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Conflict and Its Resolution in Indonesian Islam: A Case Study of a Javanese Muslim Society in Riau

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine the extent to which a Muslim society in Indonesia solves its conflict. By using a Muslim society in Riau as a case study, this article argues that the society observed has a unique characteristic which may differ from other Muslim societies in other regions. It proposes that, in this community, the negotiation is done silently to shape the peaceful social interaction and harmonious relationship. In fact, the conflict within this society is actually corrosive when the elites have basically different education background categorized into Pesantren and University graduates making diverse ideas about religious and educational issues. The conflict is identified to be hybrid as it is not solely religious or non-religious matters. The political dimension is influential which deconstructs the meaning of charismatic leader in this society. The authority of local kiyai or kiyai kampung is renegotiated by ordinary people when the kiyai is invited to be involved in the political contest by politicians. This article provides an insight on how local Islam has proposed a best example of peaceful conflict resolution in Indonesia. It demonstrates the uniqueness of Indonesian Muslims' way to solve their internal conflict.

Keywords: Conflict, Resolution, Indonesian Islam, Muslim Society.

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A. Introduction

Human beings are homo *conflictus*.¹ This means that naturally they always involve in differences, contestation and competition. It is a part of human life which cannot be vanished. Interpersonal and intergroup conflict is closely related to human history.² In fact, with the progress of time, the way of solving the conflict in a society is not always sufficient. The way of Western people solving the conflict may not be applicable in Indonesia which has a distinctive characteristic or culture. Thus, studying indigenous society's way of solving conflict is crucial as there are always local and religious values contributing its way of solving the conflict. Islam as a religion can be used both as integrating and disintegrating instrument in a Muslim society.³ This paper will look at the way of a Javanese society in Riau managing its own conflict. This study is based on the researcher's observation during his intimate interaction with people in this community. The researcher was born there and he has known the culture of this community in-depth as people of this community also have known him. Because this community is located a far away from the central city of Pekanbaru⁴ the development of technology is not as fast as its counterparts like Jakarta, Pekanbaru and some other cities. Electricity and road are expensive infrastructures which have been enjoyed to the degree of necessary by people there. Even they were built too late.⁵ Modernization is thus something which is very expensive to be owned. As a result, modernization is a foreign term which is missed but also to some extent rejected.

However, this paper will not study about this broadly, rather it focuses on the factors contributing the contest and conflict within

¹ Novri Susan, *Pengantar Sosiologi Konflik dan Isu-Isu Konflik Kontemporer*, Jakarta: Prenada Media Group, 2010, p. 8

² William Chang, Berkaitan dengan Konflik Etnis-Agama, in *Konflik Komunal di Indonesia Saat Ini* (W.A.L Stokhof and Murni Djamil, ed) Jakarta: INIS and Pusat Bahasa dan Budaya UIN Syarif Hidayat ullah, 2003, p.27

³ Abdul Jamil Wahab, *Manajemen Konflik Keagamaan Analisis Latar Belakang Konflik Keagamaan Aktual*, Jakarta: Kompas, 2014, p. 3

⁴ It is about 250 KM from Pekanbaru.

⁵ Electricity was built and developed in this community in 2010. Good road is still developed and now is still not satisfying.

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1 this community, the actors of the conflict and the way of this community solves the conflict. In this paper, using ethnographic approach, the writer argues that the Kiyai has become the central part of this conflict. It is not unsurprising that in this paper the Kiyai has been written in a large portion due to his crucial role as the actor of causing and resolving the conflict in this community. This article is divided into four parts. The first part is discussing about the establishment of Pesantren⁶ as foundation of the conflict in this community. Conflict is not sudden event. It can be traced back to know the problems and factors of the conflict so that the first part will delineate this. And the second part deals with the power struggle in the community making the conflict complicated. The third part discusses about the conflict resolution done by the Kiyai by withdrawing his position as the kiyai of the Pesantren and society. This paper is ended with a conclusion.

B. Establishing the Pesantren, Starting the Conflict

The community studied, in Pulau Kijang Riau, is a homogenous when one sees it at glance. People are united with the same ethnic group and religion. They are Javanese and Muslims. Their parents generally come from Javanese Island. They migrated in the 19th century. Some were migrated by Indonesian New Order government through 'transmigrasi' program but the majority migrated by themselves during the colonial, Old and New Order period. They mostly come from Ponorogo, East Java, others come from Magelang and Kediri. The communication in this community is Javanese, not Indonesian so this community is not much different from Javanese community in Javanese Island. Secondly, Islam is adhered traditionally. They follow the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) tradition in practicing Islam. Although there is no NU branch in the community, they culturally practice this tradition from generation to generation.

