Wahhabism and the Shariah State in Indonesia

by Saipul Hamdi

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Saipul Hamdi

Associate Professor in Sociology Department, Universitas Mataram, Lombok, Indonesia

shamdi@unram.ac.id

Abstract

This article investigates the Wahhabi movement in three Saudi-funded schools in the world's most populous Muslim nation of Indonesia. Wahhabism is a reformist Sunni Islamic movement established in Nejd, Saudi Arabia in the 18th Century that underpins Saudi state ideology and law. Its ideology, rooted in puritanism, has been exported to non-Muslim nations around the world with a reformist agenda. In looking at the phenomena of exporting reformation, agenda directed the article to examine how Wahhabi scholars in Indonesia work to negotiate the local cultural practices of Muslim community; that is, how they seek to cleanse Islam from cultural influence, and as a result, often end up producing social violence in communities. Further, the article explores responses to Wahhabi deculturalisation discourses and how local people negotiate their religious identities as they are transformed and influenced by Wahhabi teachings and ideology. In doing so, I look at the role of Wahhabi discourses in shaping radicalism and how individuals who identify as Wahhabi understand and engage radical practices their striving towards the establishment of an Islamic and sharia state.

Keywords: *Wahhabism, identity, local resistant, Islamic and sharia state*

Introduction

Wahhabism is a transnational religious movement that has a growing presence worldwide. After the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia officialized Wahhabi doctrine and ideology in government thus forming an autocracy in the 19th Century, Wahhabi doctrines have spread and strengthened around the world (Al-Rasheed 2007, Bowen 2008, Commins 2009, Delong-Bas 2004, Kostiner 1993, Yamani 2010, Zayani 2012). Economic and political support from the oil-wealthy kingdom reaching Annual profits of $180 billion have been a source of funding for spreading Wahhabi doctrine internationally. Through Islamic Relief and the Qatar Foundation, funding has been allocated for the building of mosques, educational organizations and *majelis taklim* (Islamic small study groups) in Wahhabi communities including in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Al-Saifa 2014, Abdullah et al. 2018, Bonacina 2015, Choksy & Choksy 2015, Ehteshami 2018, Moniquet 2013). However, the presence of Wahhabi influences does not always lead to positive outcomes and instead is often fraught with conflict due to the ways they consistently challenge traditional religious practices in the communities they seek to deculturalise.

Wahhabism is generally understood to be a part of Salafism, that is, a pure version of Islam whereby practitioners fully commit to following the practices and advice from Prophet Muhammad, together with the Holy Qur'an and the Hadiths, in all aspects of their lives (Algar 2002, Commins 2009, Delong-Bas 2004, Rich & MacQueen 2017). Ulama who practise Wahhabism consistently preach about the restoration of 'correct' Islamic religion through purification of Islamic teachings, particularly so for teachings about the unity of God (tauhid) with the aim of eradicating local cultural beliefs and practices that Wahhabis perceive as impure (Blanchard 2011,

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Bowen 2008, Chozin 2013, Rakic and Jurisic 2012). Religious practices that are not found in the texts are thus perceived to be invalid and may fall into the categories of *bidah* (innovation), *sirik* (heretic), or *sesat* (deviant), with the potential to steer other Muslims away from the correct Islamic teachings (Hefner 2011, Picard & Madinier 2011, Lauzière 2010, Macris 2016). It is precisely this kind of purification practice that leads communities to resist and reject Wahhabi teachings and proselytizing practices (Hasan 2007, Hamdi et al. 2015, Rubaidi 2008, Woodward 2017). This article, therefore, aims to understand Wahhabi efforts at deculturalising Islam, together with the negotiation of local identity, and the issues that emerge as a result of their intervention into those communities.

Hardline Wahhabi teachings are exclusive and hostile towards non-Islamic sources. Indonesians who have converted to Wahhabi practice have to negotiate with their local cultural context as they construct their new Wahhabi identities. Common Islamic practices in Indonesia such as sacred site pilgrimage to saints' graves, *maulidan,* a celebration of Muhammad's birthday, *tahlilan* (a special pray for death and newborn baby with providing foods and meal for the community), and remembrance of death anniversaries are rejected by Wahhabi teachings. Groups opposing Wahhabism are challenged in attempts to 'straighten' them and isolate them discursively (Hefner 2011, Picard & Madinier 2011, Hasan 2007). It is not uncommon for such Wahhabi proselytization practices to end in social conflict. It is therefore interesting to look at patterns of conflict that have emerged between Wahhabi groups and local communities in response to differences in interpreting Islamic culture. It can be said that almost all Wahhabi pesantren in the early stages of establishment face challenges and social conflict to some extent as they confront existing traditions in local communities.

In the post-September 11 period, the wider Wahhabi movement has received negative attention from the international community due to its 'hard' teachings which are known to inspire radical jihad groups. Prior to the September, 11 terrorist attacks, the United States of America had been a close partner of Saudi Arabia in the oil economy. Politically, America also assisted Saudi Arabia in warding off attacks from Iraq and Iran and has also aided occupied Islamic countries, including the current Yemen war 20015-present and Afghanistan war 1970-1989 (Al-Ibrahima 2015, Commins 2009, Rogers 2004, Yamani 2010, Zayani 2012). Osama bin Laden's attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon not only damaged the US-Saudi relationship but placed the Saudis in suspicion of sponsoring the jihadis, questioning the role of Wahhabi teachings as a source of inspiration in the September 11 attacks (Delong-Bas 2007, Moniquet 2013, Stark 2006, Valentine 2015). Global political dynamics that consider Wahhabism as an active part of terrorism have guided my research to look at such dynamics in the Indonesia context. In particular, I ask how far have Wahhabi doctrines shaped the actions of radical and terrorist groups in Indonesia; are/and to what extent are Indonesian Wahhabi leaders involved in international terrorist networks; and what are their responses to wider efforts of establishing an Islamic state.

Wahhabi's Schools: An Overview
This research was conducted in Wahhabi schools or pesantrens[i] in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan province, Selong, Nusa Tenggara Barat, Bantul, and Sleman Yogyakarta. I choose these locations because of the rapid development and growth of Wahhabi schools and communities in a different socio-political setting. The largest Wahhabi school in East Kalimantan province is pesantren Ibnu Qoyyim. Only dozens of students studied in this school at the early of its standing 1995. In 2018 the total number

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of students who have studied around 700 students and 150 families lived inside the school complex.

