

Indonesian Salafi Education: Change and Sustainability Attitudes toward Ideology in PPIM al-Mukmin Ngruki

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the changing and sustaining ideological attitudes within PPIM Al-Mukmin Ngruki. The central research question is: How has the conservative PPIM Ngruki changed and sustained its attitude toward ideology? This qualitative study draws upon primary sources, including interviews with administrators and founders of PPIM, as well as official government and institutional documents. Secondary sources include dissertations, theses, journal articles, organizational statutes (AD/ART), and key instructional texts used by PPIM Ngruki. Findings reveal that the ideological transformation of Al-Mukmin Ngruki's conservative community was driven by two key factors: (1) strong external pressure and negative stigma from both the government and the wider public, who viewed PPIM Ngruki as a hardline Islamic boarding school; and (2) an internal process of self-evaluation regarding their understanding of Islam and their attitudes toward Pancasila and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Consequently, PPIM Ngruki's ideological stance shifted from a conflictual–contestational mindset to an accommodative–inclusive orientation as part of its sustainability effort.

Key words: *accommodative-inclusive, ideology, self-evaluation, sustainability.*

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Introduction

News coverage—whether through electronic or print media—about the Al-Mukmin Ngruki Islamic Boarding School in Sukoharjo, Surakarta (hereinafter referred to as PPIM Ngruki) often revives public memories of its controversial past. The general public recalls that several alumni of PPIM Ngruki were involved in violent acts, including bombings and armed attacks across Indonesia (Nugroho et al., 2022). Between 2002 and 2015, PPIM Ngruki was widely perceived as a “nest of terrorists” that instilled fear among communities.

Wildan (2022) observed that PPIM Ngruki was particularly vulnerable to the influence of religious radicalism (Wildan & Muttaqin, 2022). This vulnerability stemmed from the perception among some radicals that Islamic knowledge should be built upon a paradigm of conflict and contestation—believing that Islam inherently opposes the ideology of Pancasila. From this perspective, Pancasila was accused of promoting polytheism (“many gods”), thus being categorized as *shirk* (idolatry). Within such a worldview, Pancasila could not resolve the nation’s problems, and Islam was positioned as an alternative national ideology (Wildan & Muttaqin, 2022). Consequently, during that period, PPIM Ngruki was perceived as a threat to both national and international security (Wildan & Muttaqin, 2022).

However, nothing on earth remains unchanged. Over time, PPIM Ngruki has undergone significant transformation since its establishment in 1972. Recent studies indicate that PPIM Ngruki historically adhered to Salafi ideology (Nugroho, et al., 2022). Yet, these studies also reveal that the Salafi movement within PPIM Ngruki is not monolithic but plural, consisting of two main streams: Salafi Ikhwani and Salafi Hijazi. The *Salafi Hijazi* group represents the softer orientation within PPIM Ngruki, while the *Salafi Ikhwani* group represents a more hardline position. Mukharom (2015) emphasized that the violent acts committed by some PPIM Ngruki alumni were not part of the school’s official curriculum or learning design but rather individual choices influenced by external networks. Scholars of Islamic studies agree that the Indonesian Salafi movement forms part of a broader global Salafi trend, characterized as *transnational Salafism*, which has spread across various regions of Indonesia.

Broadly speaking, global Salafism is divided into two orientations: Hijazi Salafism and Ikhwani Salafism. *Hijazi Salafism* focuses on purifying worship practices, asserting that many popular forms of Islam practiced in society deviate from the authentic teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. It seeks to "cleanse" Islam from superstition (*khurafat*) and heresy (*bid'ah*), aiming to restore the faith's original purity as practiced during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn*, and the early generations (*tābi'īn* and *tābi' al-tābi'īn*). In contrast, Ikhwani Salafism holds that Islamic ideals cannot be realized without political power. Proponents argue that power provides the coercive authority necessary for implementing Islamic values within society.

Therefore, power is viewed as essential—indeed, obligatory—for the realization of Islamic values in society. In other words, institutionalizing Islamic values within the structure of power is considered a religious necessity. *Salafi Ikhwani* adherents continually strive to establish Islamic sovereignty (*an Islamic state*) in various regions, whether through constitutional means in parliamentary systems or through non-constitutional, military-based approaches. This group is also often referred to as the *jibadi* Salafi movement—an ideological stream within Salafism characterized by extremism and violent action in pursuit of Islamic ideals (Fenton, 201).

