

## THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC RELIGION LECTURERS IN PREVENTING RADICALISM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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### Abstract

*This study aims to determine how the development of understanding of UPN Veterans East Java lecturers and students about radical movements in the campus environment. This type of research is a qualitative research with a phenomenological approach involving a lecturer of Religion at UPN Veteran East Java as the research subject. From the results of the interviews, it was found that the lecturers had the same view on radicalism. This radicalism understanding develops from a lack of in-depth religious understanding. Meanwhile, among students, the development is due to the immaturity of students' thinking patterns and their great curiosity. The role of Religion lecturers in preventing radicalism at UPN Veterans East Java is by instilling the spirit of nationalism based on the Unitary State Republic of Indonesia, Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, defending the state to students, teaching Islamic insights that are Rahmatan Lil Alamin, moderate, open, and tolerant, fostering Islamic brotherhood, ukhuwah wathaniyah, and ukhuwah basyariah as well as instilling critical thinking in students.*

**Keywords:** *The Role of Religion Lecturers and Preventing Radicalism*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana perkembangan pemahaman dosen dan mahasiswa UPN Veteran Jawa Timur tentang gerakan radikal di lingkungan kampus. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi melibatkan dosen Agama UPN Veteran Jawa Timur sebagai subjek penelitian. Dari hasil wawancara, ditemukan bahwa dosen memiliki pandangan yang sama tentang radikalisme. Paham radikalisme ini berkembang karena diawali dengan pemahaman agama yang tidak mendalam. Sedangkan di kalangan mahasiswa, perkembangannya dikarenakan masih belum matangnya pola berfikir mahasiswa serta adanya keingintahuan yang besar. Peran dosen Agama dalam mencegah paham radikalisme di UPN Veteran Jawa Timur yaitu dengan menanamkan jiwa nasionalisme yang berlandaskan NKRI, Pancasila dan UUD 1945 serta bela negara kepada mahasiswa, mengajarkan wawasan keislaman yang Rahmatan Lil Alamin, moderat, terbuka, dan toleran, memupuk ukhuwah Islamiah, ukhuwah wathaniyah, dan ukhuwah basyariah serta menanamkan pemikiran kritis terhadap peserta didik.

**Kata kunci:** Peran Dosen Agama dan Mencegah Radikalisme

### INTRODUCTION

The danger of radicalism has posed a real threat throughout the world, including Indonesia. Several incidents of violence in the name of religion and wanting to establish an Islamic state within the Unitary State Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) have disturbed the public and have even claimed many lives in several incidents. The events of the "Bali

Bombings I and II", and finally the "Sarinah Bombing" which were claimed to have been carried out by several radical Islamic groups gave a warning that these violent movements should not be underestimated. In response to this, the President of the Republic Indonesia emphasized that community organizations must be a bulwark for the radicalism movement (CNN Indonesia, 2021).

As the largest social organization in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) can play a role so that NU's views on religious practices, social attitudes, and societal attitudes can be disseminated and spread, both internally and externally to the nation. In addition, the same role is also highly expected from other social organizations, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and Muhammadiyah, which have become references for Muslims in Indonesia, and are considered the biggest obstacle to the development of radical Islamic movements (Antara, 2021). One of the main challenges faced by the Indonesian people related to the development of the radical movement is the development of radical ideology within the university environment by making students as targets. In several media including CNN Indonesia (CNN Indonesia, 2021).

To prevent the development of radical movements that carry violence as a form of movement activity, the campus (lecturers and campus academics) or universities in Indonesia have a very important role, (Busro, 2019). The inculcation of the ideology of Pancasila, Defending the Nation and a moderate and tolerant religious approach are very important parts to prevent the entry of radicalism on campus. There needs to be a place for consultation for students at each university where every lecturer, including religion supervisors who have qualifications, can carry out the consulting role.

The high level of intolerance among students will keep the seeds of radicalism still large which if not addressed can be serious blow to universities in particular and the world of education in general which fail to instill the values of diversity and Pancasila ideology in students (Kemristekdikti, 2021).

