Radicalism: The *Santri* Pespective in Rural Java

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Abstract - The article aims to describe view or representation of mental attitude of *Santri* in Rural Java about phenomenon of radicalism. Radicalism in social context is still a debate, including among *Santri* and other religious communities. It is very interesting to study because this actual study attempts to map out the views that exist in the concept of human development. The research method used is qualitative with phenomenology design, data source for this research is *Santri* and social-religious activities where they live every day. The results of this study are (i) radicalism is understood as deviant behavior in the context of nationalism (ii) most *Santri* reject the radicalism stereotype of Islam, (iii) there are those who understand that radicalism in Indonesia is Western engineering, and (iv) others think that the root of radicalism comes from the wrong religious learning process. The theoretical implication of this research is that the *Santri* agree that radicalism must be opposed in the context of nationalism, but the knowledge of radicalism must be presented objectively to remove the negative stigma directed to Islam because Islam is a religion that gives peace to the universe.

Keywords: Radicalism, Rural Java, Santri

I. INTRODUCTION

There are current conflicts between tradition and religion in Indonesia [1]. In response and anticipating the emergence of radicalism/terrorism, the Indonesian government then made a policy to intervene" the *Santri* by creating a de-radicalization program by conducting anti-terror training. This was done because the government saw something wrong in the curriculum applied by *Pesantren* in Java [2]. Attempts to adjust the curriculum continue to be made to prevent Indonesia from entering the vortex of prolonged religious conflict as was the case in the Middle East. In connection with this problem, this article aims to look at the perception of *Santri* in the Javanese countryside in viewing radicalism and the efforts made by the government to stem the ideology that continues to spread to various sectors of life [19].

II. RADICALISM AND TERORISM IN INDONESIA

A. Religion and Custom: The Context of Eterrnal Opposition

Radicalism is a frightening dream for all Indonesians today. The government in this context also continues to take policies to develop radicalism that continues to de-velop, both from the right school (religion) and the leftist (socialist-communist). These two ideologies continue to be a discussion about their harmony with the Pancasila ideology [3]. However, this article will not discuss further the ins and outs of leftist radicalism, the more that will be discussed is about the phenomenon of radicalism which is fronted by the right group, in terms of history and current context [4].

John L. Esposito illustrates the problem of *jihad*, that the meaning of *jihad* is still incomplete, if there are ten questions about *jihad*, there will be 10 answers about the meaning of *jihad* [5]. It shows that up to now, the *jihad* is still a problem that is difficult to describe by the community, while various kinds of terror cases that occur in the name of religion are actually more motivated and have a background in *jihad*, more clearly about the people's agreement on the state ideology [6], see table 1.

TABLE I.

No	Subject	%
1	Students agree with *jihad* for the absence of an Islamic state and khilafah	23,4 %
2	Private employees stated that they did not agree with the ideology of Pancasila	18,1 %
3	BUMN employees said they did not agree with the Pancasila ideology	9,1 %
4	High school students agree with *jihad* for the establishment of an Islamic state and the caliphate	23,3 %
5	The civil servants stated that they did not agree with the ideology of Pancasila	19,4 %

Source: Alvara Center Survey and Mata Air Foundation, 2018

Based on the data above, those who are most vulnerable to exposure to radicalism are actually students or learners with a percentage of 23.4%. Radical groups seem to deliberately target students who are in their teens since psychologically they are not mentally sufficient to understand the meaning of religion or ideology, and children in teenage age are still vulnerable to being carried away and influenced [7]. This is further exacerbated by media framing about radicalism itself. They need to be given the knowledge that radicalism is not the right thing

in any religious doctrine, but a cruel act against the people who are unable to provide meaningful resistance [8].

Religion is the issue most widely discussed today when discussing radicalism [9]. In Indonesia at the first time in the days of ancient Indonesia, religious and customary conflicts became an issue that led to the outbreak of the Padri War, with the figure of Imam Bonjol [10]. Related to the context above, it seems that students are very easily exposed to radicalism because of the influence of customs and religion that are not too strong and rooted before [11]. Overseas students try to find their identity with various alternatives, but the indoctrination is found veiled and they are unconscious that they are indoctrinated (Informant I, interview 16 June 2018).