In Selong West Nusa Tenggara province, my research focused on Jamaluddin, Assunnah, and Ibn Abbas school, which belong to the Wahhabi communities. Jamaluddin is the first Wahhabi school in East Lombok that was established by Tuan Guru Husni and Tuan Guru Abdul Manar in the 1990s. Tuan guru is a local term for religious figure in Lombok. Husni and Manar are siblings and well known as prominent scholars in Lombok after returning from their study on Islam in the Middle East. Husni decided to split and built another school called Assunnah when his brother went to politics.

Assunnah school grows rapidly and becomes the largest Wahhabi school in Nusa Tenggara Barat. Assunah is located closely to Jamaluddin likely around 300 meters. It has a huge complex for study with a total number of 1650 students from kindergarten to university level. This pesantren has a strong connection to Saudi philanthropies and scholars. They regularly invite Islamic scholars from Saudi Arabia including Dr. Sholah Al-Budaer (the imam in Nabawi mosque), Dr. Ibrohim Ar-Ruhaily, Prof. Dr. Abdurrozzaq bin Ab-Badr al-Abbad, Syaikh Dr. Utsman Al-Khomis, and Prof. Dr. Abdurrahmim bin Muhammad Ar-Rukhaini (professor at the Umm Al-Quro University). Compare to Assunah, Pesantren Jamaluddin has a smaller number of students around 400 people from elementary to the high school level. Ibn Abbas school is another branch of Assunnah, which is more concerned about informal education particularly memorizing the Quran.

The other Wahhabi schools I studied in this research project are pesantren Bin Baz, located in Bantul and Ihyaus Sunnah, located in Sleman Yogyakarta. Pesantren Binz Baz is funded by international donor agencies from Saudi Arabia and Qatar particularly for building the mosque, classroom, dormitory, library, and hospital. When the earthquake destroyed half of its building in 2007, the donor from Saudi Arabia opens hands to reconstruct new buildings. The total number of students in 2016 was 1700 students, which males and females are segregated. Ustaz Abu Nida is the head of pesantren Bin Baz. He is closed with Ja'far Umar Thalib, the head of Ihyaus Sunnah pesantren in Sleman. He is the ex-commando of Laskar Jihad in Ambon, a religious civil war between Muslim and Christian in 1999.

Negotiating Local Identity and De-culturalising Islam
Wahhabism has its roots in the Hanbali school of thought[ii] and the theology of Ibnu Tamiya (13th Century), and was further developed in the 18th Century by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab from Uyainah, Nejd, Saudi Arabia (Delong-Bas 2004, Commins 2009, Valentine 2015). Although Wahhabism is a puritan movement, its existence cannot be separated from the political movement of the Saud family, which has been rebelling to the Ottoman empire and create a new Islamic Kingdome which is now modern Saudi Arabia (Algar 2002, Delong-Bas 2004, Kostiner 1993). The relationship between Wahhabi ideology and the Saudi royal family birthed a porous kind of 'Islamic power' that integrated politics with religion. Wahhabism was positioned as the foundation in building the country's social institutions and structures based on Sharia law and Salafi puritanism rooted in a return to Islam's original texts while rejecting outside influences (Al-Rasheed 2007, 26 Bonacina 2015, 30). Wahhabism was successfully installed politically and economically, enabling it to enmesh into the society without significant disturbance from outside forces. Wahhabism became the religious source of the Saudi Muslim majority, while 10 percent embraced Syiah

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teachings and most of these Muslim minorities live close to the Yemenic border (Bowen 2008, 87).

One of the core agendas of the Wahhabi movement is to purify Islamic discourse with an interpretative textual approach while maintaining pure worship practices referring to the early phase of the Prophet and his companions as recorded in the sunah and Hadiths. Whatever is stated in the Qur'an and Hadiths must be obeyed as an individual responsibility together with rejecting all influences from non-Islamic sources that cannot be found in the texts (Commins 2009, 11). In Wahhabism, all non-Islamic sources that are not mentioned in the texts must be eradicated, even positive ones. The original texts, therefore, are the main source of reference in determining whether or not a particular practice is Islamic. If a practice is not found in either the Qur'an or Hadiths then it is automatically classified as *bidah* (innovation). Wahhabism strongly opposes all forms of *bidah* based on the argument that it is based on cultural traditions foreign to what the Prophet practiced and advised. Referring to the Hadiths, *"All new religious practice is bidah, and every bidah is deviant, and deviant people will end up in hell"* (Chozin 2013, Commins 2009, Delong-Bas 2004, Ismail 2019, Picard & Madinier 2011).

I argue that differences in understandings about *bidah* are what differentiates Wahhabis from other Muslim groups. National Islamic organizations in Indonesia such as Nadhlatul Ulama (NU)[iii] have a different understanding of *bidah* whereby if what is classed as *bidah* makes a positive contribution to human well-being, then it is permissible (Picard & Madinier 2011, Rubaidi 2008). For example, the remembrance celebrations for the Prophet's birthday, which were never performed by the Prophet himself, are important celebrations for the majority of Muslims in Indonesia and are considered as a show of reverence for the Prophet. A NU religious figure, Mahfud MD, claims that *bidah* is necessary if we want to progress and benefit, Allah Himself is the greatest at *bidah* and the most creative (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BumaK0fCnY, downloaded 23/01/2019). Wahhabis challenge those who practice what they consider to be *bidah*, including religious figures, and often describe them as heretics despite their high-level religious knowledge. Such challenging and belittling lead to conflict and social disintegration that is difficult to avoid (Hamdi et al. 2015, Hefner 2011, Macris 2016, Moore & Tumetly 2009, Valentine 2015, Woodward 2017).

