



EDUKASIA

JURNAL PENELITIAN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM

<http://journal.stainkudus.ac.id/index.php/Edukasia>

P-ISSN : 1907-7254; E-ISSN : 2502-3039

Vol. 17 No. 2 Tahun 2022 | 241-266

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/edukasia.v17i2.16034>

## Multicultural Islamic Education for Ex-Terrorists: Paradigms, Orientations, and Approaches

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### *Abstract*

*Terrorism is a problem that has not been fully resolved in Indonesia. This group still exists and continues to conduct cadres in several areas of this country. This study, therefore, aims to reveal the strategy carried out by the Lingkar Perdamaian Foundation (YLP) in Lamongan in providing guidance to former terrorists and breaking the chain of radical ideology in Indonesia. Qualitative data were obtained from interviews and direct observations with former terrorist actors through qualitative methods. This study succeeded in finding that in the process, YLP convincingly applied the values of multicultural Islamic education oriented to changing the ideology and personality of former terrorists. On the other hand, in the process, education for ex-terrorists was conducted based on an extraordinary paradigm, namely divinity (rabbaniyah), humanity (insaniyah), and nationality (wathaniyah). Islamic education was also conducted using a rational, psychosocial, and life skills approach. This research also contributes to building an Islamic education model designed explicitly for ex-terrorists with three orientations at once: ideological change, self-change, and encouraging them to socialize again with the broader community.*

*Keywords: Multicultural, Islamic Education, Ex-Terrorist, Approach*

## A. Introduction

Terrorism is a crime against humanity that has become an international issue (Hatta 2019, 77). Specifically, Indonesia is one of the countries claimed to be the basis for the breeding and development of terrorism. One of the areas known as a hotbed for terrorists is Tenggulun Village. In this village, there is an Al-Islam Islamic boarding school (mean: *pesantren*) widely regarded as an educational institution that teaches radical religious views. This assumption originated from the alums of this *pesantren*, who engaged in the cases of the Bali Bombings I (2002) and Bali Bombing II (2005) cases. Tenggulun, the locus of this research, is the village where Amrozi, Ali Ghufron, and Ali Imron lived, who were perpetrators of terrorism in the early 2000s. Among these terrorists is Ali Fauzi, who currently chooses to repent and establish a foundation to guide terrorist actors (Evi et al., 2020, 380).

The Yayasan Lingkar Perdamaian (Lingkar Perdamaian Foundation; from now on, abbreviated YLP) is a foundation for fostering former terrorists located in the Tenggulun Village, Solokuro Sub-district, Lamongan Regency. This area has become a hot topic of discussion following the network's involvement, which was exposed to national and international media. Later, after the Bali bombings, several terrorist figures emerged from this village. Among others, Anis Yusuf alias Haris, Iqbal Husen Toyyib, and Sumarno are all residents of Tenggulun, Solokuro, Lamongan.

This foundation was founded with the background to help ex-combatants socialize again with the broader community. Since establishing the YLP, ex-terrorist convicts have opened themselves to associating with residents (Ansori et al., 2019, 108).

Ali Fauzi Manzi leads this foundation, the younger brother of Ali Imron's life convict and death row convicts Muklas alias Ali Gufron and Amrozi in the Bali I bombing case. The YLP, which houses former convicts, deliberately includes the surrounding community, especially the Amrozi, Ali Imron, and Ali Ghufron families. To help ex-convicts and their families to assimilate, the YLP also tries to get the terrorists to be trained back into work after they get out of prison. This strategy is carried out so that the former convicts do not return to terrorist groups or networks.

During the researchers' visit to the YLP headquarters, there were several ways to help terrorists escape the trap of radicalism. This effort is in the context of establishing religious moderation for ex-terrorists so that they no longer understand radical religions. Some approaches taken by YLP activists in establishing religious moderation, as researchers have found in the field, include:

The first is assistance in prison. This approach embodies YLP's vision as a foundation that aims to "care for *Ukhuwah*, Knitting Peace." YLP activists also move to approach terrorist ex-convicts since they are in prison. This strategy is carried out with a communicative and dialogical approach to ensure that terrorist prisoners are no longer against the legitimate government.

