

Deradicalization from within: Enhancing the Role of *Jihadists* on Countering Violence Extremism

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Abstract: This article seeks to explore the role of Jihadists in de-radicalization initiatives programs of a former terrorist prisoner. The Jihadist established Yayasan Lingkar Perdamaian as a forum for social and economic empowerment as a mutual aid for many disengaged Islamic extremists struggle with the transition back into society. How do they engage on delimiting of radical ideologies through community and economic development programs? Employed fieldwork conducted in Lamongan District, the East Java Province through the in-depth interview with founder and activities of the foundation which all of them are former extremists. The study concludes that the jihadists engagement in the empowerment initiatives as an alternate of government de-radicalization programs of a former terrorist prisoner. The existence of the Jihadists as the peace agents is useful for the countering violent extremism, significant as a counter-narrative extremism ideology, and bridge of intervention for militant groups aimed at reducing and even eliminating radical ideology. This foundation, gradually becoming a new community of converted militant and starting a new life.

1 INTRODUCTION

Considerable effort has been devoted to countering extremism and eliminating of radical ideologies that motivated the act of terror. The government stipulates the National Agency for Combating Terrorism/*Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme* (BNPT) on coordinating relevant state agencies to undertake de-radicalization of extremists. The processes de-radicalization involve various programs of rehabilitation, re-education and social reintegration who involve in the acts of terror as the suspect, the defendant, the convicts, prisoners, former prisoners and individual or groups who have been exposed to radical terrorist ideology. However, many studies indicated that changing extremists ideology is an ambitious target of de-radicalization, the realistic target on countering terrorism is to disengage individual and group of extremists moving away from a terror group or to quit participation in acts of violence. (Bjorgo & Horgan, 2008) Yet, recent studies indicated that the role of the government in the disengagement and deradicalization of disengaged Islamic extremists only play minor roles, the program has been ad hoc

and inconsistent. (Hwang, Panggabean, & Fauzi, 2013) Many extremists struggle with the transition back into society without an adequate help.

The current framework and policy on countering violence and extremism (CVE) suggested the process and dynamics of de-radicalization involve two important elements; 'push and pull factors'. The traumatic experience as common pathways of extremist moving away from a terrorist group. (Garfinkel, 2007; Kruglanski et al., 2014) The push factors such as negative social sanctions, disillusionment on the group ideology and movement, disappointment with group activities, loss of confidence, a fatigue on status and role of group activities. While, the pull factors such as age, career prospects and personal future and family responsibilities. The push and pull factors interplay disengage person or group from extremism organization. (Holmer, 2013). Abuza regards internal and external pressures specifically on psychological pressures and the "spiraling of commitment" and group solidarity and membership composition. (Abuza, 2008)

However, religion and ideology motivation of as a basis for terrorism makes radical groups more

committed than non-religious extremists and therefore tends not to radicalize. For radical groups based on Islam, leaving the group means leaving religious beliefs. This belief is based on the assumption that the way of salvation is only implemented through the membership of the organization which provides eternity as rewards in the afterlife (Juergensmeyer, 2017). Ideology and religion play an important role for prisoners, especially for prisoners who are first in prison. Ideology giving meaning to one's behavior and becomes a mechanism for selecting complex choices. Religion and ideology give identity, purpose, and meaning to life, overcome feelings of shame and wrong, and are useful for self-control in prisons. Therefore ideology which contains many values which tend to be intolerant, will lead to an action which is an expression of the values. (Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006)

Thus, understanding the intricacy terrorist decision leaving the group, as Jacobson asserted, "There are no single, comprehensive and reasonable arguments why people or groups leave terrorist networks or organization". (Jacobson, 2010) How to offer support or assist disengaged extremist is still had an incomplete understanding. An understanding of Jihadist involvement in efforts to empower former terrorist prisoners as a unique and interesting phenomenon. What is the motivation Jihadists' effort to assisting former terrorist prisoners? How do they engage the individual militants through the community and economic development programs, in regard to reintegrate the extremist into society?

