



## Deradicalization of Islamic Education in Islamic Boarding School

Mohamad Salik

Faculty of Education and teacher Training  
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

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### Abstract:

This research discusses about deradicalization of Islamic Education conducted at Islamic Boarding School Sabilurrosyad Malang, East Java. The data of this research was obtained through the interview with the teachers of this institution, observation and documentation. Based on the data obtained can be concluded that; 1) The teachers of Islamic Boarding Sabilurrosyad view that de-radicalization of the understanding of Islamic teachings is important to do since many of Islamic teachings are radically understood. Deradicalization program is important in order for religion to really be able to give beneficiaries not just for Muslims, but also for all mankind (*rahmatan li al' alamin*). 2) The strategy of de-radicalization implemented at the Islamic Boarding School can be viewed from two aspects: the learning materials and teaching methods; *first*, the materials. The materials (*kitab*: books) must be *ahlussunnah* and *Nahdhatul Ulama`* mainstreaming, respecting humanity, and based on Indonesian context. When the books are nuanced Middle East, especially regarding the social sciences, culture and state, the teachers first examine the books, modify in such a way, and contextualize them into Indonesian context. *Second*, the methods, there are some methods emphasized for deradicalization program at this Islamic Boarding School, namely; dialogues method, exemplary method, and habituation.

**Keywords:** *Deradicalization, Islamic Education, Pesantren Sabilurrosyad*

### I. Introduction

The discourse on radicalism is one of the hot topics that is always interesting to discuss. In Indonesia, the movement of radicalism began to mushroom since the opening of the faucet for democratization after reformation, after being able to suppress it in the previous period by the government. This discourse is getting stronger because it is receiving an international response. Since the last decade, world attention has been preoccupied with the issue of radicalism, especially after the victory of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the

tragedy of 11 September 2002, and the ISIS movement in Syria and Iraq. These Islamic movements often promote the ideology of jihad, Islamic law, the Islamic state and the Islamic caliphate. These movements received many responses from various groups throughout the world.

Among the institutions that have received sharp attention from Western circles for the occurrence of radical movements and terrorism are Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren). This institution is considered a breeding ground for the growth of terrorist movements. As Robert W Hefner (2009) wrote in his book, 'Since the 9 September attacks in the United States and October 2002 Bali Bombings in Indonesia, Islamic Boarding Schools in Southeast Asia have been the focus of international attention.' Martin van Bruinessen also said the same thing that Pesantren, especially traditional Pesantren based on 'Jamaah Islamiyah', have become a seeding ground for the growth of radical movements. (Martin van Bruinessen, 2008) This view is quite reasonable because some of the perpetrators involved in acts of radicalism and terrorism come from P circles. Take for example the perpetrators of the Bali Bombing; Imam Amrozi, Imam Samudra, Ali Imron, comes from Pesantren Al Islam Lamongan, East Java. (Mukhibat, 2014)

Pesantren is actually an institution that develops Islamic values and also accommodates local Indonesian values. This is in line with Abd Rahman Mas'ud's statement that the educational pattern that has been developed in Pesantren is peaceful, open and moderate, on the other hand developing an Indonesian Islamic culture that is polite, respectful and tolerant. (Yasmadi, 2002)

However, in its development, namely entering the early decades of the 21st century, there are several Pesantren that are starting to change. This cannot be separated from the emergence of thoughts and movements that seek to promote the ideals of purifying Islamic teachings in a more literal, textual and normative manner. (Mukhibat, 2007) However, not all Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren) agree and are interested in the existence



of radical Islam. Among them there are those who do not want to know about the existence and movement. There are also Pesantren that are alert and protect themselves from the efforts of these radical movements. One of the Pesantrens that protects itself from radical ideology is Pesantren Sabilurrosyad

Pesantren Sabilurrosyad is one of the largest Pesantren located in the Malang City area, East Java, Indonesia. This Pesantren is led by one of the leading Islamic figures in Indonesia, namely Dr. KH. Marzuki Mustamar, M. Ag. He is the chairman of the Nahlatul Ulama (the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia) in East Java. This Pesantren has about 700 students from various regions in Indonesia.