The second is assimilation. The ex-convicts of terrorism find it challenging to blend in with society's life. In addition, the background of the YLP establishment is to support terrorist prisoners to be confident in interacting with the community. On the other hand, there is no longer a gap in the relationship between former terrorist convicts and the community, which still gives a negative stigma to former terrorists until now.

The third is to provide an understanding of the family. This approach was once taken with Khusnul Khotimah (wife of Arif, a former terrorist convict living in Tuban). According to Khotimah, before her husband was released from detention, she was often invited to attend the YLP headquarters to share things. For Khusnul Khotimah, YLP is the right place for ex-terrorist convicts to get out of terrorism together. She also realized that if there were no forum like the YLP, terrorist convicts would be mutually reinforced and no longer be involved in the world of terrorism.

"Frankly, with the existence of YLP, we as wives of former terrorists have been greatly helped, especially for the change in my husband's attitude, mas Arif." (Interview with Khusnul Khotimah, April 23, 2022)

Moreover, research on terrorism in Indonesia can be said to be very lively. A study that looked at the subject of similar analysis has been carried out by Mujib Ridwan, with the title "*Deradicalization Movement in Indonesia (Phenomenological Study of Activists of the Lingkar Perdamaian Foundation)*." This dissertation found that the change in the attitude of former terrorist convicts was triggered by economic problems and the desire to live a safe and peaceful life. Second, ex-terrorist convicts' return to society has pros and cons. Third, YLP's contribution to the deradicalization movement in Indonesia is quite significant by successfully pledged 120 ex-terrorist convicts and their families not to commit terrorism in Indonesia (Ridwan, 2019).

Next is a study by Lalu Supriadi entitled "*An Assimilation-Based Model for Preventing Religious Radicalism*." This study discusses the model of preventing religious radicalism based on intermingling, in which the government and civil society play a role as mediators by creating a conducive space for parties to the conflict with intersecting in religious and social activities. The results of this study stated that efforts to prevent religious radicalism must be accompanied by government policies for the community's social, cultural, and economic empowerment. In

addition, implementing religious programs and agendas can condition conflicting parties to carry out intermingling. Nevertheless, the subject matter of the study is different. If Supriadi's research focuses on suppressing radical actions, this study highlights more on changing the paradigm from radical to moderate in terrorist perpetrators. Besides, the analysis in this paper discusses the development of ex-terrorists from the perspective of multicultural Islamic education (Supriadi 2019, 65).

Furthermore, related research related to the deradicalization process has been carried out by Justice Yosie Anastasia Simanjuntak entitled, "*Deradicalization as a rehabilitation for perpetrators of terrorism to achieve the purpose of punishment.*" The study examined that punishment alone is not enough to prevent the recurrence of similar crimes; those punished are even considered examples of regenerating new terrorists because their ideology is still rooted (Simanjuntak, 2014). Therefore, perpetrators of criminal acts of terrorism must be given a rehabilitation program to revoke their ideology and instill the values of goodness and truth in them through a deradicalization program.

Next is the academic *ijtihad* shown by Josephin Mareta with the research entitled "*Rehabilitation in the Efforts to Deradicalize Convicts of Terrorism.*" The study explained that the use of violence in dealing with terrorism had not solved the problem to its root, so efforts are needed to change the radical thinking of the perpetrators by carrying out deradicalization. The study results also stated that terrorism is an individual problem that requires special guidance according to each character. Thus, in the rehabilitation implementation of terrorism prisoners, it is necessary to have the participation of prisoners and facilitators, the availability of procedures and guidance modules, and the evaluation of the success of the rehabilitation of terrorism prisoners regularly (Mareta 2018, 338).

However, the previous studies above have not discussed how multicultural Islamic education is practiced for former terrorists. At the same time, it has not touched on the aspect of the approach used explicitly in changing ex-combatants to become more moderate. Further, this research is conducted to contribute to an important finding about the strategies that civil society groups must take to play a role in rehabilitating radical ideologies through Islamic education with a multicultural perspective. Thus, the critical question that should be asked is: what is the role and approach that community groups need to take in changing the radical ideology of the former terrorist?

Data collection in this study used interviews with key informants, such as Ali Fauzi, Atho, Sumarno, and Faqih Lukman. They are YLP administrators and former terrorists who contribute to fostering ex-terrorists. In addition, the documentation was also used in this study

to find out what activities were carried out by YLP in their guidance to former wives, which was strengthened by data from observational techniques (Miles et al., 2006).