Speaking of religion and customs in Indonesia, people are divided in understanding it [12]. This is due to the knowledge and social experience of the people themselves, and the sects they follow [13] [14]. For example, Nahdlatul *Ulama* (NU) carries out religious practices while still holds on the local customs, or Muhammadiyah which is more modernist and carries out Islamic teachings in a more visionary way by separating traditional life from religious sustainability [15] [16]. Although in practice, this group still upholds the cultural diversity that exists in Indonesia [17] [18].

B. Jihadism and Observer's Mistake

The use of the term fundamentalime is basically because of the failure of Western scholars and social observers in translating the meaning of *jihad*, when looking at the phenomenon of militant "ideological" thinking in Islam [19] [20]. The image that emerged when Western scholars interpreted *jihad* is Muslim Army carrying swords invaded various regions of the Middle East: forcing non-Muslims to embrace Islam. So, this image makes the facts and arguments that are put forward by the Muslim are difficult to be accepted by Western society [21]. Subjectivity and suspicion are so great that Western society makes *jihad* no more than fundamentalism, radicalism and even terrorism. Although somewhat forced, the use of the term fundamentalism is an attempt by Western scholars in order to facilitate the understanding of the true meaning of *jihad* [22] [23]. Therefore, it is not wrong if Western scholars such as Leonardo Binder, interpret fundamentalists as religious sects with a roman-style pattern of Islam in the early period, which is perfect by covering all aspects of the problem. With a slightly different language, Allan R. Taylor said fundamentalism is the belief of a community that carries out religious interpretations in a conservative, literalist manner, with an emphasis on religious purification [24].

The problem becomes different, when *jihad* is then interpreted as fundamentalism, extremism, radicalism, terrorism and so on. Then if finally, *jihad* is then forced to be the same as fundamentalism, radicalism, terrorism, then *jihad* which in Islam is a holy teaching and placed in a position that is so important, will become something contemptible and become an "enemy" who must be op-

posed. *Jihad* which is believed and then practiced by the Imam Samudra Group was finally punished as a heretical teaching, which teaches religion without love [26].

This is what prompted the Imam Samudra Group and its bombers disagree if what they do is equated with terrorism. For bombers, the real terrorist is America [27], which has intervened in various moslem populous countries, while what they did is to carry out the practice of the highest *jihad* fi sabilillah [27].

This difference in understanding becomes the problems in Indonesia in particular, which is becoming increasingly blurred, complicated and difficult to solve. Scholars who equate *jihad* with fundamentalism and radicalism, assess the actions taken by the Amrozi group as a sense of frustation, as a result of the group's inability and unpreparedness in the face of the times. Using a slightly different sentence, Noorhaidi Hasan said they were actually trying to fight incompetence and frustration and at the same time build their identity and dignity no matter how illusory it was in the public space [28]. Meanwhile, Fazlur Rahman said fundamentalism groups, (like Imam Samudra Group) are super-ficial, anti-intellectual groups and their thoughts are not sourced from the Qur'an [29] [9].

III. UNDERSTANDING OF *SANTRI*

One model of the Indonesian original educational institution is the religion school, better known as a Pesantren (Islamic boarding school). Pesantren is an institution that has special characteristics distinguishing them from other institutions, especially modern educational institutions [30] [31]. The special characteristics is the existence of a central figure who becomes an icon for his followers. The figure has a high right and position and his words are always followed. The figure is usually referred to as the Kyai. Not everyone can be called kyai, because kyai is a term given to someone who has an advantage in all areas of life compared to others. These groups in sociological terms are groups that occupy high social stratification as informal leaders [32] [33].

The *Santri* community has its own value system that is different from any system. The developing value system has its own characteristics which according to Abdurrahman Wahid is called "subcultural". It can be observed that it is not just a subcultural character. The main value that develops in santri's community is that all life is seen as worship. Since entering this community life, a *Santri* has been introduced to a life of its own, a life of "worship". This value has a dynamic meaning, does not stop at submission to God, asceticism or lillahi ta'ala in the sense of ignoring worldly life [34].