Wahib (2017) identified four core characteristics of the Salafi movement. First, it promotes Islam as practiced during the era of the Prophet Muhammad, the *Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn*, the *Tābi'īn*, and the *Tābi' al-Tābi'īn*. Second, it seeks to purify Islamic teachings within society by eliminating practices considered deviant from the Qur'an and Hadith. Third, it emphasizes the cultivation of public piety; for example, one common expression of Salafi identity in public is the wearing of the *niqab* by women, symbolizing personal modesty and loyalty to Islamic values (Wahib, 2017). Fourth, the Salafi movement exhibits total resistance to the spread of secular culture in society.

Over time, the *haraki* (activist) branch of Salafism has expanded its involvement to include not only men but also women, some of whom have taken part in acts of violence in the name of *jihad* (Arifin, 2017). As a result of these ideological orientations, the Salafi movement

frequently encounters conflict with broader society and even with fellow Muslims—particularly those who embrace Islamic traditions and accommodate local culture (Qadir, 2023). Meanwhile, *Salafi Ikhwani* adherents have often positioned themselves in opposition to state authority wherever they exist. Their political approach tends to generate social conflict and, in some cases, violent confrontation, particularly among paramilitary factions within the movement. These paramilitary *Ikhwani Salafis* have pursued their vision of Islamic governance through non-parliamentary means, namely by taking up arms (Nugroho et al., 2022). Overall, Salafi Islam has been widely criticized as a movement that does not consistently display Islamic ethics. This criticism arises from its harsh condemnation of Muslims who continue to observe customary religious practices deemed *bid'ah* (innovation) or *khurafat* (superstition). Salafi Islam also reproaches other Muslims for being passive and failing to advocate Islamic values through political structures (Atabik & Muhtador, 2023).

In essence, Salafi Islam frequently clashes with society and the state because its religious expression often disregards local wisdom while insisting on embedding Islam into state power structures. To Salafi adherents, both culture and local traditions are largely *non-shar'i* and often associated with *shirk*, superstition, or heresy. Moreover, Salafi Islam tends to view the state as secular and anti-religious. Even when the state appears to accommodate Islamic values, this is often dismissed as mere “lip service,” intended to pacify Muslims by offering symbolic gestures rather than genuine implementation.

Nevertheless, in recent years, the Salafi movement in Indonesia—and PPIM Ngruki in particular—has demonstrated a broader evolution. Indonesian Salafism is no longer confined to the *Hijazi* and *Ikhwani* orientations but has begun to incorporate socio-economic dimensions as well (Qadir, 2023). Taufik (2022) noted that PPIM Ngruki has developed an economic empowerment initiative based on *ta'āwun* (mutual cooperation) principles. By 2024, the conservative faction within PPIM Ngruki had become especially noteworthy for its ideological transformation. They had undergone significant changes in their perception of *Pancasila*: 1) They no longer viewed *Pancasila* as a *tāghūt* (idolatrous) ideology but reinterpreted it as consistent with *tauhīd* (monotheism). 2) They shifted their view of the Republic of

Indonesia from an “infidel state” to a nation that is not antagonistic toward Islam.

Evidence of this transformation can be seen in the participation of Abu Bakar Ba’asyir—formerly regarded as the key conservative figure of PPIM Ngruki—in the Indonesian Independence Day flag ceremonies on August 17 in both 2022 and 2023 (Iqbal, 2022). Such positive developments should be welcomed by all components of the nation, as they signify a constructive reorientation of ideological attitudes within PPIM Ngruki. This article, therefore, seeks to answer the question: How has the conservative PPIM Ngruki changed and sustained its attitude toward ideology?