This study uncovered its significance because, so far, terrorist training tends to be given action instead of coaching. On the other hand, in the educational process for terrorist actors, more persuasive and humanist various strategies and approaches must be used. Hence, Islamic education is used as an instrument of *wasathiyah* Islamic values. On the other hand, Islamic education can also be used as a medium to instill the values of tolerance and nationality in the perpetrators of terrorism in Indonesia (Syahrul, 2021).

## B. Discussion

Before explaining further, it should be underlined that when discussing the discourse on terrorism, it cannot be separated from efforts to deradicalize (Zulian & Bachtiar, 2020). Separating the two is an academically unacceptable endeavor. Since the deradicalization process is essential in changing the radical mindset that affects terrorist actors, it cannot be ignored that in the process of terrorism deradicalization, there is an educational process. It convincingly intertwines the process of transformation of knowledge and values.

In this case, what YLP does is a multicultural Islamic education process aims to internalize moderation values (Siswanto, 2020). Therefore, in this analysis, the researchers need to emphasize that the deradicalization process will be read through from the theoretical perspective of multicultural Islamic education.

In this article, several themes of multicultural Islamic education are also presented in several thematic categories to make it easier to find the logical systematics of multicultural Islamic education practiced convincingly by the YLP in Solokuro, Lamongan.

### 1. The Ex-Terrorist Multicultural Islamic Education Paradigm

The main point in the multicultural Islamic education process developed by YLP is its orientation to changing the mindset of former terrorists (Evi et al., 2020). Therefore, radical religious understanding requires a multicultural Islamic education paradigm that can be a counter-ideology for ex-combatants. There are several ways that the YLP has taken to build religious moderation for these ex-combatants; for example, conducting heart-to-heart dialogue, even during prison time, and even assisting the families of convicts (Widya et al., 2020).

Thus, it can be understood that YLP, an Islamic educational institution, is a relatively effective means of strengthening Islamic moderation for terrorists. As an educational institution, YLP has also become a media and a place of guidance for particular students, namely terrorists, who are “still” sympathizers, assistants, and even those who have been involved in acts of terrorism in Indonesia (Rafsadi & Ihsan, 2017).

Education and educational institutions are likely to become the seeds of Islamic moderation and, simultaneously, an antidote to radical Islam. Here, YLP has become a kind of “school” that can be a means of deradicalization and simultaneously a vehicle for changing religious understanding (Zulian & Bachtiar, 2020). In the context of deradicalization, as a place of education, YLP teaches conflict prevention, peace education, and human rights education as a form of resistance to violence and radical actions, including religious-based radicalism.

In connection with the above, YLP is vital in creating a safe and orderly community environment. Religious education, as one of the essential materials in the YLP “curriculum,” if it can be called that, is contextually articulated to instill humanist values and keep ex-terrorists away from extreme attitudes based on religion. Therefore, YLP has become a prominent place for Islamic education to instill Islamic values that respect differences and are tolerant of other religions or different religions.

Practitioners of Islamic education are also currently trying to develop the concept of an Islamic education paradigm and generate scientific traditions, as has happened in the golden age of medieval Islamic history (Siswanto, 2020). One of the efforts to develop this paradigm is raising a concept relevant to the study people are currently discussing concerning the pattern of multicultural Islamic education for former terrorists.

One of the concepts of developing an Islamic education paradigm that has been well campaigned for is related to the integrative-interconnective scientific paradigm. This paradigm requires a relationship between one paradigm with another. This type of paradigm also presupposes a pattern of dynamic interrelationships that influence each other between science, culture, national identity, and civilization (Burhani, 2018).

In more detail, the researchers categorized three relevant multicultural Islamic education paradigms implemented by former terrorists. The three paradigms in question comprised the divine paradigm, the humanitarian paradigm, and the national paradigm. It is described in more detail below:

**a. Divinity (*rabaniyah*) Paradigm**

YLP tries to construct knowledge through a more moderate understanding of Islam. This religious moderation is based on the belief of YLP activists, who are also former terrorists, that the divine mandate that Islam dreams of is to bring mercy to everyone, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, known through the Islamic creed "*rahmatan lil 'alamin*" (Taher, 2017). For this reason, this theological paradigm must be strengthened by a more rational knowledge base about divine values.