There are several aspects of the value of a *Santri* that is commonly pinned. First, the adherence of a *Santri* to his kyai will be seen as a manifestation of absolute obedience which is seen as worship. Second, the love of science and religion that is so strong is the basis for understanding this all-worshiping life. This love is then mani-

fested in various forms, including respecting for the ulama (religious clerics), willingness to sacrifice, working hard to master various knowledge, and willingness to develop it in the same institution regardless the obstacles that they will face. Third, sincerity. Completely carrying out what the kyai commands without hesitation is the main proof of sincerity. This summary of values forms the nature of the *Pesantren* world, where they see things not materially, but the material is subordinated to divine values, which are then diligently carried out with willingness and without feeling heavy [35].

From the opinions and values expressed above, defining Santri is very diverse. It can be concluded that the *Santri* are a group of pious Muslims who embrace Islam and practice the Shari'a in earnest, carry out religious orders, and try to clean their faith from shirk behavior.

IV. RADICALISM AND SETTLEMENT

The lay view of *Pesantren* which is currently considered teaching radicalism and terrorism is still experiencing discourse. Like M. Imam Zamroni in his research entitled Islam, Islamic Boarding School and Terrorism [25]. There are three Islamic boarding schools such as al Mukmin Ngruki in Solo, the Al Zaitun Islamic boarding school in Indramayu, and Al Islam students in Sulokonto Lamongan Tulungagung who are said to teach radical teachings in Indonesia. The three Islamic boarding schools were thought to be the source of ideas for the establishment of an Islamic State, establishing Islamic Shari'a, leading to radical movements. In this study, the above is a claim that has caused negative excesses in the development of *Pesantren* on a global scale.

The main point is how to put *Pesantren* and *Santri* in an independent position [21] [12], by not reducing the cultural base of society as social capital to continue to build social attachment between *Santri*s and society. In this study the conclusion that can be drawn is that *Pesantren* through cultural relations are expected to be the Counter Hegemony of radical movements, such as the issue of terrorism.

In terms of the way, Islamic thought from *Pesantren* such as the one proposed by Abdurrahman Wahid and Nurcholis Madjid became factual counter movements at that time. Azra [22] [19] said that contemporary Indonesian Islamic Thought, once again, has more or less a continuity with intellectualism of the previous period. Indonesian Islamic thought which was once referred to as traditional was also referred to as "Islamic traditionalism" in a certain extent increasingly faded. At the same time, this style of thought also adopted the aspect of intellectualism commonly attributed to the thought of "modernism".

Another link is related to the role of *Pesantren* in the development of peaceful culture. In accordance with that, Noah in his research stated that there are differences in the way of fighting for religious beliefs which can cause prolonged pros and cons, such as the conflicts between

moderate and radical thinking supporters. There needs to be further researches on the understanding of breaking the terrorist chain based on the social construction that is built, both in general environment and in the *Pesantren* [10] [26].

The process was built through the support of democracy after the fall of the New Order [31]. Indonesia has produced its democratic process compared to other Muslim countries. The existence of reform affirms the compatibility argument of Islam and democracy. The process is indicated by the mushrooming of community life and political involvement among Muslims, the development of a humanist Islamic civil society, and the role of Indonesian Muslim leaders through the activities of mass organizations such as Nahdlatul *Ulama* and Muhammadiyah. In addition, Indonesia is the best example of tolerance between religion and the state. This then formed the basis of Indonesia's democratic structure [32].

The frame of social macro and micro theory in social science can be used as a basis for the analysis on the efforts to track religious-driven violence. Macro theory focuses on community while micro structures tend to individuals, both of which will be integrated to find out the problems being studied [32].