⁶ Azra mentions that *Pondok Pesantren* had its origin before the coming of Islam in Indonesia. At that time, it had been used for Hindu-Buddhist religious trainings. However when Islam came to Indonesia, it was blended with Islamic values so now the Pondok Pesantren has been adapted for Islamic education and training. See, Azyumardi Azra, *Islam in Indonesian World*, (Jakarta: Mizan, 2006), pp. 69-70.

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Tahlilan, *Kenduri*, and other religious activities which are close to traditional Islam are done communally. There actually two important characteristics of traditional Islam which are discussed here, namely the Pondok Pesantren and the Kiyai.

In 1965, some people in this community decided to establish a *Pesantren* called *Jazirotul Munir*. It was unfortunate that their spirit was not supported by the fact when there was no Islamic scholar or expert in this community. There were two efforts done to support the newly established *Pesantren*. The first was that they determined to look for a *Kiyai* in Java by sending two people as their representatives.⁷ The second was that this society also forced their children to study in some *Pesantrens* in Java such as Lirboyo Kediri and Tremas. This is a part of preparation for the future leader of the *Pesantren* established. It was hoped that when their children graduated from *Pesantren* in Java they could go back to their village to develop *Pesantren Jazirotul Munir*.

The first *Kiyai* was successfully brought from Java to Pulau Kijang. He was provided a house and garden. The society believed that this *Kiyai* was able to develop *Pesantren Jazirotul Munir* to provide moral guidance for the youth to anticipate negative impacts of modernization. Since this society was a Javanese society so that *Pesantren's* students were also Javanese.

However, this *Kiyai* did not feel uncomfortable living in this society. There were some reasons behind this. The first reason was that the condition of this society was different from his previous environment in Java. He could not adapt with his new environment. The second reason was that he did not receive money for his contribution for the *Pesantren*. Because Javanese people living in Pulau Kijang regarded his contribution as 'jihad', they did not pay money for him. In fact, besides he was given a coconut garden and house for his living, he was also given some packets of paddy every six months. The Javanese society in Pulau Kijang is often called as PujaKesuma (Putra Jawa kelahiran Sumatera or Javanese people who

⁷ An interview was done with indigenous people named Rudi (Pseudonym) in Pulau Kijang in August 2016. In this paper, all informants are anonymous since I want to respect them. Some of them are my teachers, brothers, and even my parents. Therefore, some information such as related to *Kiyai's* names is protected.

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1 were born in Sumatera). Their culture basically is slightly different from Javanese culture in Java. Other cultures, such as Malay influences the development of Javanese society in Pulau Kijang. Because of this then some Javanese people who live or stay in Pulau Kijang spend much time to adapt with social and cultural environment in Pulau Kijang.

Years ago, Javanese people regarded Pulau Kijang as 'new hope' since their life, particularly economy, did not improve in Javanese Island. They moved to Pulau Kijang to improve their living. However, this new hope disappeared when they saw the condition of Pulau Kijang. There was no electricity. The infrastructures did not support their new life. Sometimes, they saw Pulau Kijang as 'forest'. It was not strange that many Javanese people who came from Java did not stay more than three months in Pulau Kijang. They went back to Java.⁸

Therefore, he left to Java by selling his house and garden given previously. He left a negative image. This negative image was caused by two factors. The first factor was theological aspect. In Islam, the spirit of Jihad is urgent. People regard *Kiyai* as a person who should have a high spirit for 'Jihad'. This is because *Kiyai* has a high position in social ranks of Muslim society. Referring to Islamic tradition, a *Kiyai* should have 'ikhlas' feeling. This means that what he did should not ask payment. Therefore, in some areas in Java, a *Kiyai* often spends much contribution for the development of Muslim society but he was not given any payment from the society.

The second factor was sociological aspect. The social bond of the society in Pulau Kijang is based on Javanese culture. Its people tended to keep Javanese culture which respect hard workers. They forced their children to help them digging the ditch or planting paddy in the farm. They emphasized the importance of hard work. They regarded that time is work rather than money. They spent five to seven hours a day to work without borrowing money to their home. They planted paddy and vegetables for their food. When they wanted to buy something, they waited for three months since their coconuts

⁸ In fact, this condition slightly changes. There is electricity but it is on only at night starting from 06.00 pm to 11.00 pm. However, the road is still crummy.