Universities have a very important role in preventing the growth and development of radical understanding among students which has the potential in leading to the intolerant actions and even violent activities. Included in this role is anticipating the movement of intra-campus radical organizations through the involvement of lecturers with religious-based educational qualifications. Studies or research exploring the role of educators (lecturers) in relation and efforts to fortify radicalization are still limited, especially in public universities. There are very few materials and readings from sources that are the result of field research. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill this gap.

This study aims to understand the phenomenon related to radicalization on public campus from the point of view of lecturers as providers of religious information/professional educators for students. In particular, this study aims: first, to find out the views of lecturers on the issue of radicalism and the development of its movement within the university environment (among students). Second, this study aims to determine the experience of lecturers in carrying out and spreading propaganda or Islamic teachings that are moderate and tolerant in an effort to anticipate the development of radicalism movements in universities.

By understanding this phenomenon, this research can contribute to scientifically based knowledge (research) related to the issue of radicalism. In addition, this research is one of the few studies that discusses the issue of radicalism. There are many sources about radicalism, but research-based (scientific) sources are still limited, so it is hoped that the results of this research will add to the repertoire and insight related to the issue of radicalism and efforts to overcome it.

## **METHOD**

This research is a field research using qualitative methods. The type of approach used is phenomenology, is a research approach that tries to explore and discover human life experiences with themselves and their lives. This research was conducted at UPN Veteran East Java by using lecturers as a source of research data. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling with the inclusion criteria of lecturers in the religious field who give religion lectures or conduct lectures to spread religious da'wah messages. This sampling technique was also chosen because purposive sampling allows researchers to obtain adequate information from the desired source. The data in this study were obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews with an allotted time of 30-50 minutes for each discussion. The collected data is then processed using thematic analysis. The thematic analysis method is a method that allows researchers to identify, analyze and report patterns of subject matter from the data obtained, and this method includes data understanding, data coding, data categorization, and drawing conclusions from the data. (Liamputtong, 2013, P. 23).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **General Overview About Radicalism**

The term radicalism comes from the Latin, namely "radix" which means root, base, bottom, comprehensive, all-out, and very hard to demand change. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, radicalism means an understanding or sect that wants social and political change or renewal by means of violence or drastic; or extreme attitudes in political streams (Umi and Windy, 2006, p. 561).

In the political realm, the phenomenon of radicalism is reflected in the act of imposing opinions in unconstitutional ways and mass mobilization for certain political interests which in turn gives rise to social conflicts. Whereas in the realm of religion, the phenomenon of religious radicalism is reflected in exclusive actions that lead to destructive anarchists in the name of religion from a group of people against their own internal religious groups and external adherents of other religions with different interpretations and understandings (Efraim and Bruce, 2013, P. 78 ). Because they feel that their group is the most correct and tries to impose their opinion on other groups who are considered "perverted". Included in acts of religious radicalism are activities to impose religious opinions, desires and ideals on other people or groups by means of violence. Religious radicalism can infect all adherents of religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

In understanding radicalism, it is necessary to understand that there are two sides that can arise. The results of interviews with several respondents indicate that radical understanding is normative (permissible) in the context of deepening religious knowledge in accordance with actual teachings and for personal needs that are not forced on others. This radical understanding then becomes wrong if it is forced on others to follow this understanding, especially using methods that are detrimental to others, both physically and psychologically.

*"...radicalism is related to the effort to understand the teachings that are positive in nature". But understanding that is not deep enough so that someone commits an act of murder, bombing in the name of religion is negative" (P1)*

*"... Radicals are okay, but radicalism will become negative when people disagree and don't follow it, so those who disagree are considered wrong and must be fought. Perhaps this radicalism is because they do not understand Islam well as 'Rahamatan lil alamin" (P2).*

*"...Radicalism has become familiar to me. The term radicalism is actually an understanding that leads to physical and psychological violence to impose an interest. Therefore, inside radicalism there is a desire to impose one's will, so that someone will recognize and follow a certain understanding." (P3)*

When this radicalism understanding has led to negative things, then the radicalism understanding has been considered dangerous and must be prevented and even anticipated. Several respondents commented as follows:

*"...Radicalism is an extreme and very dangerous ideology, even if they cross the line, they must be fought." (P3)*