Hwang finds that a intricacy of factors and networks led some individual to disengage and abandon the struggle of *jihad*. (Hwang et al., 2013) Chalmers evaluates official efforts on de-radicalization divides into four typologies; committed jihadists, disengaged provisionally, provisionally de-radicalization and fully de-radicalization. (Chalmers, 2017) The involvement of jihadists in the deradicalization program for former prisoners as a mutual aid in regard to reintegration assistance in the community. This engagement provides an advantage for their experience and expertise in terrorist organizations. Their existence is useful to fight violent extremism and prevent the spread of extremist ideology.

Three related terms should be clarified related to this article; *Jihadist*, de-radicalization and terrorist prisoners. The term *Jihadist* come from the same root in Arabic (*jhd* means to strive or struggle and *Mujahidin* means as holy warriors. *De-radicalization* refer to Law number 5/2018 on the

Eradication of Terrorism Crimes, in the article number 43 D, is the process of eliminating, reducing, and changing the terrorism ideology undertake with carefully planned, integrated, systematic and continuously. This a concept denotes changing 'radical and extremist ideology to moderate and abandoning criminal and violent act. Thus, the focuses on motives and spirit of behavior, strongly differentiated from *disengagement* indicates that an individual is no longer a member of a terrorist organization. Meanwhile, *terrorist prisoners* refer to individuals committing acts of terror and violence that are punished by the Court for serving sentences in prisons under anti-terrorism laws.

2 DERADICALIZATION PROGRAM IN INDONESIA

De-radicalization is a method widely discussed in counter-terrorism discourses. Rabassa et al define de-radicalization is the process of changing an individual beliefs system, rejecting the extremist ideology, and embracing mainstream values. (Rabasa, 2010) The process of deradicalization aims to change individuals or groups behavior related to violence--especially violence against civilians. Changing ideology is seen from the individual's perspective from radical to more moderate, while behavioral change is seen in aspects of the individual action. The seminal, definition by Davis, deradicalization is an attempt to change the ideology, thoughts, and understanding of someone who was originally radical to no longer be radical. (Davis, 2009) The decision to de-radicalize is usually an individual decision, which is then isolated from the social group. Relationships with role models are seen as important in alienating individuals from a radical perspective. One thing in common with the process of deradicalization with the process of radicalization is the traumatic experience of the individual before making a decision to do disengagement. Trauma acts as an event that triggers the transformation of individual beliefs.

John Horgan distinguishes the terms de-radicalization and disengagement. Deradicalization is a combination of two terms that have different meanings, but the end goal is the same, which is to make terrorists want to leave or release acts of terrorism in the form of violence. Horgan wrote his thoughts as follows: "while deradicalization has become the latest keyword in counter-terrorism, it is important that we distinguish it from the release and

pressure that is not only different, but it is only because one leaves terrorism; it rarely implies (or even requires) that someone becomes deradicalized.” Garfinkel argued that deradicalization has something in common with spiritual experience, similar to religious conversion, as happened in the process of radicalization. In contrast to the experience of radicalization, individuals who are de-radicalized do not adopt new ideologies as a function of their participation in supportive groups. (Garfinkel, 2007)

The process of deradicalization is one of the methods in handling terrorism cases where rehabilitation and reintegration of a terrorist broader community become its main goal. This process is an important tool in the model of law enforcement in handling terrorism. The perpetrators of terrorism in this approach are seen as human beings as a whole so that the process of law enforcement, detention, coaching covered in disengagement and deradicalization is expected to return to making a terrorist to abandon radical ideology and return to having a normal life in society. Deradicalization is done so that individual terrorists can change their radical views and actions to be more moderate and not radical.

The de-radicalization program in Indonesia is part of efforts to eradicate acts of terrorism which are carried out through two approaches, “hard” and “soft” approaches. Based on Law No. 5/2018 concerning the eradication of terrorism crimes the de-radicalization program was carried out under the coordination of BNPT. this institution serves as a center for combating terrorism through; (1) formulating national policies, strategies and programs on counter-terrorism; (2) monitoring, analyzing and evaluating counter-terrorism; (3) coordination on the implementation of prevention and combating radical ideological propaganda about counter-terrorism; and (4) coordination of the implementation of deradicalization.