1 were still not picked yet. This *Kiyai* then did not have the spirit of hard work. Therefore, they could not stand from hard living in Pulau Kijang.

Because their *Kiyai* left to Java, students of *Jaziroatul Munir* Islamic Boarding School needed new *Kiyai*. People then discussed the urgency to look for a new *Kiyai* in Java. This was important since their sons and daughters who previously were sent to some *Pesantrens* in Java did not graduate yet. They thought that this *Pesantren* must be kept to survive. It is known that for *Pesantren*, the existence of *Kiyai* is chief for its development.⁹

A person went to Java to look for a *Kiyai*. He brought a fresh graduate from *Pesantren* Tremas. He was an unmarried *Kiyai*. People in Pulau Kijang hoped that this *Kiyai* could stay longer than previous *Kiyai*. They offered a girl to be married by him. He accepted. He married with a daughter of indigenous person in Pulau Kijang. He was given a coconut garden, a house for living and packets of paddy. It was unfortunate that his thought was not suitable with the thought of majority people in Pulau Kijang. He brought Muhammadiyah's thought which was opposed by some teachers in *Pesantren Jaziroatul Munir*. People in Pulau Kijang followed Nahdatul Ulama. The elevated tension between this *Kiyai* and some teachers in Pulau Kijang forced him to move from Pulau Kijang. However, he did not go back to Java. He moved to a village which was still in Riau.

The tension between Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama was not a new case. For some Javanese people in Pulau Kijang who followed Nahdatul Ulama, they could not tolerate Muhammadiyah's followers since they did not use 'qunut' in their dawn (Subuh) prayer. Muhammadiyah followers also did not allow 'yasinan' or 'Kenduri' which has the similiarity with 'Selametan' in Java. This provoked a high tension causing his move to another village.¹⁰

⁹ Komaruddin Hidayat & Putut Widjanarko, *Reinventing Indonesia: Menemukan Kembali Masa Depan Bangsa*, Bandung: PT. Mizan Publika, 2008, p.345.

¹⁰ The same phenomenon also occurred in West Sumatera where Ahmad Syafii Maarif lived. However, the tension was between Perti and Muhammadiyah followers. See, Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Titik-Titik Kisar di Perjalananku: Autobiografi Ahmad Syafii Maarif*, Bandung: Mizan, 2009, p.77.

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Another *Kiyai* then was invited to lead *Pesantren Jazirotul Munir*. This *Kiyai* graduated from Lirboyo, Kediri, East Java. As previous *Kiyais*, he was given some facilities such as a house and garden. He made the development of *Pesantren Jazirotul Munir* bigger. Seventy to hundred students studied in this *Pesantren*. He was famous. This popularity brought him into politics. He participated as a candidate for local house of representative (DPRD Kabupaten) in Tembilahan. He succeeded in his political road. He became a member of local house of representative. Because he was busy in politics, he could not manage *Pesantren Jazirotul Munir* well.

When his duty in local house of representative finished, people still hoped that he could manage the *Pesantren*. However, he did not want. He sold his house and garden and went back to Java. The students of *Pesantren Jazirotul Munir* then lost their *Kiyai*. In fact, when he nominated himself as a candidate of local house of representative, they were conscious that they would lose their *Kiyai*.

The previous description indicated that efforts done by people in the community to establish the *Pesantren* were not supported by the existence of *kiyai*, a person who has charisma and authority in Indonesian Islam. The indigenous *kiyai* was none making this community disoriented with the future of the *pesantren*. The conflict was however not evident yet as all *Kiyai* finally left the community. For the first *Kiyai*, adaptation became a problem. The second *Kiyai* faced classical tension, namely the tension between traditionalists (Nahdatul Ulama) versus modernist (Muhammadiyah). The third *Kiyai* left *Pesantren* to choose politics. This phenomenon has occurred in some *Pesantrens* in Java particularly after the fall of Soeharto. The great chance for a *Kiyai* to be a member of local or national house of representative supported this phenomenon. A *Kiyai* has a high popularity among Muslim society. This benefits him. Many *Kiyais* then easily succeeded in getting votes to be members of local house representative. They use their religious status for political agenda.

