Hijrah, Kajian Musawarah, The Strangers Al-Ghuroba, and Yuk Ngaji:

The number of Followers in Instagram and subscribers in Youtube of Indonesian Hijrah communities



a. Typology and Spectrum of Hijrah Movement

By exploring the meaning of Hijrah in the five communities, its core teachings, and movement patterns, this research can find two typologies of the hijrah movement, namely conservative and Islamist. Four communities fall into the conservative category, namely Terang Jakarta, Pemuda Hijrah, Kajian Musawarah, and The Strangers Al-Ghuroba. Meanwhile, Yuk Ngaji falls into the Islamist category.

The definition of the concept of the typology of Hijrah in question is as follows:

- The term Islamist in this research refers to the Islamic political movement, which believes that Islam is a political ideology (religionized Islam) (Bassam Tibi, 2012).
- The term conservative refers to a group that rejects modernist, liberal, or progressive interpretations of Islamic teachings and maintains a standardized social order and doctrine (Bruinessen, 2013).
- The term Salafi in this research refers to a religious sect or religious model that emphasizes the purity of Islam by returning to the Quran and Hadith textually, wanting to return to the life model of the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and following the diversity of the three early generations of post-Prophet Islam (Salaf al -Sholeh) (Wictorowitz, 2006)
- In this study, the term accommodative Salafi refers to a religious sect that rests on pure Salafi values but has an openness to modern values and is quite flexible to realize the unity of the ummah (one ummah).

a. Da'wah Strategy

There are several strategies used by the hijrah community in an effort to spread ideas and gain followers, namely 1) active use of social media; 2) the use of social media views that follow the age target of followers; 3) the use of social activities that are preferred by young people such as skateboarding, futsal, ta'aruf, camping, sports, etc.; 4) the use of third parties that represent pop culture, such as celebrities and popular icons among young people (K-Pop, anime, etc.); 5) the use of places that are not mainstream for recitation (cafes, hotels, etc.); 6) the use of a motivational training approach in recitation (ustadz = trainer); 7) use of English; 8) Discussing lightly and avoiding khilafiyah discussion (the different opinions); 9) take advantage of national holidays for religious events; 10) contemporary fashion style but in accordance with the Shari'a; 11) use of vlog about the Islamic studies in forms of videos and video boosters; 12) Mobilization of public figures; 13) encouragement to undertake entrepreneurship and independent economic development; 14) the exchange of figures and religious teachers; 15) strengthening networks through Muslim United.

a. Contemporary issues

- **Nationalism**
The hijrah community operates in an Indonesian context and makes nationalism content in community social media and joint social activities (Barisan Bangun Negeri). Nationalism is interpreted at different levels in the form of feelings, actions, and ideology. Nationalism indicators are manifested in the form of social concern (BBN) and acceptance of Pancasila as the basis of the state and not against Islam (Terang Jakarta, The Strangers Al-Ghuroba, Musawah, and SHIFT). However, the hijrah community tends to emphasize the unity of the ummah.
- **Violence and Radicalism**
whole migrant community firmly rejects violence and the views of radical groups (suicide bombings, etc.).
- **Acceptance of the diversity and leadership of non-Muslims**
hijrah community recognizes the diversity of Indonesia, both the diversity of religions and the diversity of religious organizations. The refusal of non-Muslims to become leaders is part of the textual interpretation of religion. However, with the tendency for individuals to come from the urban middle class, members of the Hijrah community are very accustomed to associating with non-Muslims.
- **Caliphate**
As a community, only Yuk Ngaji explicitly discusses and socializes the Caliph as a part of the Hijrah.
- **Rules of Fashion**
The entire community, except The Strangers Al-Ghuroba, did not emphasize the provisions for wearing clothes in a particular style. Therefore, modern styles can still be worn as long as they are still under the provisions of Sharia (covering aurat).

b. Gender Issues

In general, the hijrah community has a conservative view of women, but most of the community has an open view in some cases. For example, a conservative view can be seen in women's issues as leaders in both the household and public sphere, polygamy, young marriage, the biological relationship of husband and wife. Besides, other

issues can be the reasons for the wife to work (if the husband is unable to meet household needs) and the wife's obligation as a housekeeper. Meanwhile, an open view can be seen on the division of roles between husband and wife in the household, including women's ability to play their roles in the economic and public spheres.

Highlights

- **The meaning of Hijrah is a change from what is not good to be good or from what is already good to become better. Hijrah is also interpreted as leaving anything that Allah SWT forbids.**
- **The majority of the hijrah community is textual in interpreting the verses of the Quran and Hadith, although some are interpreted contextually for some specific issues.**
- **The strategy of preaching the hijrah community uses social media as the primary facility to reach followers and accept the pop culture.**
- **The religious figures move from one community to another. Thus, it is opening the possibility of disseminating teachings from one Ustadz in one community to another.**
- **Views on contemporary issues, especially in terms of state issues and plurality, tend to be soft, but not in terms of non-Muslim leadership, which the hijrah community cannot accept, especially The Yuk Ngaji community that tends to establish a caliphate in Indonesia.**
- **The view on gender issues tends to be conservative, but there is also a tendency towards open thinking in some aspects.**

Recommendation

1 Encouraging the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia to maximize the potential of the network of religious extension workers and local youth preachers by providing provisions for da'wah methods that target the younger generation by promoting the values of religious moderation; expanding the extension functions to foster not only offline communities but also online communities

2 Increasing the role of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in facilitating the meeting space between the Ministry, the hijrah community, MUI, mainstream Islamic organizations (such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama), and intra-religious groups, to build an understanding to create a harmonious life amid the heterogeneity of religious understanding

3 Encouraging the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, especially Director-General for Guidance of the Islamic Community, to prepare modules or general guidelines for young preachers who speak out about Islam and Indonesians based on moderate values with participatory methods and responsive to the development of the digital world

4 Encouraging the role of civil society fronted by social organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, al-Washliyah, Mathla'ul Anwar, Nahdlatul Wathan, and others, and it is necessary to balance moderate religious narratives in the public sphere by considering the spirit of youth

5 Reactivating the gender focal point at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in mentoring and evaluating activities so that gender issues become a concern in various programs

6 Increasing the synergy between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Women and Children Empowerment in strengthening gender sensitivity for policymakers and relevant authorities

The Profile of Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah

Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) UIN Jakarta is an autonomous research institution under the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta. PPIM UIN Jakarta was founded in 1994 and continuously conducts research, advocacy, and publication on religious life and education issues in Indonesia.

Together with UNDP Indonesia, PPIM UIN Jakarta since 2017 has carried out the Countering Violent Extremism for Youth (CONVEY) Indonesia program, a program that aims to build peace in Indonesia based on the potential of religious education by touching issues of tolerance, diversity, and violence among the younger generation. In addition, since its establishment until now, PPIM UIN Jakarta has also published the *Studia Islamika Journal*, an internationally reputed journal that focuses on Islamic studies in Indonesia and Southeast Asia.



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