Reformation turned out to provide a way for the emergence of various contemporary Islamic movements such as FPI (Front Pembela Islam), HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia), MMI (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia), and the Salafi movement. The most frightening is the acts of terror [9]. This action is even carried out by small groups, but the impact is felt by the world and tarnishes the face of Indonesian Islam. An approach is highlighted in the Islamic boarding school in Solo, Ngruki. Founded by Islamic activists such as Abdullah Sungkar and Abubakar Baasyir, this *Pesantren* gave birth to several militant and anti-government alumni. Many of the Ngruki alumni become terrorists. The reality that tarnished the world of *Pesantren* [4].

This study specifically tried to see the views of *Santri* from some *Pesantren* about the phenomenon of radicalism. At *Pesantren* Al Islam Selo Puro Paciran Lamongan, *Santri* and kyai see the phenomenon of radicalism as a phenomenon that is set, in the sense that there are powers that control the events that occur, but the *Santri* and kyai assume that Islam cannot teach its adherents to do terror and wrongdoing, therefore they reject radicalism and terrorism. Radicalism is a conspiracy of the power and capital that haunts Indonesia to this day (Informant II, interview 18 June 2018). In the *Pesantren*, oral tradition or folklore becomes a medium to teach about character values, as explained by Romadi and Kurniawan that folklore can be an alternative to reduce conflict by making it a media to teach character values [30].

Radicalism has become a nightmare for developing countries today [19]. In Indonesia, the spirit of terrorism on the basis of radicalism has become commonplace [14], and history records it. Ngruki students are an example of an advanced educational model at the moment. *Pesantren*

organizers agree to erase the wounds of history that are quite dark with serious educational efforts, with a vision to educate the life of the nation and build devoted people. With the issuance of the "Ngurki Declaration", this *Pesantren* asserted that it would erode the negative stigma by establishing political communication, and seminars, so that there was a future meeting point for *Pesantren* [13] [14].

Many *Santri* think that radicalism has become a separate threat in efforts to build nationalism and nationality. Various news and opinions intertwine; some are pros and some are cons. In connection with the issue of radicalism and terrorism that are "reheating" in 2017 because they have penetrated the world of education, the understanding of the reality of the issue becomes important so that we do not fall into a perspective that can "terrorize" *Pesantren* that teach Islam *rahmatan lil alamin*.

The issue of radicalism-terrorism against *Pesantren* is often proposed by Western media. They stated that *Pesantren* had become "breeding grounds" for radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia. According to Zamroni, there are at least three boarding schools - *Pesantren* al Mukmin Ngruki in Surakarta, Al Zaitun *Pesantren* in Indramayu, and Al Islam boarding schools in Tenggulung Solokuno Lamongan - which are mentioned in the radical Islamic discourse of the American version.

The three Islamic boarding schools are thought to be the source of ideas for establishing an Islamic state, implementing Islamic law and also campaigning for anti-America, so as to bring up terrorist movements. However, until 2017, the three boarding schools carry out learning activities as usual with the "*Pesantren* Curriculum" and the students continue to grow.

It should be remembered that the Western mass media's force on the definition of terrorism has been strongly criticized by Indonesian communication scientists. According to the professor of Padjadjaran University, Western media, especially America, often interpret Islam as a primitive religion that justifies slavery, polygamy, harems, women's oppression, violence and terrorism. Western media managers, both print and electronic, often associate what is done by Muslims as a representation of Islam, especially if the actor is a Muslim leader.

V. CONCLUSION

Radicalism has not completely disappeared from Indonesia. Even though the government through the National Agency of Terrorism Counter (BNPT) aggressively carried out anti-radicalism campaigns. In some cases, the Javanese countryside became a place for the development of massive radical ideologies. However, the radicalism stigma embedded in Islam is opposed by various elements. Because in fact all religions or ideologies have the potential to be radical. This is a kind of signal for the community to fortify themselves from radicalism, because the hard ideology can spread through various media. Ngruki Islamic Boarding School provides an example of how *Pesantren* institutions try their best to fight against radical stigma. Supposedly, resistance to ideology that threatens the integration of nations in any world must be opposed. Rural ares can be the foundation in maintaining national integrity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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