

RADICAL ISLAM AND THE DERADICALIZATION STRATEGY Reconstruction of Abdurrahman Wahid's Thoughts

Ngainun Naim

*Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Tulungagung
naimmas22@gmail.com*

Abstract

This paper discusses about radical Islam and the strategy of deradicalization according to Abdurrahman Wahid thought. The rapid development of radical Islam in post-New Order Era has emerged the worriedness among people. A number of efforts to discontinue the development of radical have been done; one of the efforts is through the deradicalization strategy. The data presented in this paper originated from the thoughts of Abdurrahman Wahid spread in many books, magazines and internet. The set of the thoughts was then analysed to observe the perspectives of Abdurrahman Wahid about radical Islam and the of deradicalization strategy. Abdurrahman Wahid viewed that radical Islam has destroyed Islam. Such strategy of deradicalization is presented through the indigenization of Islam, role of Islamic boarding school, maintaining the tradition and building the interaction and through the Islamic spirituality.

[Artikel ini membahas tentang Islam radikal dan strategi deradikalisasi dalam konteks pemikiran Abdurrahman Wahid. Perkembangan pesat Islam radikal pada era Orde Baru telah menimbulkan kekhawatiran di kalangan masyarakat. Sejumlah upaya untuk menghentikan pengembangan radikal telah dilakukan; salah satu upaya tersebut adalah melalui strategi deradikalisasi. Data yang disajikan dalam tulisan ini berawal dari pemikiran Abdurrahman Wahid yang tersebar di banyak buku, majalah dan internet. Kumpulan pemikiran itu kemudian dianalisis untuk mengamati perspektif

Abdurrahman Wabid tentang Islam radikal dan strategi deradikalisasi. Abdurrahman Wabid melihat bahwa gerakan Islam radikal telah menghancurkan Islam. Strategi deradikalisasi semacam itu disajikan melalui indigenisasi Islam, peran pondok pesantren, menjaga tradisi dan membangun interaksi dan melalui spiritualitas Islam.]

Keywords: *Abdurrahman Wabid, thoughts, radical Islam, deradicalization*

Introduction

Islam in Indonesia has a unique and typical characteristic. This characteristic becomes the difference between Islam in Indonesia and Islam in other parts of the world. The interaction and dialectics with any factors that intensively progress make Islam in Indonesia always grow and develop. There has always been distinguishing between Indonesia Islam and Islam from other parts of the world.

Radical Islam is one of the Islamic forms that have a strong existence in post-overthrown the New Order Era. In fact, this group has been so long existed but just found the moment to express and develop itself in the reform era. The New Order Era with its very tight control towards the existence of the radical group has led such group to run its activities underground.

When the space of expression comes in the reform era, the group of radical Islam soon uses this at best. In fact, the existence of radical Islam is disadvantageous as when it grows and develops, their actions indeed become the obstructers for the State development.¹ Though the radical Islam has been the hot press in the public course, its existence in fact is at the small-scale.

Radical Islam has an exclusive character. They are closed for those outside their group. The truth is only coming from their group and those

¹ Ariel Heryanto, "Pop Culture and Competing Identities", in Ariel Heryanto (ed.), *Popular Culture in Indonesia, Fluid Identities in Post-Authoritarian Politics* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 9.

having a different view are considered as the “wrong” group. In addition, radical Islam legitimates the use of violence. As the implication of this, the group of radical Islam has emerged the worriedness at a wide scale; moreover, such group time to time always develops.

The phenomenon of the growth and development of the radical Islam movement in fact has been so long predicted by many experts. The political analysisist from America, R. William Liddle has written that the political openness coming out in the reform era is a form of democracy progress. But, this openness has opened a big opportunity for the emergence of scriptural Islam that is not oriented to the intellectual movement but more to how apply the Islamic teachings that have been stated in Holy Qur’an and Hadith. The point of orientation is *Syariat* (Islam Law).²

The statements of R. William Liddle are in line with the reality in which the groups of radical are more growing and developing. These groups also are getting more in number with more varieties, orientations, principles and political purposes. Even, there might be competition in taking a role among the groups. Though there are many high level of varieties, there are some characteristics that become the identity of unite. First, radicalization does not emerge automatically. It is an initiative in giving the response towards the existing life dynamics. The characteristics of its response are not in the form of dialogue but in the form of reputation or rebellion. Second, radicalization does not stop merely as a refutation but offer a form of alternative structure that is viewed better. Third, the radicalism actors believe that their ideology and view are the best things. The other religion ideology and view outside what they believe are totally wrong.³

² R. William Lidle, “Skripturalisme Media Dakwah: Suatu Bentuk Pemikiran dan Aksi Politik Islam di Indonesia Masa Orde Baru,” in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), *Jalan Baru Islam, Memetakan Paradigma Mutakhir Islam Indonesia*, (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), p. 289.

³ Khamami Zada, *Islam Radikal: Pergulatan Ormas-ormas Islam Garis Keras di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002), p. 16-17.

As time goes by, the existence of the radical Islam is more spread with more number of the members. Martin van Bruinessen mentioned the phenomenon of stronger group of radical Islam as *the conservative turn*. The most noticeable sign is about a number of controversial *fatwa* (binding ruling) issued by MUI in 2005. One of the fatwas mentioned that secularism, pluralism, and liberalism of religion are contradict to Islam.⁴

A number of attempts to prevent the growth and the development of the group of radical Islam has also been done. The government used any of its instruments to minimize the existence of the group that frequently uses the violence. The religious social organization has done some attempts such as socialization about humanistic Islam through speeches, books and so on. However, in fact until today there is no any excellent strategy to prevent the development of the group of radical Islam.

