Forum Kewaspadaan Dini Masyarakat (FKDM) as a Strategy Instrument for Countering Radicalism and Extremism in North Purwokerto District, Banyumas Regency, Indonesia

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to assess the effectiveness of the Forum Kewaspadaan Dini Masyarakat (FKDM) as a strategic instrument for countering radicalism and extremism in North Purwokerto District, Banyumas Regency, Indonesia.

Methods: Utilizing a qualitative research approach, the study engaged in thorough observations and active involvement with various stakeholders. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis, supported by in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

Findings: The study found that FKDM demonstrates a strong commitment to mitigating the risks associated with radicalism and extremism. However, it faces key challenges, including insufficient budget allocations and difficulties in coordinating among multiple agencies.

Conclusions: The study concludes that while FKDM shows promise as a tool for countering radicalism and extremism, successful implementation requires sufficient resource allocation and effective inter-agency collaboration. The findings contribute to the limited body of research on the operational efficiency of FKDM in specific regional settings and offer insights for policy-making.

Keywords: National Security, Radicalism, Extremism, Forum Kewaspadaan Dini Masyarakat (FKDM), Organizational Effectiveness, Banyumas Regency

1. Introduction

Radicalism and extremism have emerged as multilayered challenges that significantly threaten both global and national security frameworks, as well as the fabric of diverse societies. These ideological phenomena are not static; rather, they demonstrate a high degree of adaptability, enabling them to permeate various geopolitical contexts, social strata, and cultural settings (Richards, 2003). This adaptability manifests in their ability to exploit technological advancements, such as social media platforms, for recruitment and propaganda purposes (Jones, 2018). Moreover, radicalism and extremism often intersect with other socio-political issues, including immigration, ethnic tensions, and economic disparities, thereby exacerbating existing vulnerabilities within societies (Williams, 2020). The global implications of radicalism and extremism are well-documented, with detrimental impacts on social cohesion, economic stability, and national security (Orhan, 2010; Richards, 2015). In Indonesia, these ideologies have gained traction, posing a threat to societal harmony and prompting policymakers to search for effective countermeasures (Ansori, 2019).

Indonesia, as a complex archipelagic nation with diverse ethnic and religious communities, provides a striking case study in this regard. Recent years have witnessed a discernible uptick in the prevalence of radical and

extremist ideologies within the country (Ansori, 2019). These ideologies are not confined to isolated pockets of society but have made inroads into mainstream political discourse, educational institutions, and community organizations. This trend has triggered a profound transformation in Indonesia's socio-political landscape, fueling sectarian divisions and instigating a reevaluation of existing counter-terrorism and deradicalization strategies (Panjaitan, 2020; Nur, et.al, 2020; Qodir, 2014). It has also precipitated concern among policymakers, security agencies, and civil society organizations, who are grappling with the implications of this ideological shift on national unity and social cohesion.

Several root causes underlie these ideologies, including socio-economic disparities, political grievances, and ideological indoctrination (Richards, 2003; Jati, 2013). Current strategies for mitigation often emphasize community engagement and early awareness as key elements for success (Finkel et al., 2020; Panjaitan, 2020; Nur et al., 2020; Qodir, 2014)

While community-based interventions such as the Early Awareness Forum (FKDM) have garnered academic attention (Pudjiastuti, 2020), there remains a paucity of empirical studies focusing on its implementation and effectiveness in specific regional contexts like North Purwokerto. This study aims to address this gap, guided by theories that emphasize the importance of context-specific approaches to counter radicalism (Lain, 2016; Carter, 2018).

The primary objective is to assess the effectiveness of FKDM as a strategic tool in North Purwokerto. Through a nuanced analysis of FKDM's implementation, challenges, and achievements, this study aims to offer valuable policy insights for both local and global contexts.

Based on successes observed in other geographical contexts (Pudjiastuti, 2020), this study hypothesizes that FKDM, when tailored to the unique needs and complexities of North Purwokerto, can be an effective tool in combating radicalism and extremism. The research aims to test this hypothesis rigorously and assess FKDM's potential as a replicable model for other regions facing similar challenges.