Ideas about reformation and anti-*bidah* have become a basic form of identity for the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia and other countries. The term 'Wahhabism' is often misunderstood to be the same as Salafi, despite there being some minor differences between the two. Salafism, in a general sense, promotes a pure form of Islam (Algar 2002, Delong-Bas 2004, Lauziere 2010, Valentine 2015, Woodward 2017). Salafism is more open to politics and views it as part of the wider Islamic struggle, whilst Wahhabism bans politics and instead focuses on proselytizing and education (Al-Saifa 2014, Bowen 2008, Ehteshami 2018, Sahrasad et al. 2019). The majority of those who practice Wahhabism, including those in Indonesia, is not involved in particular party politics. Rather, they tend to declare themselves as a non-political group, with a pure focus on religion. This is the opposite of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia where politics is enmeshed in governance, at least in providing material and a strong religious system to control the people.

The typical Wahhabi attitude of challenging local cultural practices and non-Islamic sources is what I refer to as 'de-culturalisation of Islam;' that is, a process of pulling 'Islam' out from cultural roots that have already united with Islam (Algar 2002, Commins 2009, Delong-Bas 2004, Picard 2011, Woodward 2017). Social diversity

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concerning ritual practice in human communities is what is called 'syncretism' or a mixture of various local beliefs with rituals including Islamic ones. Syncretism cannot be avoided when a new form of culture enters a preexisting cultural field (Commins 2009, Delong-Bas 2004, Picard 2011, Woodward 2017). The arrival of Islam in new communities and cultures continues to face a set of challenges because of the long, historical presence of local beliefs and practices the community shares. Additionally, new ideas from Islamic culture do not always fit in with local ones because Islam was born and developed in a different socio-political setting. Arab social and cultural values have a huge impact on the process of perfecting Islamic knowledge and contribute to its foundation. Three-quarter pants, long beards, and the *burqa* are just a few examples of the ways in which identity markers are challenged because they are imports from Arab culture and not consistent with local tradition (Hefner 2011, 2).

Wahhabism, therefore, refers to the spirit of Islam in the era of the Prophet and his companions while deviation from Islamic teachings considered to be cultural and external are perceived as immoral. This idea of religious reformation is a sensitive one, especially when proselytizing in new places unfamiliar with Islamic teachings. A consequence is an opposition from local communities who may feel threatened (Bobrovnikov 2011, Hamdi 2015, Iddrissu 2009, Indra 2017). Because of this, conflict and violence often occur when Wahhabi religious leaders socialize a single Wahhabi Islamic identity claiming to be the only pure and correct one at the expense of other Muslim identities, which are constructed as deviant. Abdulai Iddrissu (2009) has explored the conflict between Wahhabis and Sufis in Africa, particularly in the Ghana Muslim community which resulted in deaths on both sides. Wahhabi scholars who returned from study in Saudi Arabia and Egypt and their followers condemn the innovation practices in the Attijany Sufi[iv] group that ends with the communal violence and conflict. The way to negotiate and harmonize Islam with local traditions is a critical issue in the Wahhabi reformation mission in Indonesia. As I explore later in the article, in the areas I researched in East Kalimantan, Nusa Tenggara Barat, and Yogyakarta, most Wahhabi proselytizers are 'frontal' in their approach, meaning they are aggressive and hard-line when it comes to confronting the issue of *bidah*.

Deculturalising Islam has created a significant issue in the Muslim community, especially in Indonesia as the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, and in particular in areas with strong cultural traditions including the Sasak Muslims in Lombok, the Kutai and Dayak Muslims in Kalimantan and the Javanese Muslims in Yogyakarta. My data show that it is not easy for these Muslims to willingly join Wahhabi groups because of the complex process of negotiating their identities which are bound to their cultural traditions. Wahhabism requires them to abandon their cultural identity and local religious traditions and instead identify with a new Islamic one. After committing to a Wahhabi identity and life-style, newcomers forfeit their traditional clothing and practices. In addition to acquiring a new attitude towards the world, their new identities are most pertinent in their clothing which is Arab, such as the jubah and surban. Men also wear their beards long and a black spot marks their forehead as a sign of piety.

Deculturalisation of Islam can also be seen in the changing attitude towards religious traditions such as banning pilgrimage to Muslim saints' graves. In Lombok, Yogyakarta, and East Kalimantan such pilgrimage is a part of popular Islamic practice. In Lombok, for example, other than the oldest mosque in Bayan, there are tens of saints' graves considered to be sacred by local communities. Each Sunday such sites are full of pilgrims visiting the graves to seek blessings and assistance for various things including safety, wealth, marriage, and making the haj pilgrimage to Mecca (Hefner 2011, 84). Pilgrimage to sacred graves is absolutely opposed by Wahhabis who consider such

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practice to be a form of worshipping *jin* spirits who live at graveyards. It is not only saints' graves, but family graves are also a contested site for Wahhabis. Wahhabis also disapprove of the popular *tahlilan* tradition for remembering death anniversaries of departed family members; they will not attend such events if invited because the Prophet never practiced such traditions. Further, Wahhabis oppose the practice of sending *Al-Fatihah* to a deceased person's soul because Al-Fatihah is a verse from the Qur'an rather than a prayer. Celebrations of birthdays such as those in Java are also a contested site of practice for Wahhabis, again, with the reason that the Prophet did not give special preference to any day over another.

Negotiating between a new and former identity has become a challenge within the Wahhabi community. Even though this new identity has led to conflict and separation in the community, at the time I was with them for my research, they were more focussed on their Islamic teachings rather than issues of identity. My data show that the issue of identity is not one of ease for the Wahhabi community. Burhan (21 years old), a pious student from Pesantren Ibnu Qoyyim in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, and belonging to the Kutai ethnicity, told of how he felt when he first joined the pesantren to study Wahhabism. He explained how his life changed totally because of intense pressure from his new community. He abandoned the traditional practices that bound him to his place of birth, his family, and those close to him because they still practiced local traditions. In the beginning, it was difficult for him, he said, but over time he came to embrace the teachings and started to feel calm and free from the pressures of tradition. Life in the pesantren consisted of study and prayer; he did not need to concern himself with working to pay for accommodation, food, or education because the pesantren covered all costs.