In its implication, the groups of radical Islam in any of their varieties keep on spreading their existence in any life aspects. Borrowing the frame of Tarrow, the groups of radical Islam in Indonesia can develop rapidly as the political reality is more open. Besides, in its radical Islam group itself, there is a source that is successfully mobilized to realize the objective of the organization.⁵

At least, there are four factors stimulating the more rapid development of radical Islam in Indonesia. The first factor is the influence of the transitional movement and the second one is the availability of the democracy flow in the reform era. Politically, the condition has been suppressed for years in the era of New Order and this has made the group of radical Islam to find the momentum of self-actualization when a space is available. The third factor is related to the law enforcement in the era

⁴ Martin van Bruinessen, "Mukadimah: Perkembangan Kontemporer Islam Indonesia dan "Conservative Turn" Awal Abad ke-21," in Martin van Bruinessen (ed.), *Conservative Turn: Islam Indonesia dalam Ancaman Fundamentalisme*, transl. Agus Budiman, (Bandung: Mizan, 2014), p. 18.

⁵ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movement, Collective Action and Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 2.

of democracy that is much far from being satisfying; thus, it stimulates a spirit to enforce the Islamic *Syariat*. Fourth factor is about the failure of Islamic movement *rahmatan lil ālamīn* that is tolerant and respectful for the diversity.⁶

The phenomenon of radical Islam is a very complex phenomenon. The critical aspect that cannot be denied is that the radicalism of religion is the manifestation of the contiguity between religion and politics. This contiguity is related to the dynamic at the global scale to the local scale. However, it is also related to the complexity of the relation of modernisation and globalization providing a space for the existence of the parochial identity and political expression that are tightly close to the violence nuance.⁷

Such reality affirms an argument that one of the biggest challenges that must be faced by Indonesia people is the challenge in managing the diversity. Indonesia is a country with multi-ethnic, multi-faith, and multi-cultural and political expression. If the reality of the existing multi is able to be managed wisely, smartly and honestly, then it can be a very tremendous cultural wealth. The cultural wealth must be defended and struggled seriously, patiently, and broad-mindedly.⁸

However, if the reality of the multi cannot be well managed, Indonesia will be a country that is always busy with the issue in managing the diversity. Energy that should be able to be used to develop the advance in fact will be used up to halt and reconsolidate the conflicts. In such condition, the development becomes something difficult to be realized.

In terms of deradicalization, a well concerned measure is highly required from any parties by exploring any strategies both at the philosophical, theoretical and at practical level. These measures are

⁶ M. Dawam Rahardjo, "Fanatisme dan Toleransi," in Irwan Masduqi, *Berislam Secara Toleran*, (Bandung: Mizan, 2011), p. xxvii.

⁷ Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskah Jibad: Islam, Militansi, dan Pencarian Identitas di Indonesia Pasca-Orde Baru*, trans. Hairus Salim (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2008), p. vii-viii.

⁸ Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan: Sebuah Refleksi Sejarah*, (Bandung: Mizan & Maarif Institute, 2009), p. 246.

important to be done as a part of effort to discontinue the development of radical Islam widely. If the group of the radical Islam develops more widely, then many negative accesses entirely will appear in the life of Moslems.

For so long, Islam in Indonesia is known as Islam with a moderate character. Even, the domestic and foreign analysts stated that Indonesia has reached the most significant success in presenting the progressive-moderate Islam.⁹ This achievement has not been achieved just simply. Hence, it is deplorable if the struggle that has been difficultly done should be taken by radical Islam.

In the context as explained above, the reconstruction towards the thoughts of Abdurrahman Wahid about radical Islam and the strategy of deradicalization needs to be done. Gus Dur – the nickname of Abdurrahman Wahid – was a figure that is known as the moderate thinker and activist. A number of experts even categorized him into several names. Apart from what has been embedded to him, the big concern of this figure towards the humanistic values comes to the important and relevant aspect to be discussed further.

This writing discusses about: (1) the thoughts of Abdurrahman about radical Islam, and (2) the strategy of deradicalization in the context of the thoughts of Abdurrahman Wahid.

Deradicalization

The wide spread of the radical Islam group has emerged the worriedness in all social elements. This is because of many negative excesses appearing in every trace of its emergence. Then, a number of measures to prevent the growth and the development of the group of radical Islam need to be done.

⁹ Amich Alhumami, "Muhammadiyah: Pergumulan Kelas Menengah Muslim Indonesia", in Ahmad Fuad Fanani, et.al., *Islam Berkemajuan untuk Peradaban Dunia, Refleksi dan Agenda Muhammadiyah ke Depan* (Bandung: Mizan, 2015), p. 78.

A number of concepts and strategies have been offered either by government, social organizations, thinkers, or by relevant parties. However, it is objectively admitted that all measures are not implemented maximally.¹⁰ The groups of the radical Islam in its varieties are still exist and always develop into any life aspects. Even, it is felt that its spread is getting more widely.