*"...This radicalism, if not managed properly it will lead to breakdown the relationship with the people, splitting can occur." (P2)*

*"... Negative radicalism is very dangerous, because it really destroys the order of life in the midst of living in a society and a state." (P1).*

### **The development of radicalism**

To understand the issue of radicalism, an understanding of the process of its development is an absolute thing that also needs to be known. This is important because with this understanding, intellectuals who have the desire to prevent the further development of this fundamentalist movement can find points or gaps that can be modified or corrected. From the results of interviews during research found the following views:

*"... for the problem of the development of this radical Islamic school, there are three theories that can be explained. First, that Muslims are predicted to fail to enter the competition in the global era which causes Muslims to think that all*

*products of globalization, modernization are contrary to Islamic teachings. others so that Muslims take action to defend themselves (Islam) especially to defend the Islamic State which is currently in a state of chaos, this is where the "radicalists" argue that defending Palestine is 'Jihad'. Third, these actions are related to the local situation in the country where the State is considered unable to provide prosperity to the people so that resistance to the State arises..." (P1).*

*"... Radical ideas and actions develop especially for people who are weak or whose religious understanding is very lacking." (P2)*

*"... The possibility of radicalism occurring because in the world of understanding Islam, Muslims themselves are indeed given the opportunity to understand Islam in a paradiyah or individual way, there may even be a group opinion, so that disputes can occur with each other. criticizing one group to another. In such a situation, there was an opportunity for conflict at first, but because there was indeed an attempt to pit each other against each other, a dispute occurred at first and then developed into a dispute." (P3).*

The interesting thing that needs to be underlined is that the main cause of the development of radicalism is due to a shallow understanding of the Islamic teachings. Within the university environment, this understanding of radicalism makes students the target of operations. This is in accordance with the statement from the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (2016).

### **The role of lecturers in anticipating the development of the radicalism movement**

In general, the respondents paid great attention to the issue development of the negative radicalism. Providing enlightenment to students about the latent dangers of extreme radical movements is quite a priority for respondents, while there are several respondents who state that providing understanding to students is easier than giving da'wah messages to the general public about these fundamentalist movements.

*"...A lot of anti-radicalism is conveyed to students every time they teach. In addition, this issue of radicalism must also be dammed by conveying a lot through lectures and sermons in mosques, especially the nature of tolerance in publication and delivery. People should know that Islam is "Rahmatan Lil Alamin". Example of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Who understands and respects others "This happened when the Prophet acted as head of state, they were Jewish prisoners were respected and even protected." (P3)*

*"...This radicalism is always preached to the public, through lectures, sermons in every mosque." (P2)*

*"...This issue is always raised among students and the general public. Especially for students, it is very necessary to direct them as generation of builders and determinants the future of the people." (P1)*

### **Efforts to counter the development of radicalism among students**

There is a diversity of views from respondents in terms of anticipating the development of radicalism among students. Efforts to ward off the dangers of radicalism among students are quite good so that efforts to anticipate the development of radicalism can also be built from the start. In the end, the development of negative radicalism can be suppressed. Some of the respondents' views can be seen as follows:

*"...The learning system must be improved, then control over student academic activities must also be well guarded and cultural strengthening for students by upholding good values must be encouraged at all times." (P1)*

*"... Things that need to be developed to reduce the occurrence of radicalism among students and the community are as follows: developing 'KEBINHEKATUNGGALIKAN', realizing the slogan 'Islam Nusantara' opening up communication space with all organizations." (P2).*

*"...Efforts to counteract it among students can be in the form of: increasing efforts to explore the methodology of thinking, every lecturer paying attention and supporting CBT on campus, preserving 'local' wisdom that exists in each region, joint training through education outside the world, as well as at each institution campuses must provide facilities and open "public service" spaces for constant dialogue." (P3)*

From the responses above, it can be seen that lecturers at religious universities can play an important role by encouraging education to understand religious teachings as a whole, so that they are able to form the identity and character of students who are purely Islamic and do not lead to unwanted radicalism, including those involving elements of religion. coercion and violence, Sahrodi, 2008, 130). One of approach in understanding true religious teachings can be done with an anthropological approach which is defined as an effort to understand religion by looking at the forms of religious practices that grow and develop in society. Through this approach, religion seems familiar and close to the problems faced by humans and seeks to explain and provide answers.

