

Deradicalizing and Strengthening Civic Values among the Youth: An Analysis of Ideology Criticism Philosophy

Biyanto

*Department of Philosophy of Religion, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Philosophy,
State Islamic University Sunan Ampel, 60237, Surabaya, Indonesia*

ABSTRACT

This article is aimed at discussing the programs which seek to deradicalize and strengthen civic values among the youth. The approach adopted in this present article is an analysis of ideology criticism philosophy. This analysis is used to study the aforesaid programs which are implemented by educational institutions in Indonesia. Ideology criticism is used to free our knowledge from either implicit or explicit ideological interest. Using the ideology criticism, we can understand the background of the emergence of radicalism with all forms of its expressions. We may also analyze all forms of expressions of resistances to radicalism ideology through deradicalization programs. This article concludes that the most important step to take in the process of deradicalization is to understand the characters and ideologies of radicalism and terrorism movements. This step is important because when incidences of radicalism and terrorism often happen in Indonesia, the actors of radicalism and terrorism are arrested or killed. Radicalism at present has become an ideology that has been growing and developing among its adherents. By understanding the characters

and ideology of radicalism movements, the programs of deradicalization and civic values strengthening among the youth through the educational institution becomes more effective. What is also important to note is that such programs should be conducted dialogically and humanly. Cross-cultural dialogues should involve believers from various religions.

Keywords: Civic values, deradicalization, ideology criticism, the youth

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received: 5 October 2018
Accepted: 8 February 2019
Published:

E-mail address:
mrbiyanto@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

According to Mata Air Foundation and Alvara Research Center (2017), in Indonesia, ideologies of terrorism are always disseminated to youths, to radicalize them. The youths become the target of the regeneration of radicalism. It is in the middle of the process of being radicalized that they are stunned by religionism. It is inseparable from the strategy of the ideologies of radical groups who cunningly merge these doctrines with religious teachings. Being in an infidel zone (*dar al-kufr*) and a war zone (*dar al-harb*), Indonesia is not spared by these groups. For these radical groups, the form of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*) and the ideology of *Pancasila* (Five Principles) has not fulfilled the realization of an ideal state in line with their mind (Nashir, 2017).

Since radicalism is widespread among the youths, the nation should be actively involved in the movement against radical ideologies. The resistance movement against this radical ideology was popularly called deradicalization group. One of the strategies used by the deradicalization program was addressing the issue through the educational institutions. If the educational institution is able to maximize its potency, the deradicalization programs will be effective (Hidayat, 2006).

Based on these arguments, the questions that arise are how Indonesia can overcome radicalistic movements and how civic values are strengthened among the youths, as an effort to overcome radicalism ideology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Blumer (1996), ideology deals with a lot of aspects. In an ideology, there are a set of criticisms of the existing orders intended to be changed. Ideology also deals with a doctrine to justify the ideal state of values intended to be reached (Blumer, 1996). In other words, ideology deals with values, beliefs, criticism, reasons and strong defense among its believers. It is based on the ideology that the orientation of struggle, strategies, and stages to attain the intended ideal are determined by a good governance. In the religious praxis movement, ideology has been made as the direction, justification, and weapon to defend its adherents' inspiration and expectation (Zizek, 1994). As these radical groups use religion to justify terrorism, it is pertinent for the government to curb these ideologies from being spread widely, especially among the youths.

The explanation of the structural theory always relates the background of radicalism to two main factors (Sidahmed & Ehteshami, 1996). First is the precondition factor where the causes of radicalism and terrorist movements are indirect in nature. This factor is the accumulation of any disappointment experienced by radical and terrorist groups, especially those dealing with the failure of the religious elite to realize Islamic political ideals. But, the political ideals are still limited in their imagination because they have not succeeded in realizing a concrete political system in a country (Ayubi, 1991). That is why Oliver Roy (1994) called the idea of this Islamic political group

as Islamic political imagination. Oliver Roy exemplified some organizations with radical ideologies that failed to realize their struggles such as *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* in Egypt and *Jama'ati Islami* in Indo-Pakistan (Roy, 1994).