In terms of preventing - or at least minimizing - the spread of radical Islam, one of the significant measures to be done is deradicalization. The term of deradicalization consists of the term *radical* that obtains the prefix “*de*” meaning to reduce and the suffix “*-ion*” denoting a process, way or action. The combination of the term deradicalization then forms a meaning as “an attempt to reduce the radical activities and to neutralize the radicalism for those involved in terrorism and its sympathizers and the member of society that have been exposed in the radicalism of terrorism.”¹¹

The scope of the deradicalization is quite wide started from the aspect of belief, law enforcement to the social aspect. All is done in order to do transformation from “radical” to “not radical”. In this perspective, the substance of deradicalization is to do the neutralization towards those having radicalism.¹²

However, deradicalization is not only addressed to those that have followed the radicalism. Other perspectives mentioned that deradicalization also can include an attempt to detect and prevent earlier, and address to potential elements with the variety of the forms and variety relevant for each group as the target.¹³ This perspective shows that deradicalization can be in the preventive form to avoid the ideology

¹⁰ Adjie Suradji, “Ancaman Teroris Generasi Baru”, *Kompas*, February 3, 2016, p. 6.

¹¹ Agus SB, *Deradikalisasi Nusantara, Perang Semesta Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Melawan Radikalisasi dan Terorisme* (Jakarta: Daulat Press, 2016), p. 142.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹³ Ismail Hasani and Bonar Tigor Naispospos (eds.), *Dari Radikalisme Menuju Terorisme: Studi Relasi dan Transformasi Organisasi Islam Radikal di Jawa Tengah & D.I. Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Masyarakat Setara. 2012), p. 191.

of radicalism and can be neutralizing the ones that have been identified to have radical ideology.

The strategy of deradicalization is an important strategy to be intensively done. The repressive and formalistic handling towards the group of the radical Islam group is deemed important but it will never stop their movement completely. This pattern only can stop temporarily. The violence will only emerge other kinds of violence in a different time dependent upon condition and situation.¹⁴

Deradicalization indeed is not a simple strategy. There will be many complexities and drawback at the level of implementation. One of issues as the obstacle of deradicalization is related to the comprehension about the religion teaching. The aspect becoming a distinction between the radical religion community and the non-radical one is about the comprehension about the religion teaching. The substance of the religion teaching, therefore, becomes the arena for the interpretation between the radical group and the non-radical one. It seems to be reasonable as the radical movements and non-radical movements have an equal base object. Both are fighting through some efforts to fight for the meaning of religion to be in line with their interest.

The implementation of the deradicalization strategy is getting more complex when the objects are those that have experienced radicalization in comprehending the religion. Those radicalized tend to be intolerant. The lack of the conducive treatment in terms of deradicalization, it is not impossible if they can be the terrorists as soon as possible.¹⁵ This condition is different from those that have never been radicalized as they easily understand and absorb the spirit of non-radical religiosity.

Other drawback is that the existing deradicalization program is not run systematically yet. Deradicalization now is a strategy implemented sporadically. As a result, the program of deradicalization is not able to

¹⁴ Masdar Hilmy, "Memutus Reproduksi Terorisme", *Kompas*, July 26, 2016, p. 6.

¹⁵ M. Amin Abdullah, "Islam dan Keindonesiaan," in Komaruddin Hidayat (ed.), *Kontroversi Khilafah: Islam, Negara, dan Pancasila* (Bandung: Mizan, 2014), p. 207.

prevent the spread of the radical Islam movements more intensively.¹⁶ In fact, the groups of radical Islam continually spread their existence in any ways. At this point, the movement of deradicalization should be implemented intensively, integrally, and sustainably by involving any elements comprehensively.¹⁷

Deradicalization cannot rely merely on one element. All elements that have roles must do the deradicalization intensively. Thus, deradicalization becomes a joint movement involving any stakeholders in a systematic framework. One of institutions that can run the strategic role is education,¹⁸ including the educational institution of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*).

There are two strategic steps that can be done by the educational institution. The first step is by doing the early warning towards the movement of radicalism either from *top-down process* done by the external parties or from *bottom-up process* that is by the individual exploring the radicalism through any sources for being infiltrated. Early knowing the attitude infiltrated by the radicalism indeed is relatively easier. This can be done by observing the daily attitudes, comparing with the previous attitudes and observing any changes from their attitudes. Early detection requires a relational pattern that leads the teachers to have the sensitivity towards any changes of concept or view of students and friends.

The perspective of social psychology regarding two patterns of interaction: *first*, the *exchange relationship* that is more based upon the calculations of the fulfilment of the interests of two parties and second, the *communal relationship* in which in an educational environment, this relationship pattern needs to be developed as the engagement among individuals in a group is more based upon affection, equality, justice and

¹⁶ Zuly Qodir, *Radikalisme Agama di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014), p. 112-114.

¹⁷ Masdar Hilmy, "Memutus Reproduksi Terorisme...," p. 6.

¹⁸ Syaiful Arif, *Deradikalisasi Islam: Paradigma dan Strategi Islam Kultural* (Depok: Koekosan, 2010), p. 107.

togetherness. In the frame of early detection, the important pattern to be developed is the communal relationship pattern that is possible to give a persuasive response to the individual that is infiltrated with the radicalism; thus needed to be taken back to the moderate perspective.