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C. Power Struggle

This part will show how the Kiyai tries to gain power under the challenge of the community elite members.¹¹ The kiyai and elite members compete to gain authority in the pesantren and society. The conflict in this society then is about a situation of competition or contestation. This is actually relevant with Boulding's idea quoted by Rilus A. Kinseng who states that conflict "is a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other"¹²

Since 1995, in *Pesantren Jazirotul Munir*, there has been a new *Kiyai* who came from Tulung Agung, East Java. This *Kiyai* had two different characteristics with the previous three *Kiyais*. Firstly, from the perspective of his migration from Java to Pulau Kijang, this *Kiyai* was different from the previous *Kiyais* who were invited by people of the society. In the above description, it could be seen that they were brought from Java to Pulau Kijang by the representatives of people in Pulau Kijang. He, however, came to Pulau Kijang by himself since he followed his wife who was an indigenous woman of Pulau Kijang. Secondly, it is different from the previous *Kiyais* who were given a coconut garden and house. This *Kiyai* was only given some packets of paddy each month. This is because he had already given a house and coconut garden by his parents-in law.

Together with the election of new *Kiyai*, some students who were sent to some *Pesantrens* and universities in Java graduated and went back to Pulau Kijang. These fresh graduates and new *Kiyai* brought a new hope for the development of *Pesantren Jazirotul Munir*. It is not strange that, in 1997, *Pesantren Jazirotul Munir* grew rapidly. There were 150 students learning in the *Pesantren*. It was the highest students' population since its establishment. Sociologically, it indicated the success of *Pesantren* since this *Pesantren* was located

¹¹ See and compare with Savran Billahi and Idris Thaha, *Bangkitnya Kelas Menengah Santri Modernisasi Pesantren di Indonesia*, Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2018, p.87-89

¹² Rilus A. Kinseng, *Konflik Nelayan*, Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014, p. 11-12

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1 in a minority community, namely Javanese society. It is normal that although at its peak of success this Islamic Boarding School had only 150 students. This is because this *Pesantren* was intended to Javanese community. It is not strange that there were no other students from different ethnics such as Malay students.

The pesantren then strengthened the Javanese and traditional Islamic identity of this community. As a result, this community put the pesantren as the place where the power was fought. It became the arena of struggling authority between members of community and the kiyai. In Javanese island, kiyai is the central power who owns and manages the pesantren. He controls it as it belongs to him so that there is no power struggle among members of society. It is different from the pesantren in this community. The kiyai did not own the pesantren but the society owned it. Crucial decision about the pesantren should be known by the society, at least by its elite members.

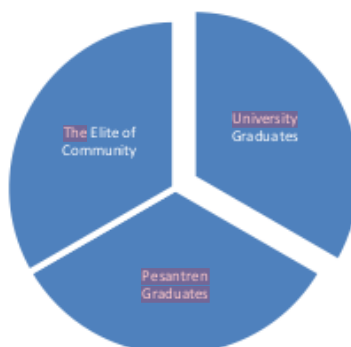
The elite members consist of two important groups. The first is the university graduates. The second is the pesantren graduates. The university and pesantren graduates were teachers of the pesantren. These graduates challenged the homogeneity of the community. *Pesantren* graduates were identified as religious scholars having a good understanding in reading 'yellow texts' or classical Islamic texts. Universities' graduates then were characterized as secular scholars who could not read classical texts.

In fact, there has been an intense discussion on the role and influence of western graduates and Middle Eastern graduates in Indonesia.¹³ The western graduates have been assumed spreading 'secular' thought which contradicts the religious values of Indonesian community. They have been even suspected as the agent of the West. The suspicious judgement to the western graduates sometimes occurs in Indonesian Muslim communities.

In the community, the tension was not between western and Middle Eastern graduates but between university and *Pesantren*

¹³Azyumardi Azra, "Melacak Pengaruh dan Pergeseran Orientasi Tamatan Kairo" in Mona Abaza, Pendidikan Islam dan Pergeseran Orientasi: Studi Kasus Alumni Al-Azhar, Jakarta: LP3ES, 1999, p.xii.

1 graduates. The tension between university and *Pesantren* graduates can be analyzed as follows:



1 **Figure 1.** The tension between university and *Pesantren* graduates.