Method

This study adopted a qualitative research design. Primary data were obtained from interviews with the administrators and founders of PPIM Ngruki, as well as from official documents issued by both the Indonesian government and the institution itself. Secondary data included dissertations, theses, journal articles, organizational statutes (*AD/ART*), and principal textbooks used in PPIM Ngruki’s teaching process. Data were collected through observation and documentation. The researcher then selected and analyzed data that were most relevant to the research objectives. To explain the behavioral changes observed among members of the conservative PPIM Ngruki group, this study adopted Albert Bandura’s Social Learning Theory. According to Bandura, individuals or groups learn through observation, imitation, and modeling, which are shaped by the reciprocal interaction between behavior and the surrounding environment. Indicators that demonstrate an individual or group’s acquisition of new social learning include: 1) Evaluating the steps that their group has taken so far. 2) Assessing the outcomes of those steps. 3) Recognizing that previous approaches have resulted in more conflict and bloodshed than benefit. 4) Seeking the best strategic solution to achieve their collective ideals for sustainability.

Results and Discussion

Government Policy in the Field of Ideology and Countermeasures

The policy of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) regarding state ideology—across the Old Order, New Order, and Ref-

ormation Era—has remained relatively consistent. Its main objective is to strengthen the loyalty of all national components to the ideology of Pancasila. Any attempt to promote group-based ideologies—whether regional, local, or religious—or to divide the nation through unconstitutional means has been firmly opposed and eradicated at its roots (Mukiyat, 2019). This stance has been evident in Indonesia's responses to various rebellions, such as the Republic of South Maluku (RMS), PRRI, PKI, DI/TII, GAM, and the Papua conflict (Mukiyat, 2019). Likewise, during the Reformation Era, Indonesia's policy toward acts of terrorism, both national and transnational, has remained substantially similar to earlier approaches. The government continues to prioritize the safeguarding of Pancasila as the nation's ideological foundation. In this context, Indonesian citizens—especially Muslims, as the majority population—are encouraged to align their religious and social aspirations with Pancasila's unifying principles.

To combat terrorism, Indonesia employs a dual approach that integrates both hard and soft measures. To combat terrorism, Indonesia employs a dual strategy that integrates both *hard* and *soft* approaches. The hard approach is enforced through Law No. 15 of 2023 on Counterterrorism and Law No. 9 of 2013 on the Prevention and Eradication of Terrorism Financing (Mukiyat, 2019). Meanwhile, the soft approach is implemented through ideological education, community engagement, and deradicalization programs coordinated by national institutions such as the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT). In addition to domestic measures, the Government of Indonesia actively participates in international initiatives for preventing and eradicating terrorism. These include collaboration with organizations such as the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (TPB-UNODC), and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (UNCTED). Furthermore, Indonesia continues to advance the implementation of the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UNGCTS) (Mukiyat, 2019).

Government Policy in the Field of Educational Ideology

Government policy in the areas of ideology and education is primarily represented by the Ministry of Education and Culture and

the Ministry of Religious Affairs. For these two ministries, Indonesia's future depends heavily on how the younger generation is prepared to develop resilience against both narcotics abuse and harmful ideological influences that threaten national integrity (Efendi, 2018). State policy in the field of education grants these institutions the authority to supervise, guide, and enforce ideological and moral education. This authority extends to provincial and district levels, empowering local offices to intervene in the development of curricula—particularly within the scope of character education (Efendi, 2018).

Following the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 87 of 2017, educational institutions under these ministries were given the mandate to revise their curricula, including the integration of new scientific and civic content such as multicultural education and religious moderation. The implementation of this decree occurs both inside and outside the classroom—through curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. In addition, both ministries cooperate with the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) to disseminate information on radicalism, intolerance, and preventive measures, which are integrated into school subjects.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs, under Secretary-General Nur Syam, also continues to promote a moderate understanding and practice of religion across both educational and non-educational institutions (Efendi, 2018). Philosophically, the foundation of Indonesia's policy toward groups with rival ideologies can be traced to Syaifudin Zuhri's work, entitled *Regimented Islamophobia, State, and Governmentality in Indonesia* (Atabik, & Muhtador, 2023).

Field data indicate that PPIM Ngruki's response to state ideological and educational policies can be divided into two major orientations: the conservative group and the moderate group (Nugroho et al., 2022). The conservative faction—represented by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir and Abdullah Sungkar—believes that Islam must be fully integrated into the structure of state power. This group refers to the Qur'anic verse *Al-Mā'idah* (5:44): "Whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, then they are disbelievers." Based on this interpretation, Indonesia, being a Pancasila-based state that does not implement Islamic law, is categorized as a non-Islamic or infidel state.