According to the Law of Terrorism, the de-radicalization program in Indonesia has four approaches, namely: Reeducation, Rehabilitation, Resocialization, and Reintegration. Re-education is deterrence by teaching enlightenment to the public about radical understanding, so there is no omission of the development of this understanding. As for terrorism inmates, re-education is done by giving enlightenment related to deviant doctrines that teach violence so that they are aware that committing violence such as suicide bombings is not jihad identified with terrorism. The rehabilitation has two meanings, namely the development of independence

and personality coaching, independence building is training and fostering ex-prisoners to prepare skills and an expertise, the point is that after they leave the prison, they already have expertise and can open jobs. While personality coaching is approaching dialogue with terrorist prisoners so that their mindset can be straightened out and have a comprehensive understanding and can accept different parties from them. The rehabilitation process is carried out in collaboration with various parties such as the police, Correctional Institution, Ministry of Religion, Ministry of Welfare, mass organizations, and so on. It is expected that this program will provide provisions for them in living their lives after leaving the penitentiary. In addition to the program, to facilitate terrorist ex-prisoners and prisoners return and mingle into the community. The concrete form of soft approach carried out by BNPT is building trust with individuals or groups that are affiliated with terrorist activities. This institution cooperates with convert terrorists to influence members of other terrorist members to abandon violence. BNPT assisted in the establishment of educational institutions and Islamic boarding schools established by former terrorists.

However, Several studies assess that deradicalization programs have weaknesses in achieving rehabilitation goals (Istiqomah, 2011; Sarwono, 2012). According to Sukabdi the deradicalization approach in Indonesia tends to focus on four elements: (1) isolating prisoners involved in deradicalization programs from other terrorist prisoners; (2) provide practical incentives for prisoners to get involved, including holding them in better condition and by providing economic assistance to them and their families; (3) using former militants to argue with detainees today ideology, reasons and justification for violence; and (4) organizing workshops to address problems such as anger management but also to develop practical skills for future work and provide new social relations outside terrorist networks (Zora, 2015). Meanwhile, Abuza the deradicalization program is lacking in costs, inadequate resources, and less institutionalized (Abuza, 2010).

Andrie points out that deradicalization is carried out and regulated independently by the prison manager in accordance with the capabilities and capacity possessed. most of these prisons do not have special programs to rehabilitate or de-radicalize terrorist prisoners. locally developed and managed by prison directors according to prison conditions and capabilities Only two prisons are considered to have adequate programs: Porong Prison (Surabaya)

and Semarang Prison (Andrie, 2011). The deradicalization program in Indonesian prisons can be identified by several activities, such as providing conflict management training or inviting an ulama from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) to deliver speeches and discussions with terrorist prisoners. An interesting finding is that most participants refused to be involved in the program. These conditions have an impact on the effectiveness of deradicalization programs. Unfortunately, several recent attacks in several police stations in Poso and Solo and suicide bombings in three churches in Surabaya were carried out by self-radicalized lone wolves and were part of terrorist cells which is more disorganized and hierarchical than in the past. These developments also at the same time show a number of weaknesses in the approach to prevention and eradication of terrorism and radicalism that have been prevailing.

3 THE ROLE OF JIHADISTS IN DE-RADICALIZATION INITIATIVES

The Lamongan jihadist community is formed based on the intricacies of social relations through the Pesantren al-Islam, Tengulun, Lamongan. The social relation as the family of the founders, teacher-students, and sympathizers. This Pesantren is an allied with Pesantren al-Mukmin, Ngruki, Solo. The relationship between the two was built since the first al-Islam was founded. Ust. Chozin points out: "After seeing a lot of *pesantren* the only *pesantren* that in my opinion was just al-Mukmin, Ngruki Solo. "We see the discipline of the students as well as the discipline of management," Pesantren al-Islam later became one of the *pesantren* involved in special operations units Jema'ah Islamiyah (JI). Many JI bombing operations--Christmas Eve 2000 bombings, attacks on the Philippine ambassador in Jakarta and Bali bombings--some planned or started from al-Islam. As disclosed by Ali Fauzi "This village was once hit by a Bali bomb that was assembled in our house."