Among the elites of Javanese community in Pulau Kijang, they tended to make a close relationship with *Pesantren* graduates rather than university graduates. Also, they respected *Pesantren* graduates. These elites basically represented the opinion of the majority people in Javanese society of Pulau Kijang. They valued *Pesantren* graduates since *Pesantren* graduates had some abilities. The first was they could lead 'the *selamatan* or *kenduri*' held by the community. As it can be seen from some Javanese societies in Java, there are also some religious activities conducted. One of the most regular activities done by the Javanese community in Pulau Kijang is 'yasinan'. This religious activity is slightly different from 'selamatan' in Java. This religious tradition is conducted weekly, i.e. every Thursday night. The menu given is 1 not rice but cake. The ritual is started by reciting 'tahlil' led by a respected person who usually graduated from *Pesantren* in Java. This ritual then is continued by reading a verse in the Qur'an, namely *Surah* (verse) in the Qur'an called *yasin*.

The second ability is that they could read classical texts. This was crucial since the majority people in Pulau Kijang respected those who were able to read classical texts (*Kitab Kuning* or yellow book). They often asked the youths who graduated from *Pesantren* and universities whether they are able to read classical texts or not.

These two abilities owned by most of *Pesantren* graduates contributed to their charisma and authority among Javanese people in

1 Pulau Kijang. This was of course rational because the only vacancy provided by the society was a teacher or *Kiyai* for *Pesantren*. And the requirements which must be fulfilled by 'the jobseekers' were mainly; able to read 'yellow books' and lead 'yasinan' activities.

This different educational background of teachers contributed to the rise of conflict in the community. University and pesantren graduates fought the power and authority in the *Pesantren*. The *Pesantren* graduates led by the *Kiyai* emphasized the importance of autonomy for the *Kiyai* to lead the *Pesantren*. This meant that all learning and teaching processes in the *Pesantren* should be free from intervention of teachers and people in the society. However, this was opposed by some people organized by university graduates. On the contrary, university graduates proposed that management of *Pesantren* should be modernized under a good organizational board or *yayasan*.

Another idea was whether those who taught students in the *Pesantren* should be paid or not. At that time, salary was only paid for those who taught in Madrasah *Hidayatul Mubtadiin*. In fact, *Pesantren* graduates had limited session in Madrasah compared to in *Pesantren*. University graduates taught more classes than that of *Pesantren* graduates in Madrasah. Some university graduates did not teach in the *Pesantren* although they taught in Madrasah. Of course, this idea was rejected by the university graduates.

The reasons why the ideas from *Pesantren* graduates could not win the debate were mainly because there was no support from Javanese society in Pulau Kijang. It was true that *Pesantren* graduates were more highly respected. However, their ideas were irrational for Javanese society in Pulau Kijang. Regarding to their first idea, for instance, when the *Kiyai* was given a great autonomy, it indicated that Javanese society gave the *Pesantren* to the *Kiyai*. This also meant that they were not allowed to control the *Pesantren*. Related to the second idea, Javanese society did not support the idea since it needed much money to pay the teachers. People did not want to invest more grants to pay them.

Furthermore, with the rise of modern instruments like television, the tension was more complicated. As known, with the

1 progress of time, the advancement of technology has put Islam in a problematic locus. Islam as a majority religion in Indonesia cannot escape from the challenge of modernization in this century. In this case, some Muslims regard that modernization has negative impacts for Muslim life. They accuse modernization as same as westernization. They assume that modernization causes the separation between secular and religious which creates the position of religion, Islam, is not important anymore. They are suspicious to Modern terms- progress, power, science, reason- since they think that these violate their well-establish identities.¹⁴

In 1995, modern television via satellite came to Javanese society in Pulau Kijang. Some wealthy people in Pulau Kijang then purchased it. This, according to pesantren graduates, could carry negative impact for youth in this society. During teaching and learning process in the pesantren, particularly at night, many students did not take part in this activity since they watched television owned by a wealthy family. In fact, there were some attempts to solve this problem. The first endeavour was made by a youth organization in this society. This organization organized its members to prevent students watching television. They usually cached the students to give punishment. Nevertheless, this punishment did not make them give up. They still went to watch television silently.

The second attempt was by asking the owner of television to close his door when there was a student wanted to watch television in his house. For the first time, it was effective enough. However, in its further progress, this was useless. The owner of television did not desire to produce a serious risk because some students even waited in front of his or her door until it was opened.