Ali Fauzi, the founder of YLP, said that the divine paradigm in fostering former terrorists they did strengthens the principle of monotheism. One of the facts that humans must accept is destiny that humans are born with differences. It is called the *ta'lim* process.

"Therefore, in the "*Jalan Terang*" (Bright Way) study, we are trying to change the mindset and understanding of *jihad*, *hijrah*, and others, which are not following the Islamic mission of *rahmatan lil alamin*. Thus, they follow more of the *tafaquh fi al-din*; some do it once a week, once a month, and some every day, usually after sunset. The form can be material and moral." (Interview with Ali Fauzi, September 21, 2021)

From the cognitive theory perspective, the learning process carried out by YLP to former terrorists is a mental event. The behavior of these ex-combatants was treated not only as a response to "what they believed before" but also, more importantly, because of the mental impulses regulated by their brains through the intake of new perspectives on the values of *Rahman* and the *Rahim* of Allah in understanding and articulating Islamic teachings (Muarif & Yunus, 2019). The learning process experienced by former terrorists at YLP can thus be understood as an active mental process to achieve, remember, and use their knowledge of the importance of living in peace, tolerance, and openness to differences.

At a more philosophical level, the divine paradigm in the practice of multicultural education for former terrorists is directed at the doctrine of truth claims (Zafi et al., 2022). It suggests that the absolute is only God's truth, so apart from that, it is a relative truth that anyone could be wrong. In this case, the claim of religious truth is a change in the mindset of ex-convicts towards religious moderation. However, the radical paradigm shift to become more tolerant did not run smoothly, and there were many challenges, criticisms, and obstacles.

Further, *tawhid* is the basis for the paradigm of Islamic education for ex-combatants. It is interpreted as a "unifying" spirit, meaning that their Islamic views must

be able to become an instrument of solidarity, national unity, and unifying various components (Aly & Thoyibi, 2020). It, of course, also has the same vision of the nation as stated in the national creed of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*. The commitment of the former perpetrators of this radical action to the existence of God or monotheism significantly influences their every step.

For this reason, ex-terrorist groups who once had the experience of being a living martyr to uphold "God's will" need to change their orientation in articulating the essential teachings of Islam amid the plurality of the Indonesian nation. Through YLP, they try to be and set an example in realizing unity, union, and peace amid this nation's plurality and plurality, at least to those still exposed to radical ideologies and are still part of terrorist networks (Masroer, 2018).

**b. National (*wathaniyah*) Paradigm**

The spirit of nationalism is a crucial node carried out by YLP in providing multicultural Islamic education for former terrorists. This fact becomes necessary because someone infected with terrorism has experienced the erosion of the national spirit. This paradigm is a significant effort in the minds of terrorists between Islam and nationality to become two colliding entities (Huda, 2019). The choice is that if it is not an Islamic state, it will automatically become an infidel state. As a result, several Islamic communities have stigmatized Islam as a religion, not in harmony with nationalism.

In YLP, the former jihadists were nurtured and educated with a national paradigm, namely directing their religious understanding to accept and acknowledge the existence of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) and proven by carrying out the commemoration of the August 17 ceremony, respecting the red and white flag as the state flag.

"We do this by acknowledging the existence of the state and government always by inviting security forces, such as the TNI (Indonesian national army), Polri (Indonesian National Police), and BNPT (National Counter Terrorism Agency), to participate in conducting joint coaching." (Interview with Ali Fauzi, September 23, 2021)

In addition, YLP, through the information the authors received from Ali Fauzi, revealed that his party was deceiving friendly relations to change the radical views of terrorists.

"Thus, a friend is vital in making him good or bad. Ninety percent of people are associated with terrorists because of friendship and camaraderie. Well, these friendships and camaraderie are what I used to return to the Unitary State of the



Republic of Indonesia. If they entered the network because of friends in the past, they also returned because of it (friendship and camaraderie)." (Interview with Ali Fauzi, September 21, 2021)

As carried out by YLP above, the national paradigm aims to strengthen that Islam and nationality are not counterproductive and even reinforce each other (Abdullah, 2020). For this reason, it becomes truly relevant to erode the phenomenon of state rebellion "in the name of religion" regardless of religion, through education, in this case, Islam. Thus, the basis of nationality becomes very crucial in the process of Islamic education for former terrorist actors (Abdullah, 2017).