The second step needed to be done by the educational institution regarding deradicalization is by developing a model of education that can prevent the infiltration of the radicalism. This model needs to refer to an intact design covering: *philosophical foundation* towards Islam; material; learning model; and the environment that can stimulate the knowledge and attitude of acknowledgment, tolerance, and being cooperative to the different parties either due to the reason of religion, understanding in religiosity, or culture.¹⁹

The strategy of deradicalization should be done intensively and integrally for the more optimal achievement. The success of the deradicalization strategy will hinder the spread of ideology of radical Islam. The exclusive radical Islam that is not respectful towards diversity can create an image of unfriendliness and intolerance to Islam. At this point, the deradicalization must be implemented by all instrument of community.

Perspectives of Radical Islam

For Abdurrahman Wahid, later written as Gus Dur, radicalism is a fluctuated phenomenon. If there are some factors supporting, then the radicalism will grow well. But if there is no any supporting factor, even hindering its existence, the radicalism will not develop. However, Gus Dur affirmed that radicalism is intolerable as it can be intemperate. “Being radical” still must be temperate” said Gus Dur.²⁰

¹⁹ Syamsul Arifin, *Studi Islam Kontemporer, Arus Radikalisasi dan Multikulturalisme di Indonesia* (Malang: Intrans Publishing, 2015), p. 59-61.

²⁰ Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islam Kosmopolitan: Nilai-nilai Indonesia dan Transformasi Kebudayaan* (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2007), p. 70.

As a pluralist, Gus Dur realizes that the reality of the religious-social life is not something simple but complex and dynamic. In the complexity and dynamic, there might be many differences in opinion, competition among group and fight for power. Even, sometimes religion becomes the base of legitimation. In the complexity and dynamic life, radicalism is also another phenomenon that cannot be ignored.

The complex and dynamic life basically is the characteristic of modern era. There are many responses given by the Muslim intellectuals regarding modernity. The response developed by Gus Dur towards modernity is positive and flexible.²¹ This indicates that modernity cannot be refuted but accepted critically. Modernity has the plus and minus points. Being flexible in this context means to take the positive aspects from modernity and to leave the negative ones.

The positive and flexible attitude becomes the base of the perspective of Gus Dur towards the broader aspects including the comprehension of religiosity. The commitment of Gus Dur for the continual interpretation in the implementation of the religious-social values accurately can be done to make it in line with the today needs in society. This then firmly stresses on the very fundamental aspect that is *dynamicization* that is viewed by Gus Dur capable of generating the progressive quality that possibly makes Islam keeping on being relevant and acceptable. Without any dynamicization Islam will be the doctrinaire and shrunken formulation.

Dynamicization enables the Moslems to get close with all citizens, Muslims and non-Muslim as it can make Muslim to be the people that are open towards the difference. It is not only being open but also being appreciative positively towards the plural composition. The substance of this perspective is that Islam asks people to be tolerant to other people. Someone will never be a good Muslim if not showing his or her sincere

²¹ Greg Barton, "Liberalisme: Dasar-dasar Progresivitas Pemikiran Abdurrahaman Wahid", in Greg Fealy dan Greg Barton, *Tradisionalisme Radikal, Persinggungan Nabdatul Ulama-Negara* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1997), p. 162.

desire to all social elements.²²

Such positive perspective is not owned by the group of radical Islam. The perspective of radical Islam is static and rigid. They do not have a dynamic character as dynamicization is viewed as a form of deviation towards Islamic teachings. The radical Islam group indeed have changed Islam and religion into an ideology. When becoming an ideology, it will be dangerous for the social life at a wide scale.²³

Radical Islam grows and develops for the influences of many aspects. The strongest influence comes from the International Islam movement from Middle East, particularly those with the ideology of Wahabi or Ikhwanul Muslimin, or the combination of both. The existence of radical Islam, called by Gus Dur as “Hard Line Islam”, has changed the image of Indonesia Islam that is soft, tolerant and peaceful to be aggressive, furious, and intolerant and steeped.²⁴

Radical Islam keeps on spreading its influence widely. Gus Dur affirmed that the existence of this group not only stands alone in certain organization but also does the infiltration to many organizations and governments. NU (Nahdatul Ulama) and Muhammadiyah considered as the entrenchments of moderate Islam is not getting rid of infiltration of radical Islam. This group attempts hard to influence these two big organizations. Moreover, they also take any assets of NU and Muhammadiyah, such as schools and mosques.²⁵

Gus Dur was a pluralist but it did not mean that Gus Dur gave tolerance without any limitation. For him, the group of radical Islam has been something very dangerous. “They easily outwit many Moslems and easily infiltrate in anywhere and anytime” said Gus Dur.²⁶ What they have done in fact is very dangerous. Gus Dur firmly warned that radical Islam

²² *Ibid.*, p. 192.

²³ Abdurrahman Wahid, *Sekadar Mendabului, Bunga Rampai Kata Pengantar*, (Bandung: Nuansa, 2013), p. 141.

²⁴ Greg Barton, “Liberalisme...,” p. 143.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 147-157.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

has broken Islam. Much violence they did gas made Muslim ashamed.²⁷

The phenomenon of radical Islam becomes a severe threat for Indonesia people with their diversity. The perspective of single truth held by the radical Islam group—according to Gus Dur—is dangerous for the future of plural Indonesia. In fact, managing the diversity needs the serious effort, thoughts and strategy.