Aisah (32 years old), from a Wahhabi community in East Lombok, also told of the huge change she underwent in herself after embracing Wahhabi teachings. She said she felt more 'Islamic' because she had found the 'true' Islam. She also abandoned her cultural practices and traditions. Consequently, she became isolated in the community because of her principles were suddenly different from those of her family, friends, and neighbors. They came to see her as a different person who was now separate from social life. She explained that some community members perceived her as an enemy because her views on traditional practices clashed with the community's normative culture. Eventually, she only associated with other Wahhabi members. Dian (38 years old), a female teacher at Pondok Pesantren Bin Baz, said that she sees Wahhabism as the pure path of Islam and there is no need for Wahhabis to follow any cultural or traditional practices because they lead to deviance. Instead, she is only interested in what is purely Islamic. The doctrine that Wahhabism espouses about purity is not always well-received and more than often there are consequences as a result of conflicting ideas about what is Islamic and what is not. Conflict and violence often transpire when local Muslims resist and contest the Wahhabi doctrine. I argue that religious arrogance and claims of superiority are at the root of such conflict and have become an enemy in the plural Muslim community.

As a Wahhabi in a pesantren community, life is segregated and exclusive. Inside these exclusive communities is a school, madrasah, and study institute/s. The complex is usually surrounded by a large wall that separates them from society for instance pesantren Bin Baz in Bantul, Yogyakarta, and pesantren Ibnul Qoyyim in Balikpapan. We find a similar environment in Pondok Pesantren Assunah, the largest Wahhabi pesantren in Lombok. Inside is teachers' housing, a school, a mosque, a study institute, a radio station, and an office for organizing hajj and umrah pilgrimages. There is a tight security at the entrance to this exclusive complex; every visitor must report and sign in,

and there is a strict policy that only Wahhabis may stay overnight. Inside the complex, female students are separated from and are banned from speaking to males. Male teachers use a cloth partition to separate male and female students while teaching. The majority of female students wear a *cadar* face-covering in public. Tuan Guru Mizan (40 years old), the leader of Pondok Pesantren Assunnah, explained that he still participates in local tradition as long as it does not interfere with or contradict his Islamic practice. For example, he still attends funerals if invited, but does not help in burying the deceased and does not join in tahlilan recitation rituals.

Despite the ultra-conservative ideologies Wahhabis espouse, in the field, I found that Wahhabis negotiate a flexible and somewhat open space for interaction between cultural tradition and religion. We can see examples of this whereby Wahhabi community members do not fully embrace Wahhabi practice due to challenges and pressures they may face in surrounding communities. Rahmini (35 years old), a Wahhabi community member, told of how she was unable to stay confined to the home – a Wahhabi practice for women, simply because her family was in need of more income, and so she had to find work outside of her home. She did not wear a cadar face-covering in public because it would interfere with her freedom to move about. She said that she was comfortable wearing an ordinary hijab head covering rather than a cadar because a cadar would interfere with her work in the rice-fields. When I asked her if she knew the wife of the pesantren's leader, she said she knew of her by name only and rarely was in the same room as her. The ustadz's wife rarely left the house and rarely socialized with the community. These examples show that amongst Wahhabi communities there is still space for dialogue and authority to choose to follow orders or not.

In East Lombok, a well-known Wahhabi community faced a different set of issues. This particular community has been able to integrate into the wider society despite having significantly different approaches to Islam. The Wahhabi community has decent and peaceful relations with Nahdlatul Wathan and Nahdlatul Ulama Muslims. These different Muslim groups successfully interrelate and despite the Wahhabi women wearing cadar face-coverings, they maintain healthy social relations with their neighbors and participate in community ritual events. These women have an active social life like non-Wahhabi women, relaxing and engaging in gossip in the streets. This kind of behavior contradicts the strict Wahhabi gender rules that confine women to the home where they are expected to prioritize raising the children and taking care of their husbands.

Social Resistant in Wahhabi Proselytization

The Wahhabi movement is also known as 'muwahhidin', that is, a purification movement rooted in the Unity of God that calls on Muslims to leave practices and beliefs that are non-Islamic. The Wahhabi version of the purification movement is exclusive in that it is unable to embrace any forms of wisdom from what it considers to be outside of Islam and any form of engagement with such sources requires a 'turning back' to Islamic purity. Such puritanism has formed a hard kind of proselytization practice among Wahhabis which ordinary Muslims often struggle within Indonesia, and which subsequently, is a source of conflict in communities (Abdullah et al. 2018, Bobrovnikov 2011, Hamdi et al. 2015, Hasan 2007, Hefner 2011, Laffan 2003).

This section explores the phenomena of socio-religious conflict as a result of Wahhabi approaches to proselytization in the three aforementioned areas in Lombok, Balikpapan, and Yogyakarta. Socio-religious conflict constitutes a serious challenge for Wahhabis and the communities in which they work because of their forceful approach

to purification which espouses the local practices and traditions entrenched in the cultures they aim to purify. Because the majority of the Wahhabi community in Indonesia is fully committed to their idea of a 'correct' Islam, their proselytization practice fails to accommodate social and cultural contexts, and thus it appears that they are disinterested in the needs and concerns of the local people they target for purification. My arguments show that Wahhabi figures' practices and activities have led to and shaped social conflict in local communities.

The first documented case of conflict involving a Wahhabi group occurred in West Sumatra (Indra 2017). The arrival of Wahhabism in the Indonesian archipelago in the 18th Century came with Ulama from Western Sumatra upon their return from Mecca. After reimmersing in their homeland, they connected and formed a group known as 'Kaum Padri'[v] and started to spread Wahhabi teachings in communities. The group faced harsh opposition from locals who were accustomed to their cultural traditions. It was a prolonged civil war between reformist and adat faction (1803-1833) when the reformist force to accept their ideas to the adat in the area of Pagaruyung Kingdom (Abdullah 2018, Hassan 2007, Indra 2017). Such conflict between Wahhabis and local communities can be seen in several different regions in Indonesia. My field data indicate that social conflict involving Wahhabis does not only occur externally in the communities in which they proselytize but also internally amongst themselves due to differing opinions and interests among leaders. For example, two Wahhabi leaders from the same family (brothers) in East Lombok, separated due to political reasons. One of the brothers became active in local party politics rather than focusing on proselytization which led to the establishment of a new pesantren by his older brother who opposes political involvement. A similar case is found in Yogyakarta where Wahhabi leaders split into groups and formed new pesantren, one of which is Bin Baz (Hasan 2007).