Departing from the above thought, it becomes very relevant that national values should be clearly integrated with the multicultural Islamic education agenda for ex-terrorists (Rohayana & Sofi, 2020). Islamic education with a national paradigm is essentially an education that places the issue of nationality as one of the visions of education, with the main character being inclusive, egalitarian, and humanist but still steadfast in spiritual and divine values based on the Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah.

Operationally, YLP conducts the YLP multicultural Islamic education process based on national values. This educational process is realized through teaching and understanding guidance services to improve the understanding, feeling, and national spirit of former terrorist actors. It is shown by prioritizing brothers' behavior, democracy, mutual acceptance and respect, and helping each other in social interaction with other Indonesian citizens (Kohn, 2015).

With a more assertive narrative, multicultural Islamic education is directed at forming ex-terrorists for the present and future. The target of Islamic education must rely on efforts to give birth to the Indonesian people. In this regard, the concept of a complete human being is someone who wants to contribute to building his nation in maintaining the dignity of sovereignty. Hence, it is not surprising that the Islamic education process developed by YLP is articulated not only by having a learning mission (*ta'lim*; instructional mission), which is expected to form intellectually good Indonesian people, but also by having a strategy to strengthen national identity (national identity; *wathaniyah*). It is by responding to and fulfilling the need for national identity through efforts to internalize national values in former terrorists who previously hated, disbelieved, and condemned the government with narratives wrapped in religion (Zarkasyi, 2019).

**c. Humanity (*insaniyah*) Paradigm**

The humanitarian paradigm shown by YLP in the multicultural Islamic education process is their commitment to assisting ex-terrorists so that their views are more moderate. This strategy is demonstrated by equipping them with life skills for their working capital. In this empowerment process, one of the YLP administrators, Sumarno, said that former jihadis were equipped with sewing, welding, buying, and selling skills through the MSME programs.

Atho', one of the former terrorists, who is now also helping the YLP program, stated:

"We get training on how to make livestock feed and fermentation. The goat is from BNPT, yes, from the YLP recommendation. If there is no YLP, we cannot receive assistance from BNPT." (Interview with Atho', November 27, 2021)

On the other hand, the humanitarian paradigm is also implemented by YLP officials by visiting former convicts and their families. "The latter is experiencing economic difficulties—even sending the children of convicts to school to get a proper education." (Interview with Ali Fauzi, September 21, 2021).

The existence of YLP in guiding former terrorists primarily uses a more humane approach (humanitarian approach); there is no intimidation, repression, and other forms of violence, both verbal and non-verbal. They do this strategy, considering that the foundation's goal is to humanize former terrorists so that they also have human sensitivities and feelings, which are entirely different from their previous behavior, which did not know human boundaries (Ansori et al., 2019).

Borrowing the term of Abd. Rachman Assegaf, the humanitarian paradigm is covered in one term, which Islam understands as *akhlak*. Morality or *akhlak* is a trait embedded in the human soul that will appear immediately (spontaneously) when needed, without requiring thought or consideration first, and does not require external encouragement (Assegaf, 2011).

Humanity's morality is also more about the interaction between human beings. Morals have a significant role in a wide range of. Hence, education with the paradigm of humanism is an educational process that empowers people to solve conflicts creatively and not through violence (Miftah, 2016).

## 2. Orientation of Islamic Multicultural Education for Ex-Terrorist

Efforts to unravel the tangled threads of terrorism must not only campaign by stating that terrorism is not related to religion. Maintaining the dichotomy reasoning that religion is always good and violence is only a deviation by a few people is only a form of excuse or making an alibi. Individuals must honestly admit that religion is also lived by humans who are often impure and more inclined to evil. It is where religion is often double-edged; one eye is good, while the other is evil, internalized and committed by its adherents (Anshari et al., 2016).

Therefore, in multicultural Islamic education for ex-terrorists, it is necessary to formulate a unique orientation that distinguishes it from the practice of multicultural Islamic education. The researchers then proposed three frameworks for the orientation of multicultural Islamic education developed by YLP in shifting the radical ideology of ex-terrorists to friendly Islam with the spirit of religious moderation.