Following this introduction, the methodology section will outline the research design and data collection methods. The results section will present the study's findings, followed by a discussion that interprets these results in the context of existing literature. The paper will conclude with a summary of key insights and recommendations for future research and policy interventions.

2. Literature Review

Radicalism, as defined by Borum (2011), involves advocating for far-reaching changes in society, often in opposition to gradual reforms. In Indonesia, this definition finds resonance in the emergence of factions calling for a complete overhaul of existing socio-political structures. These groups typically operate on societal fringes and aim to disrupt established norms (Silver, 2018).

Extremism, distinct yet related to radicalism, involves ideologies or actions that significantly deviate from mainstream community values (Carter, 2018). In the Indonesian context, extremism manifests through violent acts and the propagation of ideologies that endorse the use of force for achieving political or religious goals (Hasan, 2002). This behavior aligns with Carter's depiction of extremism as divergent from societal norms.

Community engagement, as articulated by Attree et al. (2011), involves the active involvement of community members in initiatives aimed at resolving societal issues. In North Purwokerto, community engagement takes the form of local dialogues, workshops, and awareness campaigns designed to combat radicalism and extremism (Menon & Allen, 2020). These efforts have been effective in fostering understanding and counteracting extremist narratives (Boland & Tenkasi, 1995).

The concept of early awareness entails the proactive identification and management of potential risks (Kaiser, 2011). In the specific setting of North Purwokerto, the Early Awareness Forum (FKDM) embodies this principle by focusing on the early detection and intervention of radical tendencies among youth (Crone, 2016).

Socio-economic disparities, characterized by unequal resource distribution and opportunities (Davidai, 2018), are a notable contributing factor to radicalism and extremism in Indonesia, particularly in Purwokerto. Such disparities often lead marginalized communities to be more susceptible to extremist narratives that promise societal transformation.

Ideological indoctrination involves the systematic instillation of specific beliefs or values (Mitchell, 1997). In Indonesia, extremist groups employ such techniques to target vulnerable populations, a strategy aimed at recruiting and indoctrinating individuals into extremist ideologies (Gruenewald, Chemark, & Freilich, 2013).

3. Methods

The central aim of this study is to scrutinize the initiatives undertaken by the Forum Kewaspadaan Dini Masyarakat (FKDM) in the North Purwokerto District, Banyumas Regency. The study places particular emphasis on the activities, programs, and interventions led by FKDM, with the objective of understanding its organizational structure, content delivery, and overall impact in the realm of countering radicalism and extremism.

To achieve this, a qualitative research design was chosen, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the complexities associated with FKDM initiatives. The qualitative approach is particularly beneficial for capturing the subjective experiences, perspectives, and interpretations of individuals either participating in or affected by FKDM initiatives. This helps in providing a nuanced and context-specific understanding of both the effectiveness and the challenges associated with FKDM.

In terms of participant selection, a purposive sampling method was employed. This method ensured the inclusion of a wide-ranging group of stakeholders who are actively involved with FKDM. Participants included FKDM organizers, community leaders, local government officials, and community members who have either participated in or been impacted by the activities organized by FKDM. To capture a balanced viewpoint, the study also included individuals who may hold criticisms or reservations about FKDM initiatives.

Data for the study were gathered using a combination of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders served as a primary source of in-depth insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding FKDM. Each interview typically lasted for a duration ranging from 45 to 60 minutes. Focus group discussions were also conducted to generate a collective understanding of community perspectives, with group consisting of 18 participants. Additionally, observations were carried out during FKDM events to capture real-time dynamics, interactions, and responses. All interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded after obtaining explicit consent from the participants and were later transcribed for analysis.

For the analysis of the collected data, a thematic analysis approach was followed. Initially, the transcribed data were reviewed multiple times to familiarize the researchers with the content. This was followed by the generation of preliminary codes to capture the key concepts and patterns evident in the data. These codes were then grouped into broader themes for further analysis and interpretation. Throughout this process, a constant comparative method was used to ensure that the interpretations remained closely connected to the original data. The analysis was facilitated by the use of MAXQDA software, which allowed for a systematic organization and examination of the data.