In managing the diversity, there are some important points to be concerned. *First*, giving the political rights for the minority groups to make their existence and aspiration can be represented in national political realm. Their existence must be admitted in that they indeed exist. *Second*, the rights for self-management such as political autonomy in each group agreed. *Third*, the rights to develop the local culture of each ethnic.²⁸

Those important points in the management of the diversity are not found in the perspective of radical Islam. As seen from the thoughts of Gus Dur about radical Islam, they in fact are dangerous for the Moslem and for the Indonesia future. In such perspective, it needs some measures to stem the flow of radical Islam. One of the strategies that can be applied is through deradicalization.

Strategy of Deradicalization

Seeing from the perspective of deradicalization, Gus Dur in fact has implicitly formulated any strategies that can be done to prevent the growth of the radical Islam group. The strategy is not explicitly written in some of Gus Dur's works. The reconstruction of the thoughts of Gus Dur and the perspective of deradicalization that the writer did found a number of important thoughts of Gus Dur that are in line with the strategy of deradicalization.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

²⁸ Ahmad Syafii Mufid, *Dialog Agama dan Kebangsaan* (Jakarta: Zikrul Hakim, 2001), p. 22.

Indigenouness of Islam

The most popular core idea of Gus Dur is indigenouness of Islam. This idea has emerged the wide controversy; even its controversy can still be felt until today. In fact, this idea is interesting to be reconstructed as a strategy of deradicalization. The emergence of the idea of indigenouness of Islam has been backgrounded by the restlessness of Gus Dur towards the threat of Arabicization. Today, the Arabicization as carried by the group of radical Islam is still running massively. In such perspectives, the indigenouness of Islam is reapplied as the strategy of deradicalization.

Gus Dur stated that the indigenouness of Islam does not mean “Javanization” or syncretism. The substance of the indigenouness of Islam is to consider the local needs in formulating the religion laws. Thus, it does not change the religion itself.

Besides, Gus Dur also affirmed that indigenouness of Islam is not: ...an attempt to leave the norms for the sake of culture but to make the norms accommodate the needs of the culture by using the opportunity provided by the variety of the understanding about *nash* by still giving the roles of *usbl fiqh* and *quidab fiqh*.

Indigenouness of Islam is a part of Islam history either from its originating country or from other countries including Indonesia. Those two histories have formed a large river that keeps on flowing and then is inserted by the reserve river and it makes the river bigger. The existence of the new river means the new water changing the existing water colour. Even, in the next phase, the river flow is contaminated by the “industrial waste” that is very dirty. The purpose of this parable is that the process of encountering with the historical fact does not change Islam but only change the manifestation of the life of Islamic religion.

The problem is how to accelerate the understanding of *nash* to run more systematically with the wider scope and more mature argumentation. If this desire can be implemented, then this is what is meant with the indigenouness of Islam that is the understanding about the *nash* related to the problems in our country.²⁹

²⁹ Abdurrahman Wahid, “Pribumisasi Islam”, in *Pergulatan Negara, Agama, dan Kebudayaan* (Depok: Desantara, 2001), p. 124.

The indigenusness of Islam, thus, is not to change Islam but the contextualization of Islam to make it harmonious with the dynamic of the development of era. This is important to make Islam not to go out of fashion. The substance of the indigenusness, as explained above, is not to force the rigid model of Islam as developed by radical Islam. Islam is one but the initiative understands Islam to result in the diverse interpretation. The indigenusness of Islam, in this frame, is the interpretation of Islam that is in accordance with the Indonesia context.

The Role of Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren)

Pesantren is an important institution that obtains more concerns from Gus Dur. This is reasonable as most of his lifetime, pesantren became a part that cannot be separated. It is reasonable if Ulil Abshar-Abdalla stated that “the world perspective shaping Gus Dur is the perspective of pesantren’s world”.³⁰ Thus, it is reasonable if Gus Dur had optimism towards the pesantren. For Gus Dur, pesantren can play a role of transformation in its wide meaning.³¹ Besides, the pesantren also is an institution of Islamic study that has a historical value towards a religious-social movement.³²

As stated by Gus Dur, pesantren is the starting point of the transformation process. For the deradicalization, the pesantren becomes the starting point of the deradicalization process. This role is in line with the Islamic sociological context in Indonesia. Pesantren, thus, can run the basic tasks in realizing the culture of Islam.³³ This is then affirmed by the opinion of Huda that “History has given the significant evidence

³⁰ Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, “Pada Mulanya Gus Dur Seorang Santri”, in Abdurrahman Wahid, *Melawan Melalui Lelucon, Kumpulan Kolom Abdurrahman Wahid di TEMPO*, (Jakarta: Pusat Data dan Analisa TEMPO, 2000), p. xviii.

³¹ Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, *Wajah Baru Islam di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: UII Press, 2004), p. 62.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

³³ Abdurrahman Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi, Esai-Esai Pesantren* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2001), p. 12.

that pesantren is capable of doing a total transformation towards the community of heterogeneous society”.³⁴

The perspective of deradicalization also is very possible to be developed in pesantren because the learning approach developed here is very possible for the realization of that matter. As stated by Gus Dur, the learning approach in pesantren must be able to stimulate the ability of critical thinking, creative attitude and stimulate the learners to ask in their lifetime. Learning in pesantren is not doctrinaire that can kill the ability of students in the exploration.