For this reason, the conservative faction insists that PPIM Ngruki must educate its students on the necessity of establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia (Iqbal, 2022).

Leaders of this group have also been known to label other Muslims as misguided for not using Islamic law as the sole legal reference. The conservative group is characterized by intolerance, rigidity, and conflict-oriented discourse, often constructing narratives of hostility toward those of differing religions or opinions (Fenton, 2014). In the broader context of Indonesian Islamic discourse, they are identified as hardline Islamists.

In educational practice, the conservative faction advocates that PPIM Ngruki's curriculum emphasize themes of jihad, total loyalty to Islam, and rejection of secularism, including Pancasila as the ideology of a secular state. Consequently, the conservative group envisions PPIM Ngruki as an Islamic educational institution that should produce students willing to engage in *jihad fi sabilillāh* (Nugroho, et al., 2022).

Scholars of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia argue that this group sustains its influence through emotional and identity-based solidarity, urging students to demonstrate militant loyalty to Islam and to strive toward transforming society according to Qur'anic and Hadith-based norms. The conservative group views Indonesia's current social reality as corrupt and morally degraded, citing persistent problems such as prostitution, gambling, and the proliferation of pornography. These social deviations, which remain largely unresolved, create the impression that the government, as an instrument of the state, is either tolerant of or incapable of addressing widespread moral decline.

Such conditions have strengthened the conservative faction's disillusionment with the state and deepened their conviction that Islam must serve as an alternative ideological system to Pancasila. They have constructed a narrative for students portraying Islam as the only viable moral and political foundation for the nation. Consequently, the conservative Islamist faction at PPIM Ngruki has experienced a decline in trust toward the government's commitment to eradicating immorality and safeguarding the nation's moral order. Furthermore, the conservative group believes that the state ideology of Pancasila can no longer effectively address the country's mounting social and

ethical crises. At the core of their thinking lies the conviction that: “By correctly implementing the true values of Islam as practiced in the early generations, Islam will guide the Indonesian nation to achieve success in every aspect of life based on divine teachings.”

The moderate group within PPIM Ngruki—represented by Yahya Abdurrahman, Mua’lif Rasyid, and Drs. Farid Ma’ruf—demonstrates an attitude of acceptance toward Pancasila, the Indonesian state, and its official policies. This faction chooses a peaceful approach in dealing with social and political issues in Indonesia. They hold that the ultimate ideal of Islam lies in the spiritual realm, while Indonesia, with all its imperfections, serves as a place where Muslims can perform good deeds and contribute to national welfare. The moderate PPIM Ngruki group is widely recognized as a representation of soft Islam, characterized by attitudes of friendliness, politeness, patience, tolerance, inclusiveness, and effective communication with external parties such as the military (Kodim and Korem), the police, Muhammadiyah, and other educational institutions (Wijaya & Syamsuddin, 2021).

Their fundamental philosophy centers on the integration of Islam and Indonesian identity (Islam–Indonesianism) and the cultivation of *tasāmuh* (tolerance). This concept, termed Islamic–Indonesian integration education, teaches that Muslims are not required to establish an Islamic state. Instead, Muslims are encouraged to actualize Islamic values as the substance of governance and morality within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) (Wijaya et al., 2021). This position sharply contrasts with that of the conservative faction, which considers it necessary to study *fiqh siyāsah* to establish an Indonesian Islamic State or to reform the Republic of Indonesia according to *sharī‘ah*. By contrast, the moderate group believes PPIM Ngruki should focus on embedding Islamic ethical values in state administration substantively, without demanding their formal codification in legislation (Nugroho et al., 2022).

The moderate group poses a key reflective question to its students: “What is the essence of being a true Muslim?” Their response emphasizes that the essence of true faith lies in practicing Islamic teachings holistically within the spatial and temporal context

of Indonesia. They also teach that the Prophet Muhammad never prescribed a fixed form of government, not even the caliphate. Hence, under both the Qur'an and the Prophet's example, Muslims have the freedom to choose forms of government appropriate to their own time and context. In line with this philosophy, the moderate faction of PPIM Ngruki has introduced new curricular components, including sociology, Pancasila education, and citizenship studies (Nugroho et al., 2022). These subjects strengthen students' understanding of how Islamic values can harmonize with national identity and civic responsibility.