The failure of the above attempts was supported by the fact that the *kiyai* kept silent to this problem. He remained teaching in the classroom or mosque although his students were only two. It can be assumed that there were two reasons why he kept silent. The first reason was he wanted to make a distance with the problem since he believed that it was hard to resolve the problem. Television was a

¹⁴ Nasr Abu Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006, p.11

1 new trend in the society at that time. Preventing students from watching television could boost their anxiety.

The second reason why this kiyai kept silent was that he wanted to defend his charisma and authority in the society. Since he thought that it was difficult to prevent them from watching television, he believed that he could not stop them watching television. Therefore, he did not involve in solving the problem. When he involved, and the problem was not resolved, his authority and charisma decreased.

D. From Pesantren to *Thariqat*

The occurrence of internal conflicts among Pesantren and university graduates and the emergence of television provoked the *Kiyai* to stop teaching from *Pesantren Jaziroatul Munir*. This happened in 2003. At present, he does not involve in any activity in the Pesantren. However, he now is active in *Thariqat Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah*.¹⁵ He has a lot of followers. He at least gets 200 followers. These followers even are not only from Javanese society but also from Malay and other ethnics.

Compared to his involvement in the pesantren, in this religious activity, he enjoys his status. This is because he has a great authority in which he could manage and lead *Thariqat* without intervention both from the teachers and people of Javanese society in Pulau Kijang. His character is basically common among kiyais in Javanese society. A kiyai tends to lead a *pesantren* independently. Therefore, in some cases, there are some *pesantrens* which collapse when their kiyais died. In this community however the kiyai left it. In fact, he is still alive and lives about 200 metres from the pesantren building. However, since he decided to stop teaching and leading the pesantren, it 'died'. It is true that at present there is Pesantren's building but there are no teaching and learning activities there.

Basically, the real factor contributing the peak of the conflict was the political involvement of the kiyai in some general elections.

¹⁵ About the history of the Tarekat in Riau, see Masduki, Toni Hartono and Imron Rosidi, "Harmoni Lingkungan dan Pengikut Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah Lalang tanjung, Riau" in *At-Tahrir* Vol. 17 No. 2 November 2017, pp. 288-309

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The kiyai was accused by some people in this community receiving bribes from several candidates to assist them in the election. An informant called Ahmad (Pseudonym)¹⁶ mentions:

“Waktu itu menjelang pemilu, ketika ada calon DPRD yang datang ke daerah ini. Ia memberikan bantuan sapi beberapa ekor. Namun bantuan sapi-sapi itu ternyata tidak untuk masyarakat. Pak kiyai membagi-bagi kepada beberapa orang saja sehingga beberapa orang tidak suka terhadap tindakan itu. (At that time, before the general election, there was a local representative coming to this village. He gave some cows. However, they were not given for the society interest. The Kiyai just shared with certain people so that some people did not like with what the kiyai did)

During the election process, many candidates are looking for support to gain as many as votes. Some of them even approach the kiyai since he has the authority and followers. His authority is beneficial to invite the voters to vote them. His followers can also be potentially the voters to win them. The kiyai however rejected the accusation. He, in several meeting held by the community, warned the accusers as unthankful men. He already assisted the community to lead the pesantren without any payment. He then not only did not want to be the kiyai of pesantren but also as the kiyai of this community.

As the kiyai of the community, he had become the Imam of the prayers in the mosque. He also led the tahlilan, yasinan and kenduri held by members of the community. However, after the accusation, he rejected to be the imam of prayers in the mosque and any religious activities held in the community. Interestingly, in his tarekat circle in his house, he becomes the imam. He led the prayers, tahlilan and religious activities in the tarekat. This is an indication that his withdrawal from being the kiyai, both in the pesantren and community, to be the kiyai of tarekat is his way of resolving the conflict.¹⁷ If this indication is an exaggeration, his deep involvement in the tarekat now can be understood as the process of resolving the conflict both in himself and community. The tarekat is close to the

¹⁶An interview was done in June 2016.

¹⁷ See <http://rizkie-library.blogspot.com/2016/02/manajemen-konflik-definisi-penyebab-dan.html>, accessed on Monday 30 July 2018, at 07.42 am.

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1 sufi tradition. It is a part of purifying soul from any materialistic elements. As the central actor of this conflict, he may think that his withdrawal from this religious position can reduce his authority so that any person could replace his position. His position is truly replaced by a person who is indigenous figure. However, it is surprising that his authority cannot be replaced. This indigenous person only replaces his position, not replace his authority. It is true that his authority may reduce but it does not vanish. Many people still visit him to get the *berkah* (blessings).