The orientation referred to in this context is divided into three categories: the orientation to the transformation of ideology, self, and the transformation in socializing (Hamdi, 2013; Zulian & Bachtiar, 2020; Wahyudi, 2020). It is described in more detail in the following explanation:

### a. Transformation of Ideology Level

The radical religious reasoning of ex-terrorists who profess to be religious is based on their conclusions and understanding of the concepts of struggle embodied in Islamic teachings. By acknowledging the link between terrorism and religion, the clergy can at least enlighten and moderate their followers. Extreme and radical religious interpretations or understanding will only trap religious adherents at war with each other. The terms commonly used as the basis of the movement and their thinking are the conceptions of the teachings of jihad, *hijrah*, and the understanding of Muslim-infidel relations, which are concluded as eternal enemies. In addition, the concept of promises and threats (*al-wala wa al-bara*) as the holder of God's commandments is also often misunderstood to legitimize acts of terrorism in the name of Islam (Wahyudi, 2017).

Atho, as a former terrorist, admitted that Islamic ideology manifested destructively does not reflect the spirit of Islam itself. Thus, he thinks otherwise and that Islam must be presented with an ideology that can make all safe and calm as a manifestation of God's love. He asserted:

“Look, we enforce Islamic law by bombing here and there, but the results are ineffective. Islam has become cornered. From here, it means that our way of preaching is wrong. Islam is even labeled as hard preaching, not *rahmatan lil alamin*. From here, start changing the mindset of preaching with *rahmatan lil alamin* by not using bombs anymore.” (Interview with Atho, September 21, 2021)

The language used in the world of terrorism is also divided into two grammatical plays: on the one hand, it contains narratives of threats, intimidation, and nuances of violence, such as *jihad*, *amaliah fa'i*, infidel, *taghut*, martyrdom, *qital*, and the like. However, in other aspects, it has a profoundly religious tone and is full of submission, such as pleasing Allah and includes prayer simultaneously. There is even a motto that summarizes the two sides of the language understood as contradictory to the doctrine of *jihad* in the sense of suicide bombing: live a noble life or die a martyrdom (*isy kariman aw mut syahidan*). The grammar of the language play split in the world of terrorism indicates that terrorism has a split personality (Tolchah, 2015).

On the other hand, what is in the minds of terrorists, if realized carefully, is a paradox. While they have the slogan of a dignified life (*isy kariman*), they commit terror, murder, looting shops, and bank robberies, which are considered assets of infidels legitimately functioning in the way of Allah. For us, this kind of logic is irrational; how can someone commit a crime but, in his belief's mind, want to get the glory of life? Then, what is wrong?

The complexity of the terrorist mindset, which has an ideal perspective so that it must crash into reality, is what Ali Fauzi and his friends at YLP fully realize. In this case, YLP tries to condition the best possible environment that influences the mindset change of former terrorists to be more moderate and away from rigid religious beliefs. It denotes that YLP realizes the socio-cultural context because it influences the type of knowledge of the combatants. The books read and the role of ideologies are also seen as authoritative references, as one of the main factors in the socio-cultural context for the formulation of knowledge and conceptions of how to understand Islam so that terrorists claim to believe that *jihad* is the highest level in the pyramid of Muslim worship.

At least, through reading reference books, playing conflict videos, and indoctrinating simultaneously by radical ideologues, there is a transfer of knowledge that influences the formation of a constructive framework or basis for the realm of scientific insight of former terrorists. If the thoughts introduced by watching videos, statements of teachers (read: *ustadz*), and reference books are more dominant in justifiable

characters, the pattern of thought extracted from them will lose the spirit of criticism, only recognizing “inheritance” and the monotony of previous thoughts, even adoptive and *taqlidiah*.

Thus, it is very reasonable if Ali Fauzi likens terrorism to disease; terrorism in Indonesia is currently at the stage of complications. Hence, communities need a specialist, special handling, and particular remedies. In other words, the special remedy needed to change the radical-terrorist perspective is that they are also ex-terrorists.

Why is this important? Talking about terrorism differs from other inmates' problems, such as sexual harassment, drugs, and corruption. The problems faced by former terrorist convicts are related to the sacred ideology that must be defended. They are willing to die because they fight for religion. They also think they have done this because they want to uphold the banner of religion, the *syi'ar* of Islam, and fight for the sharia.