4. Result

Our study examined the initiatives and efficacy of the Forum Kewaspadaan Dini Masyarakat (FKDM) in Banyumas, in collaboration with the Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman. Interviews were conducted with eight key informants, including FKDM Banyumas chairpersons and members. The interview data were meticulously analyzed using specialized research instruments within a structured framework of seven key questions. These questions were designed to provide comprehensive insights into FKDM's activities, the challenges faced, and the impact on the Banyumas region.

FKDM's establishment in Banyumas was a strategic response to growing local needs for surveillance against various forms of risks and disruptions. Its operational guidelines stem from governmental directives and evolved from a preexisting framework, WASDINDA, involving multiple intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The transition to FKDM aimed to improve community-level vigilance, making surveillance more localized and effective. Banyumas, a region marked by cultural diversity, faces a variety of challenges, including radicalism in certain areas and the uneven distribution of policy measures at the grassroots level. In addition to radicalism and extremism, the region is susceptible to natural disasters and security disruptions, thus highlighting the need for robust monitoring and intervention measures.

Since FKDM's inception, there has been a noticeable decline in the frequency and intensity of adverse events. The organization has particularly been effective in regions like Baturraden, a tourist area in North Purwokerto, where instances of radicalism and extremism are minimal. FKDM has also been responsive to other forms of disruptions, such as thefts and natural disasters, demonstrating its multifaceted operational scope.

FKDM employs a three-component strategy—filter, collect, and report—to mitigate radical ideologies and maintain social cohesion. This strategy includes individual-level dialogues focused on fostering an understanding and appreciation of Indonesia's diverse historical context. While FKDM has made significant strides in monitoring and intervention, it faces challenges, including low levels of public awareness and reporting from various villages in Banyumas.
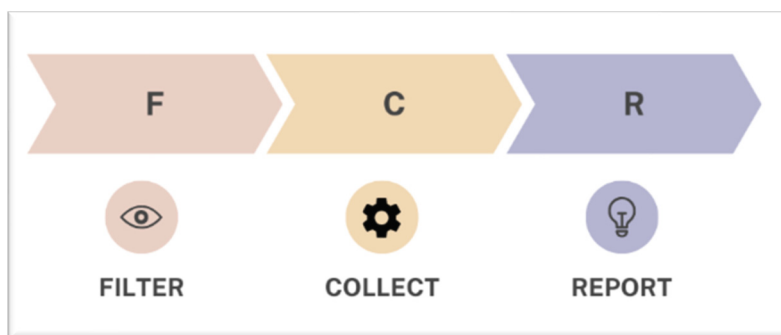

Figure 1. Three key components in the FKDM framework

The efficacy of FKDM's strategies in Banyumas exhibits a heterogeneous portrayal. Although significant achievements have been made in the areas of monitoring and intervention, there continue to be persistent challenges. One notable issue pertains to the dearth of proactive reporting from numerous villages in Banyumas, which is further exacerbated by a prevailing deficiency in public knowledge regarding FKDM. The aforementioned challenges highlight the necessity of implementing a comprehensive and extensive strategy for public engagement.

Despite its significant role, the field of FKDM encounters a multitude of challenges that impede its operational effectiveness. One of the foremost challenges lies in the operational independence of the entity, which, although affording flexibility, lacks the resilient support framework characteristic of governmental organizations. The challenges are further intensified by the lack of resources, including insufficient funding and inadequate training. It is imperative to acknowledge and rectify the operational and structural constraints in order to fully harness the potential of FKDM.

Banyumas, although characterized by its diversity and liveliness, is not devoid of social challenges. The region primarily contends with social issues as its main manifestation of adverse human and societal conditions. The social cohesion of Banyumas is consistently challenged by a range of factors, including conflicts originating from various organizations, issues arising from limited resources, and political tensions. The proliferation of inaccurate information on social media platforms presents additional challenges, thereby requiring diligent surveillance and prompt interventions.