The perspective of the learning approach, if developed constructively, can be a very good and effective media. This is in line with the perspective of Gus Dur stating that, as seen from the perspective of education management, the independent attitude of pesantren can be seen either in the educational system and its structure or the life perspective embedded in *Santri* (students). The structure of education in pesantren is popular culture and has a very large flexibility. All people, no matter from any social level, are accepted in pesantren without any administrative or financial matters.³⁵

Also, the support for the strategy of deradicalization in the pesantren world can also be traced in the purpose of the pesantren education that is the integration between the religious knowledge and non-religious knowledge; thus, the graduates generated will have an intact personality combining the strong faith elements and the mastery for the knowledge on balance.³⁶

Zamakhsyari Dhofier detailed the purpose of the education in pesantren including to enhance morality, training and encouraging the spirit, respecting the spiritual and humanistic values, teaching the honest

³⁴ Saiful Huda, et.al., *Menggagas Pesantren Masa Depan: Geliat Suara Santri untuk Indonesia Baru* (Yogyakarta: Qirtas, 2003), p. 46-47.

³⁵ Abdurrahman Wahid, “Pendidikan Kita dan Kebudayaan”, [www.Gus Dur.net/indonesia/index](http://www.GusDur.net/indonesia/index), accessed on June 18, 2011.

³⁶ Abdurrahman Wahid, *Menggerakkan Tradisi...*, p. 145.

and moral attitude and preparing the santri to live humbly and kindly-hearted. Furthermore, he affirmed that the purpose of pesantren is not merely to reach the power interest, money and worldly majesty but to embed the value that learning is merely an obligation and devotion to God.³⁷

Analysing the purpose of the education in pesantren, it can be seen that the output resulted is the humans that are not fanatical. The honest humans prioritizing worship and respecting the humanity are the human that in character is contradicting with the radical Islam. Therefore, pesantren has the important roles in terms of deradicalization.

Maintaining Tradition and Building Interaction

Tradition plays an important role in maintaining the balance in a society. The religious tradition basically is an intensive interaction between the tradition and religion. Both are related sustainably that later create a civilization.³⁸

Tradition is a starting point of a development of a society. The society uprooted from the tradition will lose their orientation. The crisis in modern society is due to the loss of tradition from their life. Maintaining the tradition tightly while accepting the new values is a strategic formula to maintain the society to be firm in facing the very rapid life changes.

The importance to maintain the tradition is strongly seen from any writings of Gus Dur. For him, tradition makes the Moslems not easily uncontrolled by the existing change. The strengthening of the religious tradition, in term of deradicalization, also is quite strategic to restrain the flow of radical Islam.

Gus Dur offered any strategies of maintaining the tradition of religion. One of strategies can be done informally through a custom in the daily life. The tradition that is well maintained will make the society

³⁷ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996), p. 21.

³⁸ Nourouzzaman Shiddieqy, *Jeram-Jeram Peradaban* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996), p. 258.

to have a strong foundation in running the religion and to function to protect the people from the existing external attacks. The maintenance of this tradition is now facing the external and internal challenges. The external challenge is globalization and the internal one is the emergence of the group of expert about *bid'ah* (falsehood) and easily to view other *kafir* (infidel).

The base of the tradition and absorption of the modernity make the thought paradigm developed by Gus Dur to be moderate. Ahmad Amir Aziz conducting a comparative study between Nurcholish Madjid and Gus Dur concluded that "Gus Dur is the most moderate figure and the real democracy warrior".³⁹ Moderatism of Gus Dur did not emerge simply but as an accumulation of long journey, wide insight, and constructive perspective for the reality that is critically done. Such condition has made Gus Dur—together with Djohan Effendy, Ahmad Wahib, and Nurcholish Madjid—viewed to have put the bases of neo-modernism in Indonesia Islam.⁴⁰

Neo-Modernism appreciates the tradition critically and at the same time it also takes the perspective of modernism. The base of tradition and the adoption of the new values do not always run smoothly. The established society firmly holding the tradition commonly is not easily to accept the new things; moreover if the offer of the new thing disturbs the existence of the tradition. As a consequence, those supporting the new concept must face the criticism, refutation and even judgement. Abdurrahman Wahid was the figure that was most frequently criticized and attacked for his new thinking.⁴¹

Though having many attacks, Gus Dur still stood ground. The consistency of Gus Dur in its development becomes the strong evidence

³⁹ Ahmad Amir Aziz, *Neo-Modernisme Islam di Indonesia, Gagasan Sentral Nurcholish Madjid dan Abdurrahman Wahid* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1999), p. viii.

⁴⁰ Fachry Ali and Bachtiar Effendy, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam: Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Masa Orde Baru* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), p. 70.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

that the culture he took got many attacks; however actually what Gus Dur did is the evidence of an effective deradicalization strategy.

The one strongly maintaining the tradition also must enhance the quality of cooperation with others. Gus Dur always reminded about how important to aspirate the truth and to be always patient in doing the duty.⁴² Such social interaction is important to maintain the social harmony.

The concern of Gus Dur with the social interaction among community seems to be backgrounded by his thoughts and existence that were intensive in society. The social intercourse of Gus Dur was so wide and cross-community. Gus Dur was active in any efforts to transform the society to a better life. He was mentioned as the core figure from the Indonesia Islam Intellectual emphasizing on the effort of *community development* to improve the condition of Moslem community in Indonesia.⁴³

The radical Islam groups refute the differences in opinion and the plurality of reality. They claim as the owner of the single truth and what they do seems to defend God. Religion for them is for God – not for human. In fact, religion comes for the human interest – not for the God interest as God does not need a help of human.⁴⁴ For this reason, the interaction among human must be built intensively. At this point, the paradigm offered by Gus Dur found its relevance as it is opposite with the paradigm of radical Islam that is exclusive and avoid the equal human interaction.