In the midst of Pesantrens being in the spotlight as a result of radical and unfriendly movements, Pesantren Sabilurrosyad Malang can be used as an example for other educational institutions. From the researcher's observations, the teachers of this Pesantren are known to be very close to the community members, the students are known to be very polite, tolerant, far away from racist and radical actions and are well accepted by the local community. According to one of the teachers, it is because in teaching religion they try to de-radicalize radical religious understanding.

Based on the background above, the problem in this research can be formulated as follows: 1) What are the teachers' understandings of Pesantren Sabilurrosyad regarding the deradicalization in Islamic education? 2) What are the strategies used in an effort to deradicalize Islamic education?

## II. Research Method

This is field research with a case study approach. This research is included in the qualitative research category. The location of this research is Pesantren Sabilurrosyad, located on Jalan Candi 6C Gasek Karangbesuki Malang East Java Indonesia. The data sources used in this research can be grouped into two types, namely primary data sources (data taken from original data sources, namely the teachers of Pesantren Sabilurrosyad through interviews and observations) and secondary data sources (data taken from second hand such as documents, books, magazines, journals and so on).

This research was carried out in three stages, first the orientation stage, second, the exploration stage, and third, the data analysis and interpretation stage. At the orientation stage, the researchers carried out a study in general related to Pesantren and deradicalization through Islamic

education by looking for information from various sources, including books, journals, magazines and other supporting sources. In the exploration stage, researchers come directly to the research location to obtain the necessary data related to the main research problem. At the data analysis stage, the activity carried out by the researcher is tabulating the data according to the data presentation needed to answer each research problem. The data analysis technique in this research uses descriptive-analytical methods. (Moh. Nadzir, 1996)

## III. Research Finding and Discussion

This section describes the results of research related to the deradicalization through Islamic education at Pesantren Sabilurrosyad. This section is divided into two sub-chapters, first, regarding the understanding of the teachers of Pesantren Sabilurrosyad regarding the term "deradicalization". Second, the strategies they use in efforts to deradicalize Islamic education. This matter will be explained more broadly as follows:

A. The Teachers' understanding of deradicalization  
From a series of interviews conducted by researchers with the teachers regarding their understanding and views of the term "deradicalization", the researcher categorized them into two groups: First, they agree with efforts of deradicalization of Islamic education. They argue that currently there are many radical thoughts related to understanding Islam. If this is allowed to happen, it will endanger lives and harm Muslims themselves. For this reason, efforts need to be made to prevent radical understandings of Islamic teachings, namely by deradicalization efforts. Second, the others do not agree with the term "deradicalization". They argue that the term "deradicalization" will indicate that Islam is a radical religion, which teaches violence. In fact, Islamic teachings are clearly not radical, but tolerant and respect differences. Therefore, Islamic teachings must be taught according to their portions so that they can be a blessing for all of nature.

The above view is in line with what was explained by Yusuf Qardhawi in his book entitled "Radical Islam". (Yusuf Qardhawi, 2004) In his opinion, Islam is a *manhaj* (clear path) that is moderate in everything, whether in concepts, beliefs, worship, morals, behavior, *mu'amalah* and *shari'ah*. This moderate attitude is one of the characteristics of Muslims, namely the basic characteristics used by Allah to differentiate them from other people. Therefore, Muslims in living their lives must follow a straight path, and must not deviate.



Many texts in the Qur'an tell Muslims to act fairly, moderately and avoid attitudes that lead to radicalism. Among the terms often used in the Qur'an to describe radicalism are *ghuluw* (excessive actions), *tanathu`* (exceeding limits), and *tasydid* (acting harshly or making things difficult for others). Based on descriptions from the Qur'an, Yusuf Qardhawi advised Muslims to stay away from and be wary of radicalism and extremism, because they have a negative impact on humanity.

#### B. Deradicalization Strategy at Pesantren Sabilurrosyad

From interviews conducted with the teachers, it can be explained that the implementation of deradicalization at Pesantren Sabilurrosyad can be seen from two aspects, namely; 1) Learning Materials, 2) Learning Methods

##### 1. Learning Materials

According to the teachers, the learning materials at Pesantren Sabilurrosyad are selected based on the values of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* and Indonesian context. And if the material is mainstream from the Middle East, it needs to be studied first and contextualized according to the Indonesian context. This is as expressed by one of the teachers:

"The books used in this Pesantren is similar to those used in other Pesantrens in general. Because the Pesantren here is based *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) ideology, the books used here are also of the NU-based, *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah*, Indonesian context, humanitarian ideology. So, even though the book has an *Ahlussunnah* ideology, if it is from Middle East, must be studied first, especially books that concern social sciences, culture, state administration and the like. even if the setting is *Ahlussunnah*, it must be modified first, assembled, it does not have to be accepted as such. Books such as *Ahkamu al-Sulthoniyah* by Imam Mawardi, the book by Ibn Taimiyah, must first be contextualized in an Indonesian context. As for whether or not it is necessary to establish Islam, enforce Islamic law in Indonesia, and so on, it is necessary to look at the context first with the Indonesian context."