Another defining characteristic of this group is their strong commitment to *tasāmuh*, or tolerance, in Indonesia's plural society. They emphasize the nation's diversity in terms of culture, ethnicity, and religion, and teach that such plurality must be respected, protected, and transformed into constructive synergy for nation-building. *Tasāmuh* is regarded as a prerequisite for religious harmony. Although religion is often celebrated as a source of compassion, it can also become a source of conflict when misinterpreted. Therefore, PPIM Ngruki's innovative moderate faction integrates lessons on religious tolerance within its Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum (Wahib, 2017). By nurturing a moderate mindset and behavior, this group believes that the true indicators of Islamic superiority and glory lie in the upholding of morality (*al-akblāq al-kañmah*), justice, and equality within society and the nation. For them, the realization of Islamic values must be achieved through wisdom, patience, and moral conduct, rather than through violence that brings suffering and bloodshed.

From the explanations above, PPIM Ngruki can be categorized as a Salafi-oriented Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*). The institution promotes Islam modeled after the *Salaf* era—namely, the early period of Islam. PPIM Ngruki's ideological foundation draws upon the idealism of the early Muslim generations, a period when the *ummah* was still united, free from sectarian divisions, and prioritized the Qur'an and Hadith over individual reasoning or political interests. Based on available information, the Salafi community within PPIM Ngruki can be divided into two main currents: the Hijazi Salafi and the Ikhwani Salafi (Nugroho et al., 2022). Both streams have historically

experienced friction with society and, at times, with the state. This tension arises from the doctrinal and intellectual genetics embedded in PPIM Ngruki's Salafi orientation.

The Hijazi Salafi tradition focuses primarily on purifying acts of worship, seeking to restore ritual practices to their original prophetic form (Fenton, 2014). In contrast, the Ikhwani Salafi movement aspires to integrate Islamic values into political and state structures, even advocating for the establishment of an Islamic state. These two orientations frequently place PPIM Ngruki in a delicate and often oppositional position vis-à-vis broader society and the Indonesian government. Given this complex background, the present study aims to explore how PPIM Ngruki manages its Salafi intellectual inheritance ("scientific genetics") so that it can maintain ideological continuity while simultaneously existing and functioning within Indonesia's pluralistic national context.

Change and sustainability

Self-Evaluation

Recent developments indicate significant ideological change among PPIM Ngruki's conservative group. The most prominent evidence of this transformation is found in the personal evolution of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, who was once firmly opposed to Pancasila but has since expressed acceptance of it as the ideology of the Republic of Indonesia (Iqbal, 2022). Two pieces of evidence highlight this change. For two consecutive years (2022 and 2023), Abu Bakar Ba'asyir participated in the Indonesian Independence Day flag ceremony on August 17, attended by local Kodim and Korem commanders. There has been a clear shift in Ba'asyir's public statements regarding Pancasila's ideological nature (Iqbal, 2022).

Previously, Ba'asyir regarded Pancasila as a form of shirk (polytheism) and *ṭāghūt* (false deity) and argued that it must be resisted and replaced (Zuhri, 2021). However, since 2022, his views have changed. He now asserts that Pancasila embodies monotheism (*tauhīd*), not shirk. He further reasoned that it would have been impossible for the ulama of the independence era to have accepted Pancasila had it truly contradicted Islamic belief (Iqbal, 2022). This change emerged from a period of self-evaluation and critical

reflection among conservative members of PPIM Ngruki. According to Satriawan (2022), the group began reassessing their religious knowledge and attitudes through a series of studies. They concluded that their earlier stance—labeling Indonesia as a *kāfir* (infidel) state for not implementing Islamic law, and branding Pancasila as a shirk ideology for recognizing multiple religions—was a misguided approach.