The Lamongan jihadist community as a terrorist organization based on some basic elements that characterize a group to commit acts of terrorism or are considered a terrorist organization. James Lutz and Brenda Lutz (2004) described terrorist organization involves political aims and motives. It is violent or threatens violence. It is designed to generate fear in a target audience that extends

beyond the immediate victims of the violence. The violence is conducted by an identifiable organization. The violence involves a non-state actor or actors as either the perpetrator, the victim of the violence, or both. Finally, the acts of violence are designed to create power in situations in which power previously had been lacking.

Thus terrorist organizations have the main characteristics in the terrorist movement, namely: (1) that certain actions or movements that use violence and threats to create public fear; (2) this movement is aimed at one or several countries, or communities, or certain groups of people or individuals; (3) this movement regulates its members with terror too; and that these individuals or movements commit violence with a view to gaining systematic and organized support.

The cultivation of radical ideologies through formal education and extracurricular activities in Pesantren al-Islam. The process of radical ideology indoctrination was carried out through al-Islam affiliation with the advisors of al-Mukmin Ngruki. Abuza (2008), who examined the motives of Islamist groups in the path of violence in Indonesia, said there were four main factors, namely; (1) among JI, motivation is based on applying Islamic law holistically by undermining secular power and replacing it with the Southeast Asian caliphate, (2) purification or purification of Islamic teachings, including cleansing of Western and secular values into a foundation that facilitates formation. Islam country; (3) the perception that Islam is currently under attack by anti-Islamic forces, especially America and its allies and Christians; (4) the reason is that there is a global conspiracy to weaken the power of Islam.

Generally, terrorist organizations provide material and non-material support to recruit and bind their members. Material supports, such as providing soft loans, venture capital assistance, providing school fees for children, health assistance. While, non-material supports provided in various forms, such as ideology and brotherhood. Cultivating radical ideologies through formal and informal institutions (*dauroh, i'dad, rihlah* and *mukhoyyamah*). The interplay of both supports as a barrier of *Jihadist* to disengage from a terrorist organization. Therefore, the engagement of Jihadists in de-radicalization has the advantage to form a new community that provides similar support in the same style but with different content. The mutual aid of jihadist in de-radicalize former terrorist prisoners based on the view that the ability in using weapons, agitation, propaganda, and make bombs as the

barrier in obtaining jobs and reintegrate to society. However, they have individually responsible such as children and spouse. Ali Fauzi points out: “so far we are always confused when former terrorism prisoners out of jail and could not find a suitable job, but there are children and wives”.

The relevance of Jihadist empowerment programs based a difficulty of getting a decent job because of a mismatch of expertise and negative views on former terrorists. Ali Fauzi feels compelled to involved in the efforts of empowering former Terrorist Prisoners and hoped that this group will build a ‘new community’, which can gradually defy the extremist beliefs of their imprisoned families. The empowerment efforts begin by identifying a dozen families of the ex-terrorist prisoner, “I have profiling more than 40 friends and students, why they join the old group,” and not being able to return to the community is due to terrorist activities as a barrier to getting a job. The establishment of Yayasan Lingkar Perdamaian as a mutual aid to begin a new life. This our understanding of de-radicalization, Ali Fauzi revealed:

“theorizing de-radicalization it is too difficult. Here we implement practical de-radicalization, if they speak violence, we speak peace. Similar method with different content. For example, currently they have a project to Yemen, yes we are also to Yemen but the charge is different. They like to ride the mountain is the same, but the cargo is different. That’s more ideal of this foundation.”

Furthermore, this foundation gives an ample to the ex-terrorist prisoner to communicate with other without being scrutinized. They freely express the views of *jihad* without needing to be excommunicated from their group, as they gain strength from the friends of the community. This process often involves reading, discussing, debating within oneself and among friends, and making dozens of small incremental choices. This process gradually delegitimizes radical ideologies.