Several villages in East Lombok such as Sakara, Suralaga, and Pringgasela 2010, for example, a local community refused to accept the building of a Wahhabi mosque because they felt that it would destabilize their local community. Abdur Rauf (38 years old), an activist from local community explained that the community is uneasy with Wahhabi approaches to proselytization because they judge others as inferior, deviant, and un-Islamic; an example being Wahhabi discourse from mosque loudspeakers that insults village Islam and opposes local intellectuals who wish to discuss openly such issues. When Wahhabi leaders began to build the mosque which was isolated from the wider community, locals responded with violence in the form of throwing rocks at individual Wahhabis while attempting to damage the mosque's foundation. The Wahhabi community defended their mosque by surrounding it. The violence of this nature occurred on three occasions until the local government intervened and facilitated reconciliation between the two sides. The Wahhabi community continued to build their mosque until completion with the condition that they would not offend or insult any other group or person in the surrounding community. I found a similar scenario in Central Lombok where a Wahhabi mosque was burned down by locals and the Wahhabi community was ordered to leave the village because locals felt denigrated by their proselytization. In 2000, a Wahhabi mosque in East Lombok was attacked by an unknown group who threw rocks onto the roof until a religious sermon that was running at that time was forced to stop. In the same area, another violent attack took place where a Wahhabi leader and his community were holding a sermon in a small mosque when local villagers suddenly attacked them with weapons including knives, and proceeded to destroy the mosque. This particular Wahhabi leader is known to have a very hard demeanor when proselytizing.

The Wahhabi community in pesantren Ibnul Qoyyim Balikpapan has also experienced conflict with the community surrounding the school. According to Khairuman (52 years old), the community felt offended by Wahhabi teachings that insulted their cultural traditions. With government intervention involving various religious leaders from other organizations including Nahdlatul Ulama, they attempted to resolve the issues through open discussion. The discussion did not go according to plan and the Wahhabi representative excused himself and left early due to family reasons. Saifuddin (56 years old), a Muslim Sunni priest belongs to Nahdlatul Wathan[vi] organization from Samarinda, explained that he has faced the harshness of Wahhabi debating during a sermon he delivered in Samarinda. When Saifuddin delivering *dawa* in a mosque Samarinda, the Wahhabi From these cases, I draw conclusions that Wahhabi approaches to proselytization are aggressive and forceful. It is the arrogant attitude that needs to be addressed in order for Wahhabis to successfully proselytize in communities that are enmeshed in local cultural traditions. It appears that it is difficult for Wahhabi communities to avoid conflict due to their harsh approach to proselytization. For them, they are performing a sacred duty just as the Prophet did and they are committed to continuing that duty (Commins 2009, 125, Hasan 2007, 87).

Wahhabi Proselytization: between Islamic and the sharia state
The international community that is a part of the United Nations pays particularly close attention to Wahhabi activities where they believe the teachings maybe misused by radical groups (Hamid 2016, Ismail 2019, Jones 2014, Nawab et al. 2018, Rudner 2013). Suspicion was raised when *jihadists* no longer focused on fighting against the Soviet Union and instead turned towards America and NATO including military offices, foreign embassies, banks, and other government assets (Desk 2003, Feifer, 2009, Gendron 2010, Powell 2011). The peak of this, of course, was the attacks against the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in September 2001 which saw the death of 2,996 people and 6,000 injured. This grave injury to the American government, infrastructure, wider community, and individual families caused a financial loss of approximately US $10 million or billion (Stice 2005, 24).

The response to the September 11 events was that Bush started a campaign known as the global war on terrorism. Bush targeted not only Islamic countries, which proliferate the *jihadist* movements, but also Muslim schools with a program to clean out any form of what he considered to be radical Islamic teachings, including those in Indonesia (AI-brahima 2007, Singh 2010, Schulze & Liow 2018). The war started in Afghanistan with the United States and its alliances targeting the ultra-conservative regime of the Taliban. The Taliban had controlled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 after declaring victory in the civil war against the Afghanistan Islamic State government led by then-president Ahammad Shah Massoud (Rogers 2004, 5). The civil war from 1992 to 1996 involved actors from Islamic factions in Afghanistan and occurred in response to their freedom from Soviet occupation from 1978 to 1992. The Taliban government applied shariah law with great force which had the most negative impact on women. The Taliban failed to overcome economic problems the country faced and instead Afghanistan suffered even more (Dorsey 2018). The United Nations embarked on investigations into what was happening in the country and found various inequalities in society. When it came to offering humanitarian aid, the United Nations faced challenges that prevented them from doing their work. Mohammed Omar, the Commander of Afghan Mujahideen and the founder of the Taliban and the Emir of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan closed many foreign non-government organizations in the country, including the United Nation's office (Feifer 2009, 9).

Osama bin Laden was an important figure behind the success of the Taliban regime. In addition to receiving help from Muhammad Ziaul Haq, the Taliban was also greatly supported by Al-Qaeda, a jihadi organization founded by Osama bin Laden in 1998 (Cherney & Murphy 2017). Al-Qaeda had cells in various countries fanned by a vision and mission of forming an Islamic Caliphate at a global level. Bin Laden's background as a Saudi technocrat became the main aspect in looking at the role of Wahhabism in the wider terrorist and jihadi movement (Hellmich 2008, Stark 2006, Romero 2007, Rudner 2013). Bin Laden was accused of initiating the September 11 Terrorist Attacks against the World Trade Centre in the United States in 2001. This event generated much controversy in the Islamic world and opened up new ways of looking at Wahhabi ideology and the role it played in shaping jihadi behavior, especially among academic researchers of Islam. Conclusions reached argued that bin Laden's Wahhabi identity led to a correlation between Wahhabism and the global terrorist movement in the post-September 11 period (Gendron 2010, Jones 2014, Macris 2016, Romero 2007, Moore & Tumetly 2009).