Through a series of reflective studies, the conservative PPIM Ngruki group concluded that they had chosen the wrong ideological path and taken misguided actions. They acknowledged that their earlier stance—considering Indonesia an *infidel state* because it does not apply the Qur'an and Hadith as sources of law—was erroneous. Similarly, they admitted that their perception of Pancasila as a *shirk* ideology, on the grounds that it recognizes and accommodates multiple religions, was a serious misjudgment (CNNIndonesia, 2022). This rigid and exclusionary mindset had previously led some of their followers to adopt *tatharruf*—that is, an excessive or extremist attitude—which manifested in acts of violence in several regions across Indonesia (Mukharom, 2015). The choice to sustain a confrontational and conflict-based approach, they later realized, had resulted in more bloodshed and public suffering than in the actual advancement of Islamic values. As Hilmy (2013) explains, such approaches stand in stark contrast to the principles of *Islam rahmatan li-l-ālamīn*—Islam as a mercy and source of peace for all creation.

With growing awareness, the conservative group at PPIM Ngruki conducted an in-depth evaluation of its previous attitudes and actions. They concluded that the Republic of Indonesia is neither *Dār al-Islām* (an Islamic state) nor *Dār al-Kufr* (a domain of disbelief), even though the majority of its citizens are Muslim. Importantly, Indonesia is not hostile toward Islam. Recognizing this reality, the group acknowledged the flaws in their earlier perceptions of Pancasila and the state. Consequently, they reversed their stance, extending support not only to the moderate PPIM Ngruki group but also to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) itself.

It should also be noted that since 2016, conservative figures have been conducting structured study sessions on Pancasila and the

Indonesian state, concluding that neither is in conflict with Islamic teachings (Iqbal, 2022). Their engagements with Densus 88, Indonesia's counterterrorism unit, further deepened this transformation. Members of the conservative faction expressed admiration upon discovering that many Densus 88 officers personally adhere to Islamic principles. They also emphasized that their newfound attitude is genuine and conscience-driven, clarifying that it is not a form of *taqiyyah* (concealment) nor a tactical maneuver to disguise hidden agendas (Kompas, 2022).

External pressure

The external pressure exerted on PPIM Ngruki from both the government and the wider public has been notably strong. Public perception has long depicted PPIM Ngruki as a hardline Islamic boarding school and even as a terrorist breeding ground, instilling fear among communities. Such accusations have been reinforced by media coverage—both print and electronic—of intolerant behavior and violent acts committed by some of its alumni (Mukharom, 2015). However, it is crucial to note that these acts were not part of the pesantren's official curriculum or educational design, but rather the individual responsibility of specific alumni whose actions deviated from institutional values. Nevertheless, the negative stigma associated with PPIM Ngruki as a “den of terrorists” has been deeply painful for its administrators and community. These efforts were intended to demonstrate PPIM Ngruki's openness and its genuine desire to participate constructively in national life rather than to isolate itself from it (Mukharom, 2015).

Sustainability

For PPIM Ngruki, sustainability represents a commitment to preserve and strengthen its educational mission within Indonesia's pluralistic and evolving society. The reconciliation between the conservative and moderate factions has provided new vitality and unity of purpose, enabling the institution to continue its service to the Indonesian people and nation. This newfound harmony is viewed as a positive turning point that supplies the additional energy required to sustain long-, medium-, and short-term institutional goals through programmed and measurable stages.

The essence of sustainability at PPIM Ngruki lies in its determination to remain peaceful and relevant amid the rapid transformation of Indonesian society. To avoid being swept away by social changes that may lead in conflicting directions, PPIM Ngruki has undertaken a process of reorientation. The *pesantren* now redefines its role within the landscape of Islamic education by acknowledging both its contributions and its mistakes. It takes pride in its success in improving the quality of the nation's youth through education, yet it also recognizes that a number of its alumni once committed violent acts that, although not part of the *pesantren's* official design, have significantly affected its institutional reputation.

In response, PPIM Ngruki has embraced an orientation toward Islam Wasatiyyah—a balanced, moderate Islam that looks to the future confidently while preserving its authentic roots. The school strives to transform its image from being fierce and confrontational into one that is friendly, peaceful, and solution-oriented. The old tendency to stigmatize other Islamic groups is being replaced with a willingness to engage in dialogue and offer constructive problem-solving. If this new direction becomes the dominant stream of thought, PPIM Ngruki will evolve into an inclusive educational institution that cultivates non-discriminatory equality and willingly accepts differences alongside similarities (Zuhri, 2021., Fuziyah & Hidayati, 2022).