Second is the triggering factor, namely direct trigger of radicalism and terrorism movements where these groups blame the government for socio-economic injustice, no law enforcement, limited political participation that causes the people to feel powerless to voice their disgruntlement against the ruling regime.

Meanwhile, a psychological theory explains the psychological aspects of the actors of radicalism and terrorism, starting from the stages of recruitment, self-identify, personality, ideology implanting and motivations of its members. From the psychological point of view, the social background of the actors of radicalism and terrorism is predictable. For example, it is known that the actors of radicalism are individuals or groups who experience social alienation and economic troubles. Meanwhile, the rational choice theory explains that radicalism is made using the cost and benefit consideration. Through this theory, it is known that the actors of suicide bombing are those who are socially and economically low. This fact shows that actually there are socio-economic reasons behind their bravery to create a terrorist movement.

Dealing with the characters of the ideology of a radical movement, Hrair Dekmejian (1980, 1988) explained that this movement had three characteristics; namely, pervasiveness, polycentrism,

and persistence. The first characteristic, pervasiveness, shows that radicalism is a phenomenon of a socio-religious movement that happens evenly all over the world. This movement in general also gives a prominence of symbolic aspects of religious teachings. The second characteristic, polycentrism, is shown through a lot of socio-religious organizations with radical ideology. The activities of this movement are done by a lot of organizations. Each organization has a different ideology, leader, program, strategy, and tactic. Uniquely, these organizations are not related to one another. The third characteristic, persistence, means that these radical groups struggle continuously; they do not give up and are brave to take any risk as long as the aim is reached. Based on these characteristics, radicalized groups should recruit new cadres and as many as possible. It is through this way that the radicalism ideology is always implanted so that it is strongly rooted in the believers' hearts.

Recently there have been an increasingly growing number of studies on radicalism in Indonesia. In one study, for example, Makbuloh (2019) sought to explore how Islamic education could enable individuals to deal with threats of radicalism. As the results showed, when graduates used certain Islamic education methods, they developed more tolerant attitudes, higher skills, and noble characters. Makbuloh (2019) concluded that Islamic education could improve students' ability in the mastery of science.

Some scholars have found the solution for the problem of radicalism in the

Holy Quran. For example, Arifin (2019) in his study of the effectiveness of the socialization of *Tafsir Inspirasi* in social media pointed out the four principles of divinity, humanity, morality, and moderation as a possible remedy. According to Arifin (2019), radicalism will be reduced by loading the social media with content which reminds our community that this world finds its existence from an absolutely positive supernatural source, that emphasizes the importance of love among humans, that speaks of the significance of morality, and that reminds us ultimate peace is achievable through moderation and compromise and not extremism and radicalism.

In another study, Sumbulah (2019) investigated women's organizations' preventative role in family-based radicalism using interviews and focus group discussions. As she reported, such organizations helped both families that had been affected (high-risk families) and families that had not been affected (low-risk families) by radicalism. Studies like Sumbulah's (2019) emphasize the strategic role of women in fighting against radicalism.

As this review of related literature indicates, more studies are needed to investigate the different ways in which radicalism can be handled in the global world of today.

METHOD

For this study, data was collected from books, articles in journals, newspapers, and sources from the websites. This study used ideology criticism as the analysis

method. Ideology criticism was formalized as the philosophical reflection to free human knowledge from hidden or disguised interest. By utilizing the critique of ideology, the society will be awakened from any false awareness which is always implanted by the ruling groups to preserve their powers (Hardiman, 2009; Suseno, 2005; Zizek, 1994). The use of critique of ideology becomes a deep study of the causes of various incidences of radicalism. The critique of ideology could also be used to evaluate the programs of deradicalization conducted by the government.