How, then, do we examine the correlation between Wahhabism and radicalism? It is very difficult to come to a monolithic conclusion because the original writings of the founder of Wahhabism do not specifically teach violence and physical jihad. Natana Delong-Bas (2004, 193-94) argues that there is no evidence of Wahhabi writings that order jihad or legalize the brutal slaughter of humans. Jihad is a forceful mechanism in Wahhabi teachings including the banning of killing women and children. Perhaps because of the war in Afghanistan there many *jihadists* from Wahhabi religious backgrounds came to fight based on a fatwa, a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority, from the charismatic Wahhabi imam Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz from Saudi Arabia. Sheikh bin Baz released a fatwa for jihad in Afghanistan as an individual responsibility. This fatwa had a huge impact on the Muslim community in general and Wahhabi in particular, which entice them to be a martyr in the Afghan war against the Soviet Union and Communist Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (Jones 2014, Moniquet 2013, Sahrasad et al. 2019, Rich & MacQueen 2017). Abu Bakar Ba'asyir[vii], Abdullah Sungkar[viii], Ja'far Umar Thalib[ix] are religious figures and activists from Indonesia were involved in the Afghanistan war. They were trained by the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States (CIA) to fight against the Soviet Union. This was the first phase of a communal jihad, especially for those who identified with Salafi and Wahhabi teachings (Hamid 2016, 7).

Not all alumni *jihadists* who fought in Afghanistan chose the path to terrorism with Al-Qaeda including Thalib who disagree with Al-Qaeda's terrorism and violent ideology. He argues that violence is not part of Wahhabi teachings and for him, Osama bin Laden is somebody whose understanding of Islam is minimal[x]. According to him, the aftermath of the war with the Soviet Union marked the end of the *jihadist* work. However, the fact remains that many Wahhabi jihadist have been influenced and brainwashed by Ikhwanul Muslimin from Egypt who also joined the battle. Those influenced by Ikhwanul Muslimin teachings were taught to oppose Western countries and work towards establishing an Islamic state. Tahlib tried to distance himself and focus on studying with a charismatic teacher in Yemen. After returning to Indonesia, he was not considered a part of Jamaah Islamiyah, the Al-Qaeda cell in Southeast Asia and instead established his own group called Laskar Jihad[xi] that joined in religious fighting in Ambon in 2000. After Laskar Jihad disbanded he concentrated on spreading Islamic teachings in Papua while managing Pondok Pesantren Ihya' As-Sunah di Yogyakarta (Hasan 2007, 85).

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I argue that Wahabi teachings do not specifically support the idea of jihad and that rather, jihad is part of the religious reformation movement that promotes new interpretations of tauhid (the Unity of God) and proselytization based on the life of the Prophet and his companions (Algar 2002; Delong-Bas 2004, Valentine 2015). According to Wahhabi teachings, Islam in its early years was perfect without innovation; those who became Muslim were inspired by Allah directly through the Prophet himself and not for any other reason. Innovation (*bidah*) developed after the third generation of Islam, including innovation in the form of Sufism or spiritual practices (Delong-Bas 2004, 42). Because of that, questions arise about how Wahhabis have become radicalized and involved in terrorism. The majority of international scholars such as Ahmad Algar (2002), Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid (2016), and Giovanni Bonacina (2015) hypothesis that Wahhabi teachings have inspired radical and terrorist behavior towards other religious groups. In my own research in Indonesia, I have found this hypothesis to be somewhat flawed and in need of further exploration. Wahhabi pesantrens and schools in Lombok, Balikpapan in East Kalimantan and Yogyakarta, which I collected my data were not involved in acts of terrorism. However, I do wish to consider the potential of Wahhabi teachings which can be exploited to legitimize violence. No student or teacher has been arrested in the case of terrorism activity in Indonesia. One of my informant Ramli, a teacher from Ibnul Qoyyim pesantren said that as a teacher I am so worried about the social judgment and stigma develops in the community, where each event of terrorism in Indonesia used to be connected to our pesantren. I am tired of this stigma, where no prove if we involve, so I welcome to government and community to our pesantren look at inside what we have done in our pesantren and probably they can study Islam here follow our curriculum for the informal study of Islam.

The Afghanistan war and Wahhabi Ulama fatwa for jihad did not only inspire Salafi groups to turn to temporary jihads but also gave them a kind of legitimization to spread terrorist ideology around the world (Taskarina 2018, 29). Many jihadi alumni, including Ba'asyir for example, spread and teach jihad and terrorist ideology through their religious sermons and choose to oppose the government. Ba'asyir, a former activist of the Indonesian Islamic Youth Movement, the head of Islamic Students' Proselytization Organisation and the founder of Pondok Pesantren Ngruki, had been appointed as Amir of Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), a Southeast Asian branch of Al-Qaeda. He was accused as a core intellectual actor in various terror incidents involving bombs in Bali, Jakarta, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Yogyakarta, Solo, and Bima (Hamid 2016, 8). Although Ba'asyir contested these accusations, the government found evidence to prove his involvement in training terrorists in Aceh in 2010 and he was subsequently imprisoned (Abdullah 2018, 220). Ba'asyir was arrested by the special police Densus 88 after giving a religious sermon in several places in West Java including Bandung, Tasik Malaya, and Ciamis. On the way home to Solo, the police intercepted his car and ask him to give up.

Although the Indonesian government imprisoned Ba'asyir to 15 years, it did not stop him from further developing his jihad teachings (Abdullah 2018, Hasan 2007). While he sat quietly in prison, his ideological teachings spread among Muslim hardliners. His loyal students were active in continuing to teach Ba'asyir's jihadi dogma and as a result, strengthened ties among religious and school networks. Many new pesantren were established to create martyrs ready to die for the cause in the name of Islam. According to research findings from Badan Penanggulangan Nasional Terrorism (National Counter-Terrorism Agency) and Lembaga Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat (P3M) Nahdlatul Ulama 29 of September to 21 of October

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2017 there were at least 19 pesantren suspected of teaching jihad and terrorist concepts and 41 mosques where religious figures espoused jihad ideology and hate speech. Unfortunately, BNPT and P3M did not expose the entire name of those pesantrens and mosques (Haryani et al. 2018, 263). Pondok Pesantren Ibn Mas'ud in Bogor West Java is mention in this report, that is one such newly established pesantren suspected of harboring candidate jihadist to participate in the Syrian war. This suspicion was further strengthened with the death of 11-year-old Hatf Saiful Rasul in Syria and former student at Pondok Pesantren Ibn Mas'ud in Bogor. As a result, I argue that Ba'asyir's ideas about jihad will always have a place among those drawn to radicalize, and will continue to metamorphize in the form of organizations, both large and small. Jemaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD)[xii] and Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT)[xiii] are two examples among many terror cells operating in Indonesia that are no longer operating under the terrorist banner but instead use conservative Islamic symbols and are more open to participating in the media (Abdullah 2018, 215).