Alongside this reorientation, PPIM Ngruki seeks to consolidate its achievements and address remaining weaknesses, whether in infrastructure, curriculum implementation, or management. The institution aims to become a comparative and competitive *pesantren* that excels both academically and morally at the national level. It prepares students to become academically competent and ethically upright individuals who will serve as future leaders of the Muslim community and of Indonesia, while also expanding cooperation with various stakeholders to support program implementation (Alvian & Ardhani, 2023).

A closer examination shows that both the conservative and moderate groups within PPIM Ngruki are grounded in the same fundamental teachings—the life of the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an, and the Hadith (Qadir, 2023). The difference lies in their

interpretive approaches. The conservative group employs a textual method, reading Qur'anic verses literally, whereas the moderate group applies a contextual method, interpreting the texts in relation to the historical setting of revelation and the realities of contemporary society. These contrasting approaches have led the two factions to take different paths in articulating Islam within Indonesia's sociocultural environment.

Meanwhile, other experts in Islamic studies have also sought to answer the question of why PPIM Ngruki eventually divided into two factions, each pursuing a different path (Suryono, 2021). These scholars argue that the division occurred because of differences in modes of thinking. The conservative faction adopted a conflict-contestation mindset, constructing narratives of antagonism and religious exclusivity, whereas the moderate faction embraced a tolerant, accommodating, and inclusive mode of thought. According to these experts, this divergence in reasoning and worldview led PPIM Ngruki to follow two distinct trajectories within Islam—one toward peace and coexistence, and the other toward violence and confrontation.

PPIM Ngruki's contrasting interpretations of Islam and their corresponding attitudes are deeply rooted in the broader historical evolution of Indonesian Islam since the nation's independence. In simplified terms, post-independence Indonesian Islam can be categorized into two major orientations. The first comprises groups that accepted the ideology of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) and its foundation of Pancasila, such as *Masyumi*, *Mubammadiyah*, and *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU). The second consists of groups that rejected the Pancasila-based Republic, insisting that Islam should serve as the foundation of the state. The latter faction pursued its political aspirations through extra-parliamentary channels, aiming to establish an Indonesian Islamic State (Negara Islam Indonesia, NII).

During the Constituent Assembly sessions, several critical agendas were debated, particularly concerning the form of the Indonesian state and the ideological basis upon which it should rest. Regarding the state's form, the parliamentary representatives reached a consensus relatively quickly that Indonesia would be a nation-state

in the form of a republic. The more contentious issue concerned the ideological foundation of the newly independent nation. On one side, nationalist groups argued that Indonesia should be founded on the Pancasila ideology, while Islamic groups advocated for the adoption of an Islamic ideological framework.

After lengthy and heated debates, the assembly reached a provisional compromise known as the Jakarta Charter, which stated that the five principles of Pancasila were to be accepted with an additional note attached to the first principle: “Belief in One God, with the obligation to implement Islamic law for its adherents.” However, through political negotiation and compromise, this clause was later annulled, and the final form of the state ideology became the version of Pancasila that exists today—without any explicit reference to Islamic law.

Islamic Sharia and the Nation State

Building upon the discussion above, it is important to consider the challenges faced by Indonesian Muslims as a consequence of accepting the nation-state system. The most immediate implication is that Muslims must recognize and accept the pluralistic nature of Indonesia, which encompasses diversity in religion, political ideology, culture, ethnicity, and race. This plurality requires Muslims to coexist within a heterogeneous national framework rather than an exclusively Islamic one.

A second consequence is that Islam cannot function as the sole source of values and norms governing the nation. In practice, Indonesia’s national ethos and legal system are influenced by multiple sources beyond Islamic teachings. Third, Muslims are expected to adapt to the social, political, and legal systems that have developed within the structure of the nation-state (Sembodo, 2016). In reality, much of Indonesia’s legal and political system was adopted from Western models. The country’s civil and criminal codes derive from the Dutch *Burgerlijk Wetboek (BW)* and *Wetboek van Strafrecht*, while its political system reflects John Locke’s theory of the separation of powers, modified for a republican framework. These imported systems form part of the unavoidable political reality faced by Indonesian Muslims.