RESULTS

As mentioned by the former Head of the State Intelligence Agency (Badan Intelijen Negara), Marciano Norman (2014), terrorism actions in Indonesia had not ended yet. Radicalism and terrorist actions will never end as long as the ideology of its movement is not destroyed. At a certain level, these radical groups were successful in making the youths become cadres. Usually, the regeneration is made by the leaders of the radical group. Instead of merely using the conventional model in the regeneration, this movement also makes use of social media to seed radicalism. In effect, the youth are easily exposed to any information from the social media providing the contents of radicalism and terrorism. They skillfully interact through the cyberspace such as blogs, Facebook, twitter, telegram, and WhatsApp. They have become part of a virtual society (Maulana, 2017).

According to the data from the Indonesia Internet Service Users' Association (*Asosiasi Pengguna Jasa Internet Indonesia*), in Indonesia, there were 132.6 million internet users in 2016, most of whom are students, university students, and youths. Some of them even had more than one set of hand-phone and gadget. On the basis of this reality, it can be stated that the youth is the group that is most susceptible to the impacts of social media with large radicalism and terrorism contents. Since these youths are susceptibly exposed to radicalism through the internet network, the head of National Agency for Combating Terrorism (*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme*), Police Commissioner General Suhardi Alius (2018) reminded that the youth should be careful with the contents on social media. The youths should be smart and wise in making use of social media. The data from National Agency for Combating Terrorism showed that there were about 900,000 sites on the Internet that teach radical ideology, which means that, in a self-taught way, one may learn radical ideology through the Internet. Through the manual provided on the Internet, the youths may also learn how to assemble bombs (Maulana, 2017).

To counter these radicalizations, the youths, especially those studying in the universities, actually may become the pioneers of the program of deradicalization. In this context, it is important to ask the university students to give contributions to this nation through various cultural movements to counter radical ideologies. Due to their knowledge and great organizational

skills, the position of the youths is important to fight against various forms of radicalism in Indonesia. In fact, the youth have become the target of regeneration of the ideologies of radicalism and terrorist groups. Even at present, there is a tendency of terrorism actions starting to involve children, for example, in the incidence in Surabaya on May 13 and May 14, 2018. Elementary and secondary school students were involved in a series of suicide bombs. The children had become the victims of their parents' ideology (Pranawati, 2018). In that context, the Indonesian government has come up with deradicalization programs, and one such program is *Bela Negara* (Defend the State). The deradicalization programs also used institutions of education to eradicate these ideologies.

One of these programs was special among the youths at secondary school and higher education. The youths received lectures about strengthening civic values such as democracy, pluralism, and multiculturalism. In this context, university students should be given adequate insights so that they may apply civic values in the whole segments of their life. Up to now, the implanting of civic values to students has been conducted through various activities such as civic education. In Indonesia, the learning of Civic Education is positioned as an obligatory subject in the national education curriculum from elementary to tertiary levels. This shows that the government has a commitment to implant civic values to the youth. The learning of Civic Education finds its momentum since

at the same time we see that in the state and nation, there are many cases of radicalism. The trend of radicalism at present also shows the intense disability for these groups to accept the liberal government.

The phenomenon of radicalism with religious nuance has among others manifested in various radical movements happening in Indonesia. From the observation, it can be stated that one of the elements that serve as the target of the radicalism movement is the youth. This can be observed from some cases of terrorism and radicalism that involve the youth, especially university students. As a group susceptible to be the target of regeneration of the radical movement, university students should be involved in the program of deradicalization, instead of being exposed to radical ideologies. Moreover, the program of growing civic values should also be conducted through the educational institution. Therefore, the spirit of nationalism among the youth will be growing so that they will take pride in being an Indonesian.

DISCUSSION

Modernization and its consequent conditions have created a global world and have caused the emergence of fundamentalist groups in Indonesia. This is because groups with fundamentalist ideology, in general, intend to respond to any challenges induced by modernization and aim at offering the Islamic ideology. They intend to make Islam an alternative ideology that replaces the modern-secular ideology. But, since their

ideologies are many and they also become social and political activists, the typology of the fundamentalist movements highly reflect radical characters (Ahady, 1992).