### **Efforts to Counter Radicalism in Public Universities**

Education and educational institutions are very likely to become the seeds of radicalism and at the same time an antidote to radicalism. Studies on radicalism indicate that higher education institutions have been exposed to radicalism. Azyumardi Azra said that school children and students were the special targets for recruitment of radicalism groups. This professor of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta stated that several studies have proven that there are recruitment efforts to schools to campuses by brainwashing students, which are then filled with certain radical ideologies (Azra, 2021).

In some public university campuses, the tendency of students to support radicalism is also very high. This was revealed in a study on campus which involved 2466 samples of students from various well-known universities in Indonesia. when the

students were asked about the implementation of amar makhruf nahi munkar in the form of sweeping places that are considered sources of immorality, they answered as follows: around 65% (1594 respondents) supported the implementation of immoral sweeping, 18% (446 respondents) supported and actively participated in the activities sweeping. Around 11% (268 respondents) stated that they did not support sweeping, and the remaining 6% (158 respondents) did not provide an answer. Furthermore, those who support sweeping argue that sweeping activities are part of religious orders (88%), support sweeping because they think that the security forces are unable to enforce the law (4%), and for reasons of moral decadence (8%) (Fajar, 2007, P. 35).

The strategic management steps that can be taken to be able to de-radicalize Islamic education with moderate and tolerant views in the campus world as the results of interviews with religious lecturers at the UPN Veterans Campus East Java are as follows:

**Moderate and Tolerant Insight Curriculum;** Learning in religious education is more emphasized on deradicalization strategies by formulating a moderate and tolerant religious education curriculum by inserting civic values in learning activities so as to produce outputs that have moderate and tolerant religious awareness and are able to apply them in daily life. To achieve this, the various components involved in the educational process need to be planned in such a way as to support the realization of these ideas. In this case, what needs to be paid attention to are curriculum factors, educators (lecturers), and learning strategies used by educators.

**Moderate and Tolerant Paradigm Educators;** After the curriculum aspect, educators who have a moderate and tolerant paradigm also need to be emphasized in the religious learning process in universities. because, no matter how good the material that has been programmed in the curriculum, if it is not understood and delivered by a competent educator, it will not be effective, therefore religious educators must have a moderate and tolerant paradigm.

There are several ways that can be taken to produce moderate and tolerant educators. First, organizing various trainings, workshops, seminars, and other activities with an insight into religious moderation and tolerance to educators (lecturers). Second, holding religious dialogues with religious educators, leaders, or other religious people. Third, introduce readings or various references with the nuances of multicultural education from an early age to educators (lecturers).

**Evaluation of Religious Education Deradicalization Strategy;** After the deradicalization strategy is implemented in universities (in this context, general higher education), an evaluation must be carried out whether there are obstacles and obstacles that certainly require follow-up. For this reason, an evaluation is needed to find out to what extent the religious education deradicalization program has been able to become a solution to deradicalization and counter radicalization of student understanding which tends to be overshadowed by religious doctrine by various radical religious organizations.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research is as follows. *First*, according to information from sources, the development of radicalism is caused by a lack of in-depth understanding of

Islamic values and true religious teachings. Students in higher education, especially Public Higher Education (PTU) are very vulnerable to be targeted for the development of radical movements and understandings due to the age factor of personal maturity, self-discovery and curiosity and trying new and challenging things. *Second*, religious lecturers at universities have realized the challenge of radicalism, so that both formal and non-formal (student approaches) have often been carried out with the aim of equipping students with knowledge about tolerant and moderate Islam and the dangers of radicalism movements. *Third*, universities as institutions that play a role in creating a superior generation of nations must play an active role in anticipating the development of radical movements and understandings through the inculcation of comprehensive religious values, including teaching pluralistic values, understanding national insight, training logical and scientific thinking patterns, as well as facilitating the opening of open dialogue forums for students as a forum for exchanging ideas and neutralizing all forms of negative radical ideas that are developing.

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