Based on the above description can be concluded that to become a teacher in Pesantren, a person does not only need to understand the *Kitab* (book) he or she will teach. However, they must be able to communicate well and contextualize it in life. They must be able to provide students with an understanding of the books they teach, not only in terms of the text, but must be able to explain in terms of the context, so that they can provide a comprehensive understanding of the values of

Islamic teachings according to the context in which they find themselves. They agreed on the importance of understanding like this to protect students from wrong understandings that cause them to fall into radical understandings and actions.

According to one of the teachers, one of the main values that must be instilled in the students is the need to maintain a balance between the values of monotheism and humanity. In his opinion, the teachings of the Islamic religion include two great values, namely monotheism (*hablun minallah*) and humanity (*hablum minannas*). So, Islam contains two great values, namely humans who believe in God (*tawheed*) and humans who are humane. These two great values will not be realized and sustainable if they are not protected by the state that regulates them. Thus, maintaining the security and integrity of the country is part of Islam. There is no need to contrast the two. There is no need for humanitarian reasons to only defend international interests and forget about national interests and those who are Islamic only defend monotheism, likewise those who are liberal then become anti-Islam.

The above view is in line with the general view of Indonesian pluralist figures. One of them is Nurcholish Madjid. In his opinion, in order for Islamic teachings to exist, they need to be adapted to the context in which Islamic teachings grow and are implemented. Nurcholish Madjid further described that even though Islamic values and teachings are universal, the implementation of its teachings itself requires knowledge and understanding of the socio-cultural environment of Indonesian society as a whole, including the political environment within the framework of the nation-state concept. According to Nurcholish, Madjid, the fact that Indonesia is a nation that has the highest heterogeneity (an archipelagic country), as well as religious matters, is not only something that is "given" but must also be "taken into account". Based on this, every step in implementing Islamic teachings in Indonesia must always take into account socio-cultural conditions whose main characteristics are growth, development and diversity. (M. Syafi'i Anwar, 1993)

Similar opinion is also expressed by another Indonesian leading figure KH Abdurrahman Wahid in his idea "Indigenization of Islam" coined in the late 80s. This term was coined due to the rise of the Arabization movement in Indonesia. If Arabization requires self-identification with Middle Eastern culture so that Indonesian society is vulnerable to being uprooted from its cultural roots, then indigenization tries to make religion and culture not defeat each other but tries to bring them together



so that the two can work in harmony. (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2001)

The idea of indigenization was encouraged by Islamic dakwah which was developed by Wali Songo (nine saints) on the island of Java, especially in the 15th and 16th centuries. The dakwah method used by Wali Songo was very easily accepted by the community, because there were no elements of Arabization in conveying religious teachings. On the contrary, the idea of indigenization is to incorporate Islamic teaching values into local Javanese traditions.

The success of Wali Songo's strategy in preaching Islam peacefully, politely, respecting traditions and being friendly with the people should be a good example for us because this method of preaching will be easily accepted by the people. On the contrary, preaching carried out using violent means will not be successful but will instead give rise to hostility, division and hatred.

This model of understanding Islam is what *Nahdlatul Ulama* later called *Islam Nusantara*. According to one of the figures, namely KH. A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus), Islam Nusantara is the Islam that has existed in Indonesia from the past until now, which has been taught by Wali Songo. The Islam taught by Wali Songo is an Islam that invites people to live peacefully, in harmony, not be arrogant and feel most righteous and an Islam that is *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (beneficial for all mankind). In preaching, Wali Songo not only invites verbally (*bi al-Lisan*), but also sets an example with actions (*bi al-hal*), not emphasizing formalities, but prioritizing the essence of Islamic teachings. (KH. A. Mustofa Bisri, 2015)