As an effort to fight against the ideology of radical groups, what should be done is not to give any chances to the emergence of radicalism and terrorist movements. This desire will be achieved if the factors triggering the radicalism and terrorist movements are minimized. The categories of the triggering factors in this context include social injustice, either at the global, national or local scale. Economic, legal and political injustice should also be considered. Another point that needs to be looked into is the interests of the elite groups.

The conflicts among the elite groups, either civil or military should be reduced if Indonesia is expected to be freed from any radicalism and terrorism incidences. The cases of medium and high scale corruptions that have attracted public attention should be handled by the concerned organizations by highly upholding the principles of justice. If the cases are not honourably handled, the problems of legal injustice could trigger radicalism and terrorism incidences. The problem of law enforcement should also be considered by the government and the political elite so that the latent danger of radical ideologies will not turn into radicalism and terrorist movements. A factor that must not be forgotten is the interpretation of the *jihad* teaching which is often partially understood by the actors of radicalism and terrorism (Rahardjo, 2002; Shihab, 1996). In this context, it

is important for the youths to understand the Islamic teaching of *jihad* completely. The accumulation of political, economic, legal, social, and cultural problems and the system of belief should be considered by the whole community so that everyone is aware of radicalism and the catastrophes it can bring about. In this vein, Islamic education has proved to be capable of empowering individuals to understand and deal with threats of radicalism. As mentioned above, there is research evidence that shows Islamic teachings can result in more tolerant attitudes, higher skills, and more noble characters (Makbuloh, 2019). Likewise, bringing values such as divinity, humanity, morality, and moderation to the attention of the public in the social media has also proved to be beneficial in minimizing radicalism (Arifin, 2019). Social organizations such as the women's organizations stated in Sumbulah's (2019) investigation have also indicated promising results that such organizations' are able to prevent family-based radicalism. Her findings clearly indicated how the organizations were capable of raising particularly high-risk families' awareness about the threat of radicalism.

Besides women, the youths, including university students, as the power of civil society that has been proved to have played an important role in the history of the nation, have an important role to play in the deradicalization movement. They should be given the freedom and power to urge the government to address the realization of a good governance. In this case, leaders are

seen as models to instill this sort of culture. According to Haedar Nashir (2018), leaders in each level should intelligently control their words and behaviors. In other words, the public figures in this country should really have high integrity to make words and actions contribute to unity. Corruptive, consumptive, hedonic, and materialistic cultures should really be avoided. If the government and the elite groups fail to realize the noble ideals of the nation, radicalism and terrorism will continue to grow. University students may also play their roles by always presenting discourses on the themes of civic values such as democracy, pluralism, and multiculturalism.

CONCLUSION

Since radicalism has become a social-religious phenomenon, the effort to overcome radical ideology is a necessity. Based on ideology criticism, the problem of ideology should be considered if we expect to implement deradicalization. The narration of counter-ideology of radicalism and terrorism should continuously be conducted by all elements of the nation. Ideology internalization in the programs of deradicalization should be conducted by considering human aspects. In this context, the deradicalization programs are important to realize in the forms of cross-culture and religion dialogues for human interest. Dialogues, in this case, should not be understood formally but through informal ones such as through art performances theaters, music, sports, and social services. Through these social encounters, people

will forget their social status, cultures ethics, ideologies, and religions while in a formal situation they become distant, and distance differentiates individuals. In this context, the educational institution could become the path to deradicalize individuals by instilling civic values among the youths in Indonesia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper resulted from Professor Acceleration Program in 2018. This program was cooperation among Directorate of Islamic Higher Education at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Indonesia and Centre for the Advancement of Language Competence (CALC) Universiti Putra Malaysia. In consequence, the author thanks very much to Prof. Dr. M. Arskal Salim (Director of Islamic Higher Education), Associate Professor Dr. Arsyad Abd. Samad (Director CALC), Prof. Dr. Jayakaran Mukundan (Programme Coordinator), instructors, and colleagues for their facilities in this program.