Changes in global terrorism also affected local jihadists in Indonesia. The emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) replaced Al-Qaeda in the aftermath of Osama bin Laden's death in Mei 2, 2011. ISIS has successfully developed a new world-wide terrorist network including in Indonesia (Hamid 2016, Hamilton-Hart 2016, Moore & Tumelty 2009, Rudner 2013, Romero 2007). ISIS propaganda is more far-reaching than was that of Al-Qaeda because it makes use of both print and online media. The emergence of youth-obsessed ISIS fans who idolize 'heroes' has led to the phenomenon of 'cool jihad' amongst European youths (Asal et al. 2008). In Indonesia, loyalists have sworn allegiance to ISIS in Syria including members from Jamaat Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT). Both of these groups (JAD and MIT) use an open approach to oppose the government with open jihad in public spaces. For example, in the case of the Tamrin bombing in January 2016 in Jakarta, they changed the identity of the bomber from that of a typical Wahhabi with a long beard, *sorban* and *jubah* to that of an ordinary person such wearing jean and carrying a backpack (Abdullah 2018, 219, Taskarina 2018, Hamdi et al. 2015).

From such cases, it remains challenging for researchers to assess the extent to which Wahhabi teachings and movements are involved and this is mainly because Wahhabism is not one solid homogenized movement, but is plural. The Wahhabi movement in Indonesia, for example, stands alone with no central authority in the Middle East. Wahhabi groups in Indonesia tend to exhibit freedom to design their own education organizations as long as Wahhabi teachings remain core (Hasan 2007, Laffan, 2003, Woodward 2017). In Indonesia, the terms Salafi and Wahhabi are often used interchangeably, yet there are differences between the two. My research shows that the majority of Wahhabis disagree with the label 'Wahhabi' and prefer to identity as Salafi because the term Salafi refers to *manhaj*, a method to understand the text. According to Badrul (31 years old), a Wahhabi leader from East Lombok, the label Wahhabi is incorrect because there is no connection to Abdul Wahhab, and what he and his follower's practice is a pure form of Islam. Only a few from this community accept the label Wahhabi that refers to the name of the founder.

My research findings from Wahhabi pesantren I examined in Lombok, Balikpapan, and Yogyakarta reveal that they are not involved in acts of terrorism or radicalism. According to them, their students have never been found to be active in acts of terror such as bombing. In Lombok for example, the pesantren is focused on education from kindergarten until higher education level. I found no hate-based teachings or concepts of jihad. Hidayat (38 years old), a teacher there, explained that he is loyal to the Indonesian government and opposes radicalism and demonstrations. He

said that despite Indonesia being a non-shari'ah state, citizens have the freedom to apply shari'ah law. He further clarified that Wahhabi people in his congregation are not interested in politics nor the idea of establishing an Islamic Caliphate. Rather, they follow government laws and policies even if the government has the right to illegally take their assets, they will give due to Quranic guidance.

Hidayat explained that his pesantren did not partake in 'aksi 212', the largest protest by Islamist groups to the Jakarta governor Ahok in the case of insulting and blaspheming Islam in 2016, because it is forbidden for Wahhabis to join in political demonstrations. His pesantren has a different interpretation of Wahhabi's teaching about the demonstration, where several famous Wahhabis figures in Jakarta and West Java such as Adi Hidayat and Zaitun Rasmin took part in that action. Each year on the 17th August his Wahhabi community celebrates Indonesian Independence Day and raises the Indonesian flag in celebration of the nation. As a researcher, I was surprised to see the Indonesian flag flying in front of this pesantren gate because it is generally assumed by local people that this particular pesantren is conservative and anti-nationalist. The same position was conveyed by Ali (27 years old), the head of pesantren Jamaluddin in East Lombok, whereby he explained that his Wahhabi pesantren and community have a good relationship with the government and is committed to maintaining it while focusing on education and proselytization. Muhammad Ali disagrees to be called his Islamic movement as Wahhabi and prefers to call Salafi, however this name already popular in the community. He cannot deny that it creates a negative stigma on Wahhabism and effected Wahhabi perception in the community. He believes that Indonesia is already an Islamic country although we do not officially operate *shari'ah* state. We have a ministry of religion, pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic universities that means Islam has a space to develop in every aspect. Abdul Gafur from pesantren Ibnu Abbas also expressed loyalty from his Wahhabi community to the Indonesian government. He explained that his pesantren is committed only to teaching the Quran and Arabic language. He did not apply a national curriculum in his pesantren, only local curriculum that focuses on Islamic text and memorizing Quran.

The leader of pesantren Ibnul Qoyyim Ahmad Amin (52 years old) in Balikpapan East Kalimantan opened his school's doors for the public to assess for themselves whether his community harbors terrorist teachings or not. A few teachers who I interviewed in 2018 explained that anybody is welcome to examine the pesantren and its activities and teachings by joining in sermons and classes. He said that they are tired of being misjudged as terrorists each time there is another terrorist attack in Indonesia despite them not being involved in any way. I also acquired similar data from pesantren Bin Baz in Yogyakarta, which too is committed to education and proselytization. Rafi'I (34 years old), a teacher at Bin Baz, said that there are no radical or terror-related teachings in his school's curriculum and that they only teach 'correct' Islamic teachings based on the Quran and Hadiths. In addition to formal education, Bin Baz pesantren also has social, economic, and health programs including a hospital and shops to accommodate the needs of the surrounding community and students at the school.

Conclusion

The Wahhabi community is a minority in Indonesia, yet their strength and commitment to developing education through proselytization is something to be appreciated. Wahhabi education organizations and institutions are developing quickly and are successfully competing with madrasah from Indonesia's largest established Islamic organizations. The major issue facing Wahhabi groups is their harsh and aggressive

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approach to proselytization in communities, which as I have demonstrated through case studies from three different regions in Indonesia, has the potential to lead to negative responses, and oftentimes violence, from those who reject them. Proselytization patterns and approaches defined as 'hard' or 'harsh' are attacks against cultural and traditional symbols and thus are viewed as attacks against local people themselves. In their attempts to deculturalise Islam in Indonesia, Wahhabi groups need to be deeply evaluated if their mission to purify Islam is to be accepted by local communities.