As a result, the implementation of Islamic sharia, which many Muslims regard as divinely ordained and ideal for social and national life, has become marginalized within the framework of the modern nation-state. In this context, it is virtually impossible for Indonesian Muslims to disengage entirely from the governance and coercive authority of the state. The nation-state possesses binding and regulatory power, enabling it to enforce laws uniformly throughout Indonesia. Consequently, any attempt to reject or undermine the established legal and political order is considered an act of rebellion or treason, subject to suppression by the state.

From contestation to accommodation

With the above facts in mind, a question arises: is the aspiration to incorporate Islamic law into the fabric of national and state life permanently closed? The answer appears to be no. Some Indonesian Muslims still adopt a conflict–contestation mindset, viewing Islam and Pancasila as two opposing ideologies that contradict and reject each other. However, many other Muslims think in a more accommodative and inclusive manner, believing that Islam and Pancasila share fundamental principles of truth, justice, and morality.

After long reflection and scholarly debate, several leading Islamic figures have concluded that none of the values embedded in Pancasila contradict Islam. Rather, the two can coexist harmoniously. This compatibility is evident in the state's openness to incorporating authentic Islamic values into national legislation and governance. Examples include the 1974 Marriage Law, the 1989 Religious Courts Law, the establishment of Sharia Banking (Bank Muamalat), the Fatwa Commission, the National Sharia Council (DSN), and the Institute for the Study of Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics (LPPOM-MUI). Further legislative manifestations include Law No. 44 of 2008 on Pornography, Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance, and Law No. 23 of 2011 on Zakat Management, among others (Umar, 2016).

Given this development, a new question emerges: Where should PPIM Ngruki go after unification? In essence, PPIM Ngruki—with its foundational Salafi character—will maintain its identity but reform its approach. Learning from past experience, it recognizes that striving for Islam through conflict narratives and extra-parliamentary routes

has shed more blood and caused more suffering than promoting *Islam rahmatan li-l-ālamīn*. Considering both past mistakes and the plural, diverse nature of Indonesian society, integrating Islamic values with Indonesian identity is now a necessity. The old paradigm of conflict and contestation, which produced pain and division, must be replaced by an inclusive and accommodative paradigm rooted in peace and cooperation.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the conservative group of PPIM Ngruki has undergone a fundamental transformation—changing its stance from rejecting to accepting the Pancasila ideology. This change was driven by two main factors: self-evaluation and external pressure from the Indonesian government and broader society. The key aspect of self-evaluation lies in the realization that their previous actions—fueled by a conflictual ideology—had produced violence, division, and public suffering, rather than advancing the peaceful and compassionate message of *Islam rahmatan li-l-ālamīn*. By acknowledging this and choosing an inclusive, accommodative orientation, PPIM Ngruki gains new energy and legitimacy for its institutional sustainability and future development. PPIM Ngruki sustained an orientation toward *Islam Wasatiyyah*—a balanced, moderate Islam that looks to the future confidently while preserving its authentic roots.

Looking forward, PPIM Ngruki's development will rest upon inclusive and accommodative thinking, which not only ensures harmony with the Pancasila-based Republic but also opens space for genuine Islamic values to be integrated into Indonesia's state structure. The open and dynamic nature of Pancasila provides ample opportunity for Islamic ethical and moral principles to become part of the national framework without exclusion or suspicion. Through such a paradigm, Islamic values—previously viewed as marginal or sectarian—can be transformed into mainstream values that strengthen the nation's moral and spiritual foundation.

The implications of this acceptance and alignment with Pancasila and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia can be outlined as follows. First, the ideological implication is that Muslims

recognize Indonesia as a pluralistic nation comprising various religions, ethnicities, and cultures, thereby upholding mutual respect for the rights and beliefs of all citizens and positioning Islam within an inclusive national framework. Second, the socio-cultural implication involves fostering tolerance and interreligious harmony. Muslims are encouraged to promote peaceful coexistence and to prevent the resurgence of radicalism and extremism. Third, the political and legal implication is the willingness of Muslims to participate fully in democratic processes, channeling aspirations through legal and constitutional means rather than violence, while demonstrating respect for the rule of law. Fourth, there is the implication of religious moderation, in which Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, stands as a global model for Islam *Wasatiyyah*, or the practice of balanced, moderate Islam that embraces diversity while upholding faith.

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