Although radicalism exists in Banyumas, it is not the primary focus of concern. The implementation of robust monitoring systems and proactive interventions by organizations such as FKDM has effectively prevented the widespread adoption of radical ideologies. Individuals affiliated with radicalism are subject to rigorous police surveillance, which serves to proactively address and neutralize potential threats. The implementation of this proactive approach has played a crucial role in the preservation of peace and harmony within the region.

The FKDM organization plays a crucial role in the Banyumas region and operates within a distinct framework. While it fulfills the role of an informant by collecting and relaying vital information, it does not operate as an executor. The present operational model, despite its inherent flexibility, presents a series of challenges. The need to improve FKDM's capabilities for a more significant future is highlighted by the dependence on community-sourced information and the constraints of limited resources.

5. Discussion

Upon concluding the interviews, the research team facilitated a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to delve deeper into the intricacies of the subject under investigation. The decision to employ this method stemmed from the need to foster inclusive dialogue among a diverse set of stakeholders and to validate the robustness and reliability of the data gathered during the interviews. This technique served as a form of data triangulation, enriching the study's findings.

The FGD assembled a diverse group of participants representing different sectors, including local government bodies, law enforcement agencies, FKDM members, and academics. This multi-disciplinary gathering enabled a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with FKDM's initiatives.

Among the key issues highlighted during the FGD was the implementation of governmental policy initiative (Perda No. 11 of 2019), which aims to address social conflicts in the Jawa Tengah region. While this policy represents a significant step forward, financial constraints, specifically delays in fund disbursement as mentioned in Article 22, continue to be a substantial hurdle. Another challenge discussed pertained to the need for increased coordination among various entities involved, particularly in light of the diverse human resources that contribute to FKDM's reporting mechanisms.

Security concerns were also a focal point of the discussion, including the changing landscape of extremist recruitment strategies. The shift towards the use of online platforms for these activities calls for specialized law enforcement units capable of tackling cyber-related crimes. The dilemma lies in the widespread availability of religious content online, which can sometimes be misused to foster extremist ideologies. Moreover, the covert

nature of intelligence operations such as FKDM doesn't necessarily reflect its effectiveness, a point that was clarified during the FGD.

A recurring theme in the FGD was the issue of financial constraints, with noticeable discrepancies in budgetary allocations at different administrative levels. Trust issues between various units also emerged as a concern, particularly the observed lack of collaboration between national intelligence and local entities. The FGD concluded with the consensus that economic factors alone cannot be held responsible for the prevalence of terrorism and radicalism. Instead, ideological and mindset shifts are the root causes, emphasizing the need for strategies that can effectively address these core issues.

6. Conclusion

This study brings forth important insights into the operations of the Forum Kewaspadaan Dini Masyarakat (FKDM) in Banyumas and its role in mitigating the challenges of radicalism and extremism. Governed by Permendagri no. 46 of 2019, FKDM exemplifies the government's commitment to enhancing surveillance and security at the community level. However, the study identifies enduring challenges such as insufficient funding and the need for improved inter-agency collaboration as areas requiring attention.

A significant contribution of this research lies in its enrichment of the academic discourse on community-based strategies to counter radicalization. Through a detailed exploration of FKDM's operational framework, challenges, and community impact, the study offers a robust understanding of grassroots surveillance mechanisms. The nuanced perspectives obtained from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions highlight the importance of localized strategies in combating extremist ideologies. Therefore, this research stands as a critical reference for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners interested in implementing similar community-based initiatives in various geographic settings.

Despite its comprehensive nature, the study has some limitations. The primary data collection methods, namely in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, while rich in qualitative insights, may not capture the full spectrum of community opinions. Additionally, the participant selection in the focus group discussions may not be entirely representative of all the stakeholders involved in FKDM activities. The study's focus on Banyumas also limits the direct applicability of its findings to regions with different socio-political landscapes. Future research could benefit from expanding the participant pool and conducting comparative studies across multiple regions, thus enhancing the generalizability of the study's conclusions.

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Conflict of Interest

None to Declare

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