Islam Spirituality

The spiritual aspect has a great concern from Gus Dur. Spirituality recently tends to be seen as an aspect related to the dimension in human. As the intrinsic aspect, the spirituality seems to be passive and does not have any contribution to the dynamic of human development.

⁴² Abdurrahman Wahid, *Sekadar Mendabului, Bunga Rampai Kata Pengantar*, (Bandung: Nuansa, 2013), p. 168.

⁴³ Zuly Qodir, *Radikalisme Agama di Indonesia...*, p. 21.

⁴⁴ M. Sulton Fathoni and Wijdan Fr, *The Wisdom of Gus Dur, Butir-Butir Kearifan Sang Waskita* (Depok: Imania, 2014), p. 31.

Gus Dur had a different perspective. He stated that the spiritual aspect is not passive but active. The active nature enables the spiritual approach to be used for any positive purposes including as the strategy of deradicalization. This is because the well managed spiritual approach can generate an active awareness that can then stimulate the individual and social transformation. Clearly Gus Dur explained that when the inner conflict occurs between *Rabb* and prurient, it will cause the physical activities.⁴⁵

Gus Dur viewed that the Radical Islam Group has reduced, amputated and even emasculated the glorious Islamic messages. Islam does not merely consist of the *Fiqh* aspect (materials) but also there is *Tasawuf* aspect (spiritual). The group of the hard line claim that they fully understand the meaning of the holly book. As a consequence, they feel to have rights to be the *Khalifah of Allah* (the representative of God) and rule the world to force anyone to follow their understanding. They believe that their understanding is the *perfect one*.⁴⁶

Such understanding appears as they have changed Islam to be the political ideology. As the implication, a perspective that is different or even contradict to their understanding will be viewed as something contradicting to Islam. This is because the base of interpretation of the ideology is to rule and equalize.⁴⁷

Therefore, the important effort for the deradicalization is by introducing the spiritual dimension and the essence of the Islamic teaching. Many elements are carried away with the allurements of the radical Islam as they only see Islam from the formal symbols. Therefore, deradicalization by presenting the spiritual dimension and the essence of the Islamic teaching as suggested by Gus Dur is very strategic to restrain the flow of the radical Islam.

⁴⁵ Abdurrahman Wahid, *Sekadar Mendabulni...*, p. 133.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 142-143.

Deradicalization through the spiritual dimension and the essence of the Islamic teachings can be done with some ways such as by asking and inspiring society to be humble, keeping on learning and more open-minded. Such ways enable to understand the spirituality and the essence of the Islamic teaching. If this can be continually done, it can generate the Moslems with “the peaceful souls”.⁴⁸ Human in a peaceful state represents the existence of spirituality that is what Gus Dur mentioned as the real *khalifah* of Allah.⁴⁹ The peaceful souls as the reflection of spiritual maturity cannot mention those that are different as *Kafir* or *Murtad* (apostate). The centre of pressure of their life is to maximally attempt to give the advantages as many as possible to anyone without considering any existing difference.⁵⁰

Though the intrinsic spiritual aspect is important, it does not mean to ignore the extrinsic Fiqh aspect. Both should not always be contrasted as they in fact complete to each other. Giving the centre of pressure extremely to the Fiqh aspect can make Islam furious as shown by the radical Islam group. The Fiqh oriented perspective in reality is not able to cope with the issue fundamentally. The approach of fiqh and tasawuf must be on balance.⁵¹

Gus Dur attempted to build the balance between the exoteric and esoteric aspect. The emphasis on one of the aspects makes the Islamic expression to face the hard challenge when it is implemented in life. The balance aspect makes Islam as a dynamic religion along with the dynamic and the development of the era.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 144-145.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁵¹ Budhy Munawar-Rachman, “Spiritualitas: Pendekatan Baru dalam Beragama”, in Hasan M. Noer (ed.), *Agama di Tengah Kemelut* (Jakarta: Mediacita, 2001), p. 48-49.

Conclusion

The dynamic Indonesia Islam becomes an object that is always interesting to be studied. The analysis on the thoughts of the figures such as the thoughts of Abdurrahman Wahid, always finds out the actuality. The wide context of the thoughts of Abdurrahman Wahid enables to reconstruct the thoughts covering many fields to be always relevant with the dynamic of the existing development of era.

Abdurrahman Wahid since so long gave a concern to the phenomenon of radical Islam. The existence of radical Islam is related to the internal and external factor of Moslems. Though respecting the variety of religion expressions, Abdurrahman Wahid gave a note that radical Islam indeed has damaged Islam.

Therefore, the thoughts of Abdurrahman Wahid can be reconstructed in the frame of searching the strategy of deradicalization. The thoughts about radical Islam, pesantren, tradition and spirituality of Islam are the strong bases to formulate the strategy of the deradicalization. The contribution of such thoughts is important so as to make the harmonious religious life of people maintained well.