Strengthening the opinion above, Quraish Shihab added that Islam has various faces due to the diversity of local customs and culture. In fact, in his opinion, customs and culture can be a source for establishing a law. However, this does not mean that if there is a culture that is contrary to Islam, it must be accepted, but must be rejected or revised. However, this must be done in a wise manner and still prioritize togetherness and unity of the nation as a whole. (Fathurrahman Karyadi, 2024)

## 2. Learning Methods

### a. Dialogic Method

According to one of the teachers, the learning model at the Pesantren Sabilurrosyad is actually similar to other Pesantren, namely the *wetonan*, *sorogan* and memorizing methods. However, among these learning models there are dialogical methods, discussions, where a teacher asks questions to the students, asks for opinions, dan provides rational

reasons, in order to sharpen and contextualize the material in the context of everyday life. This makes students not easily bored and able to expand their horizons of thinking. They are given many opportunities to develop their thinking skills and together contextualize what they learn from texts with everyday life. From there, the students can discover the nuances of differences between one another so that they can learn lessons about the flexibility of Islamic teachings with the existing context. Learning methods like this will one day make students accustomed to finding new understandings of the same text with different understandings because the context continues to develop.

Based on the description above, it can be seen that the learning method carried out at Pesantren Sabilurrosyad does not just provide knowledge, but also provides space for students to develop their knowledge through dialogue and discussion models. This learning model is in line with what Paulo Freire wanted, namely that education is not just receiving, repeating and memorizing knowledge obtained from the teacher or what he called the "banking concept of education", where students are seen as the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. (Paulo Freire, 2005) Education is not just a process of transfer of knowledge, where learning is only carried out by means of lectures, stories, memorization, anti-dialogue, theoretical in nature without touching on the realities of real life in society. (Susanto, 2000) According to Freire, education is a process of liberation against dominating practices in education, where humans are seen as abstract, isolated, independent creatures and separated from the real world. In fact, humans are interconnected with each other and with their world. (Paulo Freire, 1984) Based on this, in the education process there should be no domination or hierarchy, teachers and students are equal, giving and receiving, and complementing each other. From here, a dialogue process occurs, facing each other and jointly solving the problems they face in life. (Meilya, 2014)

### b. Exemplary Method

Another method used in efforts to deradicalize education is the exemplary method. Exemplary method is a learning method that is used by the teacher by giving an example and acting as a model for what they are teaching. According to the teacher, a student who studies every day from morning to evening at Pesantren will learn about how the teachers live, think, educate their family, and learn how the teachers live in society. So, after leaving the Pesantren, they will have insight as they have seen from the activities of their teachers, and they will





practice what they have seen in their real lives. This is as stated by one of the teachers:

“Apart from studying religion, children who live and study here know their teacher’s thought, behavior and his local wisdom, know how teacher make decisions, guide families, take part in society, teach in the community. After graduating from Pesantren, they will have insight like that, reciting the Koran and reading books. So, no matter how busy the teacher is in the community, he has to recite the Koran first with their students. So we must make time to recite the Koran with the students.”

In a Pesantren, the figure of a teacher will greatly determine the style and behavior of the students in the future, because in general the students think that a teacher in a Pesantren is a figure whose students consider to have many advantages. Therefore, they must be followed and obeyed. The extraordinary obedience and submission of a santri to his teacher is an excellent means of instilling the values of Islamic teachings in the students. How the students will behave like, really depends on how a teacher can be a figure for his students.

This is in line with Ahmad Tafsir's view (1991) that imitating an educator is the tendency of students. Because psychologically, humans need role models in their lives. And the role models are of course people who feel close to themselves. In Islam, this kind of nature is also recognized, because imitating or emulating is an innate human characteristic. As Muslims are commanded to imitate the Prophet, the Prophet imitates the Qur'an and so on. Based on this, according to Ahmad Tafsir, example is the core of methods in Islamic education. According to Ahmad Tafsir, exemplary is divided into two types, namely intentional exemplary and unintentional exemplary. Intentional example is like giving an example of how to read well, teaching the correct way to pray. Intentional exemplary is an example that is accompanied by an explanation or command to emulate it. Meanwhile, unintentional exemplary is exemplary in science, leadership, sincerity, and the like. This example is carried out informally, but sometimes its usefulness is greater than the usefulness of formal example. (Ahmad Tafsir, 1991) The exemplary model of this second model is what the teachers of Pesantren Sabilurrosyad emphasize in order to educate the students.