REFERENCES

- Ahady, A. H. (1992). The decline of Islamic fundamentalism. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, XXVII(2), 1-15.
- Alius, S. (2018). *Islam antara ajaran dan budaya* [Islam between doctrine and culture]. (Working Paper). Retrieved September 29, 2018, from <https://www.bnpt.go.id>
- Arifin, Z. (2019). The effectiveness of the socialization of *Tafsir Inspirasi* in social media. *Pertanika Journal of Social Science & Humanities*, 27(2), 1219-1229.
- Ayubi, N. (1991). *Political Islam: Religion and politics in the Arab world*. London and New York, USA: Routledge.
- Blumer, H. (1996). Social movement. In Alfred M. L. (Ed.), *Principles of sociology* (pp. 22-30). New York, USA: Barnes & Noble.
- Dekmejian, R. H. (1988). Islamic revival: Catalysts, categories, and consequences. In Shireen T. H. (Ed.), *The politics of Islamic revivalism: Diversity and unity* (pp. 32-49). Bloomington, USA: Indiana University Press.
- Dekmejian, R. H. (1980). The anatomy of Islamic revival: Legitimacy crisis ethnic, conflict, and the search of Islamic alternatives. *The Middle East Journal*, 34(1), 1-13.
- Hardiman, F. B. (2009). *Kritik ideologi* [Critique of ideology]. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Kanisius.
- Hidayat, K. (2006). Kata Pengantar [Preface]. In A. Ubaedillah & A. Rozak (Eds.), *Demokrasi hak asasi manusia dan masyarakat madani* [Democracy human right and civil society] (pp. iii-x). Jakarta, Indonesia: ICCE UIN Syarif Hidayatullah and the Asia Foundation.
- Lubis, A. Y. (2015). *Pemikiran kritis kontemporer* [Contemporary critical thinking]. Jakarta, Indonesia: Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Mata Air Foundation & Alvara Research Center. (2017). *Potensi radikalisme di kalangan pelajar dan mahasiswa* [Potential of radicalism among students and undergraduates]. [Power Point Slides]. Retrieved September 30, 2018, from www.tribunnews.com
- Makbuloh, D. (2019). The asah potential fitrah method in encountering radicalism in Lampung. *Pertanika Journal of Social Science & Humanities*, 27(2), 937-947.
- Maulana, D. (2017). *Pintu-pintu radikalisme* [Avenues to radicalism]. Retrieved September 29, 2018, from <https://www.uinjkt.ac.id/id/pintu-pinturadikalisme/>

- Nashir, H. (2017). *Indonesia hitam putih* [Indonesia in black and white]. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Suara Muhammadiyah.
- Nashir, H. (2018). *Meneguhkan nilai-nilai kebangsaan* [Strengthening values of nationality]. Malang, Indonesia: University of Muhammadiyah Malang Press.
- Norman, M. (2014, January 16). *Kami terus memetakan jaringan terorisme* [We continuously map our network on terrorism]. *Harian Rakyat Merdeka*, pp. 1-2.
- Rahardjo, M. D. (2002). *Ensiklopedi al-Qur'an* [Encyclopedia of the Qur'an]. Jakarta, Indonesia: Paramadina.
- Pranawati, R. (2018, May 15). Pelibatan anak dalam terorisme [Involvement of children in terrorism], *Jawa Pos*, p. 4.
- Roy, O. (1994). *The failure of political Islam*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA: Harvard University Press.
- Shihab, M. Q. (1996). *Wawasan al-Qur'an* [Insights of the Qur'an]. Bandung, Indonesia: Mizan.
- Sidahmed, A. S., & Ehteshami, A. (Eds). (1996). *Islamic fundamentalism*. Boulder, Colorado, USA: Westview Press Inc.
- Sumbulah, U. (2019). Preventing radicalism by family and civil society organizations in Indonesia, *Pertanika Journal of Social Science & Humanities*, 27(1), 391-403.
- Suseno, F. M. (2005). *Pijar-pijar filsafat* [The glows of philosophy]. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Kanisius.
- Zizek, S. (1994). *Mapping ideology*. London, England: Verso.