References

- Abdullah, M. Amin, "Islam dan Keindonesiaan," in Komaruddin Hidayat (ed.), *Kontroversi Khilafah: Islam, Negara, dan Pancasila*, Bandung: Mizan, 2014.
- Abshar-Abdalla, Ulil, "Pada Mulanya Gus Dur Seorang Santri", in Abdurrahman Wahid, *Melawan Melalui Lelucon, Kumpulan Kolom Abdurrahman Wahid di TEMPO*, Jakarta: Pusat Data dan Analisa TEMPO, 2000.
- Alhumami, Amich, "Muhammadiyah: Pergumulan Kelas Menengah Muslim Indonesia", in Ahmad Fuad Fanani, dkk, *Islam Berkemajuan untuk Peradaban Dunia, Refleksi dan Agenda Muhammadiyah ke Depan*, Bandung: Mizan, 2015.
- Ali, Fachry Ali and Effendy, Bachtiar, *Merembah Jalan Baru Islam: Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Masa Orde Baru*, Bandung: Mizan, 1996.
- Arif, Syaiful, *Deradikalisasi Islam: Paradigma dan Strategi Islam Kultural*, Depok: Koekosan, 2010.
- Arifin, Syamsul, *Studi Islam Kontemporer, Arus Radikalisasi dan Multikulturalisme di Indonesia*, Malang: Intrans Publishing, 2015.
- Aziz, Ahmad Amir, *Neo-Modernisme Islam di Indonesia, Gagasan Sentral Nurcholish Madjid dan Abdurrahman Wahid*, Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1999.
- Barton, Greg, "Liberalisme: Dasar-dasar Progresivitas Pemikiran Abdurrahman Wahid", in Greg Fealy dan Greg Barton. *Tradisionalisme Radikal, Persinggungan Nahdlatul Ulama-Negara*. Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1997.
- Bruinessen, Martin van, "Mukadimah: Perkembangan Kontemporer Islam Indonesia dan "Conservative Turn" Awal Abad ke-21," in Martin van Bruinessen (ed.), *Conservative Turn: Islam Indonesia dalam Ancaman Fundamentalisme*, terj. Agus Budiman, Bandung: Mizan, 2014.
- Bustamam-Ahmad, Kamaruzzaman, *Wajah Baru Islam di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: UII Press, 2004.
- Dhofier, Zamakhsyari, *Tradisi Pesantren*. Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996.

- Fatoni, M. Sulton and Fr, Wijdan, *The Wisdom of Gus Dur, Butir-Butir Kearifan Sang Waskita*, Depok: Imania, 2014.
- Hasan, Noorhaidi, *Laskah Jihad: Islam, Militansi, dan Pencarian Identitas di Indonesia Pasca-Orde Baru*, trans. Hairus Salim, Jakarta: LP3ES, 2008.
- Hasani, Ismail and Naispospos, Bonar Tigor (eds.), *Dari Radikalisme Menuju Terorisme: Studi Relasi dan Transformasi Organisasi Islam Radikal di Jawa Tengah & D.I. Yogyakarta*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Masyarakat Setara, 2012.
- Heryanto, Ariel, "Pop Culture and Competing Identities", in Ariel Heryanto (ed.), *Popular Culture in Indonesia, Fluid Identities in Post-Authoritarian Politics*. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Hilmy, Masdar, "Memutus Reproduksi Terorisme". *Kompas*, July 26, 2016.
- Huda, Saiful, *Menggagas Pesantren Masa Depan: Geliat Suara Santri untuk Indonesia Baru*, Yogyakarta: Qirtas, 2003.
- Liddle, R. William, "Skripturalisme Media Dakwah: Suatu Bentuk Pemikiran dan Aksi Politik Islam di Indonesia Masa Orde Baru," in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), *Jalan Baru Islam, Memetakan Paradigma Mutakhir Islam Indonesia*, Bandung: Mizan, 1999.
- Maarif, Ahmad Syafii, *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan: Sebuah Refleksi Sejarah*, Bandung: Mizan & Maarif Institute, 2009.
- Mufid, Ahmad Syafii, *Dialog Agama dan Kebangsaan*, Jakarta: Zikrul Hakim, 2001.
- Munawar-Rachman, Budhy, "Spiritualitas: Pendekatan Baru dalam Beragama", in Hasan M. Noer (ed.). *Agama di Tengah Kemelut*, Jakarta: Mediacita, 2001.
- Qodir, Zuly, *Radikalisme Agama di Indonesia*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014.
- Rahardjo, M. Dawam "Fanatisme dan Toleransi," in Irwan Masduqi, *Berislam Secara Toleran*, Bandung: Mizan, 2011.
- SB, Agus, *Deradikalisasi Nusantara, Perang Semesta Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Melawan Radikalisasi dan Terorisme*, Jakarta: Daulat Press, 2016.
- Shiddiqi, Nourouzzaman, *Jeram-Jeram Peradaban*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996.

- Suradji, Adji, "Ancaman Teroris Generasi Baru", *Kompas*, February 3, 2016.
- Tarrow, Sidney, *Power in Movement: Social Movement, Collective Action and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Wahid, Abdurrahman, *Menggerakkan Tradisi, Esai-Esai Pesantren*, Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2001.
- _____, *Pergulatan Negara, Agama, dan Kebudayaan*, Depok: Desantara, 2001.
- _____, *Islam Kosmopolitan: Nilai-nilai Indonesia dan Transformasi Kebudayaan*, Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, 2007.
- _____, *Sekadar Mendahului, Bunga Rampai Kata Pengantar*, Bandung: Nuansa, 2013.
- Zada, Khamami, *Islam Radikal: Pergulatan Ormas-Ormas Islam Garis Keras di Indonesia*, Jakarta: Teraju, 2002.