Many efforts have been conducted in order to ensure the continuity of Jihadist empowerment programs. The foundation develops network and cooperation with various parties; *Firstly*, The existence of al-Islam pesantren is very important in the sustainability of the program. al-Islam is not only as the hub of Mujahidin, as a teacher, student, and guardian of santri, but also as a place for the children of terrorist prisoners to continue the education. Almost all exponents of Yayasan Lingkar Perdamaian have links with al-Islam and when the Jihadist to moderate their view that is in line with the changes that occurred in pesantren al-Islam. This condition is similar to the work of Marc Sageman

“*Understanding Terror Networks*”. Through profiling of 172 global jihadists who have been involved in the terrorism from the 1990s to the early 2000s. Sageman denies some of the commonly held assumptions that those who are potential to join terrorist are socially and religiously alienated, and most likely in distress. Through his observations found that the process of involvement in the terror movement in general through three branches: (1) social affiliation with the movement through friendship, kinship and teacher-student relationships; (2) progressive intensification of beliefs and teachings leads to acceptance of the ideology of salafi-jihadist; (3) formal acceptance of jihad movement through meetings with global salafy networks. This teacher-student factor is most evident in the Southeast Asian jihadist group. They generally have a relationship, directly or indirectly, with Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba’ashir as mentors or teachers. Sageman asserted that social ties are a very important element in this radicalization process.

Secondly, building network and cooperation with Local Government, Police, Military and the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT), although many de-radicalization activities are the result of contributions from activists and donations from sympathizers. This empowerment effort indicates that when government institutions incapable to sustain de-radicalization, a civil society has given concrete form in empowerment. The results of the interview with Ali Fauzi revealed: “that the acts of terror committed to jihadists are one critique of the absence of the state.” Many de-radicalization activities are the result of contributions from activists and donations from sympathizers.

4 DE-RADICALIZATION PATTERN AND MECHANISMS

In order to de-radicalize ex-terrorist prisoner, Yayasan Lingkar Perdamaian employs cultural patterns and mechanisms. This approach adds the Police persuasive approach that seem counterproductive to the efforts of de-radicalization. Dalgaard-Nielsen (2013) reveals, “when an individual has internalized the beliefs perceived identity as true, an attempt to challenge or de-radicalize attempt to be a failure. Therefore, the first effort that needs to be done is to encourage extremists to leave terrorist organizations. Some important factors in the disengagement process

include; disillusion with group strategy, tactics, or leadership. Similar findings by Barrelle (2015) add physical or psychological confusion. The process of disengagement based on Harris-Hogan (2017) research that the negative dynamics of relationships between individuals within the terrorist group encourages individual to re-think their hopes and desires. Sagemen (2004) agree that intervention programs against radicalism and extreme extremism can only be done after the disengagement process goes well, through the psychological connection between individuals within terrorist networks.

The approach of Yayasan Lingkar Perdamaian adopted non-material strategies in order to deradicalize former terrorist prisoners. This form of strategy aims to delegitimize and de-eliminate the radical ideology previously learned. Ideology or system of thought besides giving meaning to one's behavior also becomes a selection mechanism for complex choices. Ideology defines what is good and what is bad, what allowed and what is not, what is morally right and what is wrong, who is the friend and who is the opponent, and so on. As stated by Ian Adams (2009), ideology has functions such as maps and signs that give an idea of what the ideal society is like and how to make it happen. Therefore the ideology in which contain intolerant values that tend to lead of violence. Brachman (2009) identified five main concepts to doctrine embraced by extremist groups: *tawhid*, *aqidah*, *takfir*, *al wala wal-bara*, and *jihad*. Particularly the doctrine of Jihad, the trio of deathly Bali bombed, Imam Samudra, feelings of discomfort and anger perceived in the frame in religious logic which calls of violence. The concept of Jihad. In Salafy groups, the concept of jihad has a number of different interpretations, including its praxis square. In the jihadists, the concept of jihad is always evolution and development over time. The understanding of Quthb, al-Faraj, Azzam, and al-Zawahiri has had a very powerful influence on the interpretation and practice of jihadists of the modern jihadist Salafist. Quthb and Faraj radicalize the concept of jihad not only related to the role of offensive and defensive role but more widely as restoring the sovereignty of God that has been seized. In the context of this kind of understanding, the operation of jihad also means fighting against and eliminating the system and the rulers that block the occurrence of all laws and rules of God in all aspects of life. Replacing the ignorant people becomes a fully Muslim community. In the hands of al Faraj, extreme jihad was manifested in a bloody violent action against the secular "fir'aunis" rulers in Egypt, including the assassination of President