### c. Habituation

According to the teacher of Pesantren Sabilurrosyad, habituation is an effective way to deradicalize education. Habituation is a method used to realize the knowledge learned. This habit must be done

repeatedly, until finally the students will get used to doing it easily. For example, in order for a person to get used to praying in congregation, he must get used to praying in congregation. In order for someone to get used to giving alms, he must get used to giving alms. Likewise, in order for someone to get used to behaving politely and tolerantly, he must get used to doing so.

In Pesantren Sabilurrosyad, many activities are carried out as a habit so that the students behave tolerantly. Since they first entered the Pesantren, the students have been educated and trained to understand differences. They come from different backgrounds of life, cultural families, and even ethnicities. Many of the students come from outside East Java, and many even come from outside Java. When they first entered, they occupied rooms according to the existing room allocation without any differences. There are more than six people in one room. They share the room, cook together, and do other activities together. From here they are taught to practice understanding differences, loving each other and understanding each other in order to achieve what they aspire to.

On the other hand, students are also accustomed to working together in community activities so that students know and experience directly the real life in society; Religious activities, social activities, community service and other things held in the community. These activities are important so that the students practice interacting directly with the community, being able to exchange ideas with community members, in the end it is hoped that they will be able to apply the teaching values they obtain at Pesantren in the reality that exists in society.

The habit of interacting is not only with fellow Muslims, but also with non-Muslims. In this way, the students are accustomed to establishing good communication with non-Muslim people, working together with them, and sometimes helping them when there are certain events. In this way, it is hoped that non-Muslims will feel sympathetic towards the kindness shown by Muslims.

Another important activity carried out in the context of deradicalization efforts is holding a flag ceremony which is held every August 7, and other national holidays. According to the teacher, this is in order to help raise awareness among the students in particular and society in general that the state does not belong to the government, officials or civil servants, but it belongs to the entire Indonesian nation. Thus, it is not only the government, officials or police who are obliged to protect it, but the entire Indonesian nation is obliged to maintain the integrity of the nation, including the students of Pesantren.



These are among the community activities that students usually participate in. With the habit of working together with the community, we will be able to prevent them from carrying out radical actions. Likewise, these activities will be able to suppress the infiltration of terrorists and radical acts in society. Because everything a member of the community does can be known by other members of the community, so that they can control each other. The above is in line with Ahmad Tafsir's thoughts. According to him, this habituation learning model is very effective in forming the character of students. Therefore, many teachers and parents make this method the main way of providing education to their children. Even the Prophet himself often used this method in educating his people. According to Ahmad Tafsir, the benefit of this method is that a person not only gets physical benefits, but also internal benefits. For example, people who are accustomed to being physically clean tend to be clean in their hearts and minds. So, it turns out that the habituation method has a big influence on personal formation. And it turns out that habituation is not only about inner things, but also related to outer things. For example, people who are used to driving a car are more skilled than people who master the theory of driving a car. (Ahmad Tafsir, 1991)

Based on the theory above, many educational institutions including Pesantren uses habituation as one of the methods in its efforts to deradicalize education. The efforts of the teachers of Pesantren Sabillurrosyad who often involve the students in events involving community members, such as joint community service, religious activities, sports and so on, are among the effective ways in efforts to suppress and minimize the influence of movement and ideas of radicalism.

#### IV. Conclusion

Based on the findings above can be concluded as follows: First, it is important to deradicalize the radical understanding of Islam. This is because basically Islam is not a radical religion but instead are a religion that teaches politeness, tolerance, respect for differences, and hate violence. The importance of this deradicalization program is so that Islamic teachings can truly provide benefits not only to Muslims, but also to humanity as a whole. Second, there are several strategies that can be implemented in efforts to deradicalize Islamic education. This can be seen from two aspects: namely learning materials and learning methods. In selecting learning materials must be oriented towards material that upholds human values and

emphasizes the importance of preserving local culture. Meanwhile, in choosing learning methods, dialogic, exemplary and habituation methods are among the methods that are suitable in efforts to support efforts to deradicalize Islamic education. These learning methods will help students develop their thinking power, contextualize what they learn with everyday life, and practice tolerant ways of living in society, so that they are able to prevent actions that lead to radicalism.

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