The presence of Wahhabism does not always lead to a positive outcome for the development of communities. In addition to conflict experienced internally by some Wahhabi practitioners, social conflict also occurs as a result of their widespread deculturalisation practices. There is an assumption that Wahhabi teachings affect and shape radical behavior, even leading to acts of terrorism, yet this article cannot draw such conclusions in relation to the three pesantren considered here. As I have shown, almost all of the pesantren I researched claimed they did not teach a curriculum that supported jihad. Instead, I found new data that show some Wahhabi leaders are working to protect social unity, respect for the government, and ways to oppose radicalism. They also oppose any form of an Islamic nation including a Caliphate in Indonesia, and in fact, for many, they consider sharia as a part of Indonesia because they have the freedom to implement their religiosity without intervention from the government.

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[i] Pesantren is a local term for religious education institutions in Indonesia.

[ii] Hambali school is one of the four primary schools in Islam belong to the Suni group. It refers to Iraqi scholar Muhammad bin Hambal. The greatest of Hambali followers live in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar.

[iii] Nahdlatul Ulama (the Revival of the Ulama) is a Sunni and Indonesia's largest Islamic organization. It was established on January 31, 1926, in Surabaya as a response to Wahhabism's rise in East Java.

[iv] Syeikh Ahmad Attijani founded the Attijani Sufi order in the 1780s. Attijani was a global Sufi order, and it was reaching West Africa, particularly in Senegal, The Gambia, Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, Niger, Chad, Ghana, Northern, and South-western Nigeria, and some part of Sudan.

[v] Padri is a name for a group that supported sharia law enforcement in Minangkabau, West Sumatra, in the early 1800s. Padri agenda had been challenged by the *adat* group who live around the Pagaruyung kingdom and caused a prolonged conflict and civil war between these two groups.

[vi] Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) is a local Islamic organization founded in the 1950s in Lombok by Tuan Guru Zainuddin Abdul Madjid. NW becomes a national organization after opening a representative to all Indonesian provinces, including Samarinda, East Kalimantan. Saipudin is an alumnus of NW school in Lombok and transmigrated to Samarinda in the 1980s.

[vii] Abu Bakar Baashir is an Indonesian charismatic Muslim cleric and the spiritual leader of Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), an Al-Qaeda cell in Southeast Asia. He is also well-known as a Muslim activist since his young involvement in a struggle to hold the Islamic State of Indonesia (NII) in the 1970s. He escaped to Malaysia when the Suharto regime arrested all the NII activists. During his escape in Malaysia, he went to Afghanistan and affiliated to Al-Qaeda terrorist organization.

[viii] Abdullah Sungkar is a close friend of Abu Bakar Baasyir since his young. Both are activists and took part in the Afghanistan jihad during the Soviet war. When they returned to Indonesia, they built Pesantren Ngruki in Solo and ran the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) cell to create social fears and instability.

[ix] Ja'far Umar Thalib is a Salafi activist who follows Bin Baz *fatwa* to conduct *jihad* in the Afghanistan-Soviet war. After the holly mission being completed, he went to Yemen to study about Salafism model of thinking and ignored to be part of the Al-Qaeda global movement.

[^x] I interviewed Ja'far Umar Thalib about his experience in the Afghanistan war and his opinion about Osama bin Laden. The interview took place in his house in Sleman Yogyakarta in August 2017.

[^xi] Laskar Jihad is a militia group to act as jihad for defending and protecting the Muslim community from Ambon's external attack during the religious civil war in Indonesia's early new era.   .

[^xii] Jamaah Ansorut Daulah (JAD) was established in 2014 by Aman Abdurrahman when he was in jail in Nusa Kambangan, Cilacap Central Java. He asked his colleagues to visit him in jail for consolidation and created a new terrorist cell under the ISIS flag called Jamaah Ansorut Daulah. JAD was involved in several bombs attacks such as the Tamrin bomb, Kampung Melayu, and Ouikemene Church in Samarinda.

[^xiii] The Eastern Indonesian Mujahidin (MIT) is one of Santoso's jihadist wings in 2012 in Poso Central Sulawesi. Santoso is a member of the Jamaah Ansorut Tauhid (JAT) before establishing MIT. JAT is a new group designed by Abu Bakar Baasyir to replace Jemaah Islamiyah when dissolved by the government. As a JAT member, Santoso was involved in several horrifying violent and terror attacks on government officers and facilities. Santoso held military training to consolidate the movement against the government.

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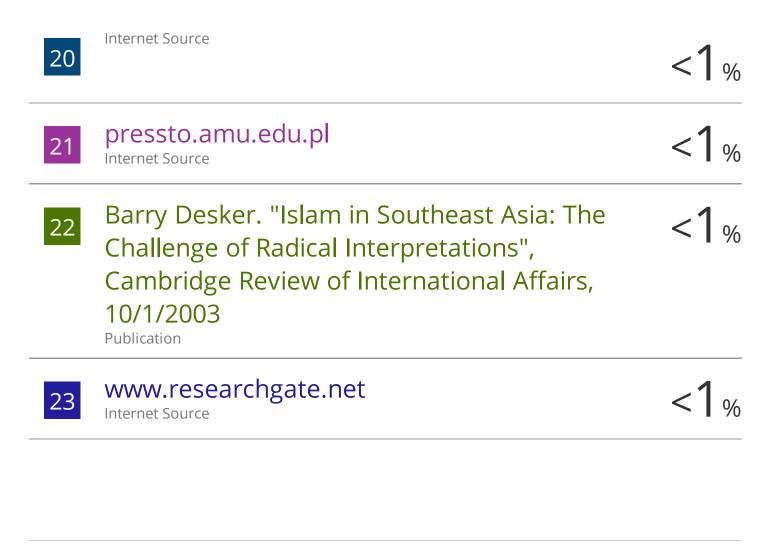
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