His withdrawal may be regarded by his opponents as their victory since his central position in the community he left could be taken. However, his withdrawal from the conflict is also his victory since he then can focus on his *tarekat*. His withdrawal from being the *kiyai* is not only for resolving the conflict in the community but also the conflict within his soul. A position in this temporary world should not be fought by any means. It is a 'nafsu' (desire) which should be controlled and managed well. Through the *tarekat*, now he involves deeply in the process of purifying his conflict with his 'nafsu'.¹⁸ Nafsu (desire), according to Abdurrahman Wahid, is a negative and destructive power making the soul worried and restless. Those who can control and manage their desire can easily achieve their holy goal but those who are controlled by their desire can endanger themselves and other people.¹⁹

The Sufi tradition then provides a pathway for the community to resolve its conflict. The tradition is actually inherent in Indonesian Islam as Islam comes to Indonesia through the preaching of the Sufis.²⁰ Sufism meets the local tradition in Indonesia which emphasizes on a religious inner way, "providing space for individual devotion and

¹⁸ The goal of *Tarekat* followers actually is the soul purification to get closer with God. When their soul is 'clean', they can approach to God. See, Sri Mulyati, "The Development of Islamic Spirituality in Indonesia" *Ilmu Ushuluddin* 2, No. 1 (2014): 81-82

¹⁹ Abdurrahman Wahid, "Musuh dalam Selimut" in *Illusi Negara Islam Ekspansi Gerakan Islam Transnasional di Indonesia* (KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, ed), Jakarta: Wahid Insititute, 2009, p. 13

²⁰ Uka Tjandrasasmita, *Arkeologi Islam Nusantara*, Jakarta: Kepustakaan Gramedia Populer, 2009, p.28

1 search for truth, complementing the outward manifestation of Islamic piety expressed through formal worship.”²¹

E. Conclusion

The conflict of Pulau Kijang community is influenced by many factors. They are not merely religious or non-religious matters. This paper shows that they are hybrid factors mixing between Islamic (being Kiyai) and non-Islamic factors (aiming to gain the power or authority). This paper shows that the authority of being the kiyai is contested by several people in the community. As known, the Kiyai is a symbol which has a ‘sacred’ authority. It commonly should be given to a special person. However, in the case of Pulau Kijang community, the status of kiyai can be taken at any time by the society.

The pesantren and kiyai are basically central elements of this conflict in Pulau Kijang community. Before 1990s, there were three religious scholars graduated from *Pesantren* in Javanese Island chosen as kiyai. These three kiyais, however, could not manage the *Pesantren* well since they faced three complex problems; adaptation, different religious interpretations, and political orientation. After 1990s, the conflict started to emerge. Because of this conflict, the kiyai decided to stop being the kiyai in the pesantren and society. The rise of university graduates in the community caused the fragmentation of authority in the community. In Javanese Island, the Pesantren has been central in the hand of a *Ulama* or a leader of the Pesantren.²² He is the owner of the *Pesantren* so that his authority has been resilient. It is different from this Pesantren in which the *Kiyai* did not have such authority. This is because he did not own the Pesantren. The pesantren of Jaziroatul Munir was owned by the society. Furthermore, the *Kiyai* of the *Pesantren of Jaziroatul Munir* was not an indigenous person. The *kiyai* felt reluctant to manage the

²¹ Robert Pringle, *Understanding Islam in Indonesia Politics and Diversity*, Singapore: Edition Didier Millet PTE Ltd, 2010, p.35-36

²² See, Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1990), 55

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Pesantren fully. The *Kiyai* might think that some members of the society would suspect him as bringing different agenda.

Moreover, this study finds that the political dimension is influential which deconstructs the meaning of charismatic leader in this society. The authority of local *kiyai* or *kiyai kampong* is renegotiated by ordinary people when the *kiyai* is invited to be involved in the political contest by politicians. However, the *kiyai*'s withdrawal from being the *kiyai* in the *pesantren* and society proves that the conflict in the community can be solved peacefully. The *tarekat* as a part of the *sufi* tradition provides a conduit for the *kiyai* to solve the conflict in his community. This article provides an insight on how local Islam has proposed a best example of peaceful conflict resolution in Indonesia. It demonstrates the uniqueness of Indonesian Muslims' way to solve their internal conflict.

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