Anwar Sadat in 1981. Furthermore, Abdullah Azzam, based on his involvement in jihad in Afghanistan 'modifying' the understanding of jihad becomes wider, no longer just aiming for anti-Islamic powers in the country as near enemies), but also applies to all enemies occupying Muslim states as far enemies. Abdullah Azzam also stated that the law of jihad to fight against the enemies of Islam in Muslim countries became a blessing for every Muslim to fulfill it. The framework in deradicalization efforts at an ideological level carried out through intellectual reflection with critical arguments or counter-narratives is the main task in any deradicalization strategy and program.

The confession of Ali Imran, a perpetrator of Bomb in Legian Bali 2002, vividly shows how a number of mixed issues, ranging from disappointment to government, jihad vocation, anger, and revenge, into a series of religious dimensions motivating brutal violence. For all of them, wherever the region including Bali is also a jihad field, all non-Muslims and Westerners, are legitimate enemies. Ideology certainly plays an important role in constructing such *jihadists* thinking. Here are some of the reasons presented (Imron, 2007): (1) not satisfied with the existing government. This is due to the absence of *Imamat* (a leader who is appointed and inaugurated by Islamic standards or ways, a kind of caliphate) has led to widespread disobedience and submission to non-Islamic leadership; (2) Islamic Shari'a is not applied thoroughly; (3) the hope of opening *jihad fi sabilillah*, where a greater war will occur between the Muslims against the unbelievers after the bombing of Bali; (4) the bombing as a form of jihad obligation as commanded by religion; (5) reply to abominations and oppression by the infidels against Muslims as happened in Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Somalia, and a number of other countries. The bombing also served as a form of retaliation for Christians who fought with Muslims in Poso and Ambon.

A strong jihadist doctrine can be read in the articles of Aman Abdurrahman, a radical figure who has a strong influence in the jihad movement in Indonesia. Aman calls his followers to support ISIS and together Ba'ashir declared *bai'ah* against the caliphate of Abu Bakar al-Bahgdadi. Aman argues that the Indonesia state is pagan countries and government are *taghut*. The pagan accusations also apply to Muslims in this country who consciously believe and follow the democratic system, willing to sing the national anthem and recognize the basis of the Pancasila state. Yayasan Lingkar Perdamaian in

order to counter extremist ideology through formal and non-formal education institutions. Through formal institutions, changing in *Pesantren al-Islam*, implemented through several dimensions; the curriculum, addition of material of *Tahfidzul Qur'an*, vocational education, build new facilities and orientations from *jihad-dakwah-tarbiyah*, become *tarbiyah-dakwah-jihad*. The effort of Pesantren al-Islam reduce radical understanding in the surrounding environment is done by acculturation with the surrounding environment, active in social activities such as School Committee and joining Muhammadiyah organization.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Findings of the study presented that existence of the former extremists as the peace agents is useful for the countering violent extremism in the country. Their involvements are significant as a counter-narrative of the extremist ideology. It is to intervene the militant groups in aiming to reduce and to eliminate radical ideology, to provide practical assistance such as helping defectors to find accommodation away from former (jihadist) friends, help them in moving and possibly financing their home deposit, helping them find a suitable job or embarking on education. Such things are hoped can create the willingness of participants to re-against violent groups, the reduction in numbers of potential recruits through media campaigns featuring ex-participants, and the reduction in the size of violent groups. In the end, it can have a significant impact on the low capacity and durability of an extremist or terrorist movement.

A second element of the program is that it provides an unthreatening forum in which families of individuals in prison or Syria can express their aspirations, economic needs and ideological convictions without fear. They talk to people from the same area, with the same accents and often from similar socioeconomic status. A third element is a link to al-Islam. It may be problematic at some point. However, it is clear that the al-Islam boarding school is no longer promoting violence. It is a good idea to have a school with little fees in an area prone to extremism that can help families while strengthening bonds among the parents.

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