This Islamic ideology, which is full of shades of anger, by YLP is trying to be shifted into an Islamic ideology full of friendliness. Therefore, they use dialogical efforts to have a dialectic with former terrorist convicts. Ali Fauzi, for example, did not want to deconstruct the meaning of *jihad* in front of former terrorists with a *haul al-nash* understanding, permanently departing from the text, going to the text, and within the text framework, such as the narrative of *jihad*, martyrdom, and infidel believers.

Therefore, to avoid literal-textual understanding, religious text studies are oriented toward efforts to produce objectivity (*al-maudlu'iyah*) and continuity (*al-istimrariyyah*) (Al-Jabiri, 1992). YLP also dialogues various kinds of religious understanding with social reality (Hanafi, 1991). It is because Muslims must be aware that they do not live in an imaginary world, but they must be aware of living in an empirical world (Arif, 2008).

Thus, one ideological awareness firmly embedded is that Islam is a universal religion, a religion for all humanity, or a “worldwide” religion since its message is a blessing for the universe. Borrowing from Mulyadhi Kartanegara's categorization, Ali Fauzi and his foundation, YLP, are trying to articulate civil values that support establishing a cosmopolitan Islamic society as a universal religion of grace with the following pillars: inclusivism, humanism, tolerance, and democracy.

**b. Transformation of Self**

The self-concept in this discussion is interpreted as an understanding of former terrorists arising from interactions with YLP administrators and coaches who are fully aware. Self-concept is also a determining factor in the process of multicultural Islamic education taking place. In addition, self-concept is the view and feeling about selves. This self-perception can be psychological, social, and physical.

In this regard, the self-transformation of former terrorists YLP fostered was born from the learning experience. Hopefully, this experience will provide a fundamental change in former terrorists who were previously violent to become more moderate.

Ali Fauzi admitted that the YLP establishment was motivated by the fact that the threat of terrorism in Indonesia had not yet shown its final episode. According to him, the problem of radical ideology in Indonesia has not been entirely resolved. In this regard, he revealed:

"Finally, we agreed to form a foundation, and then we took the name of Lingkar Perdamaian (the circle of peace) as the name of our community; why did we take the name of Lingkar Perdamaian? It is because we used to be in the circle of conflict, and now, we want to change it. Now, we move from the circle of conflict to the circle of peace." (Interview with Ali Fauzi, September 25, 2021)

Ali Fauzi's riveting testimony must be underlined to mark their transformation "from a circle of conflict to a circle of peace."

In this study, the researchers also detailed the three hierarchical stages taken by YLP in carrying out self-transformation for former terrorists: changing mental attitudes, changing lifestyles, and focusing more on life goals.

Self-transformation, in turn, will form a self-concept built on several components, i.e., self-image, which includes perceptions or responses related to the past of former combatants and how they should look at the present and the future (Prawira, 2013). The next component is the ideal self, the former radical perpetrator's perception of how the individual should behave based on his standards and ideals (Regus, 2015). The formation of this ideal self is dynamic because other individuals around him can influence it. Self-ideal is also referred to as hope for oneself. Of course, in former terrorist actors, the ideal of life is that they want themselves, their families, and those around them to live more peacefully and harmoniously without violence and conflict. It is an expectation of the desired possibilities as a community (Yue et al., 2014).

Changing the focus and life goals of ex-convicts is also essential in the process of self-transformation towards a more substantial life, which emphasizes the harmonious aspect between humanity and divinity and the balance between happiness in this world and the hereafter (Faiqah & Pransiska, 2018). At the level of self, transformation can be described by a positive attitude towards differences and diversity. This transformation is one of the keys. Thus, one indication that can be said to be a successful form of multicultural Islamic education for former terrorists is when there has been a self-transformation, i.e., a change in orientation or life purpose to a more humane direction (Sunhaji, 2017).

**c. Transformation in Socializing**

As an Islamic education orientation for former terrorists, social transformation is carried out by YLP by encouraging them to socialize more with the community. It is as stated by Agus Martin, one of the former terrorists:

“Yes, it is through the recitation of the *Jalan Terang*, compensation, and frequent friendships with the apparatus. We cannot suddenly become friends with them. We can be friends because of YLP, which can bring each other closer. We can also socialize because Ustadz Ali often invites figures, so they can chat with each other and stay in touch.” (Interview with Agus Martin, September 20, 2021)

Here, an inclusive religious attitude is internalized by Ali Fauzi and his friends at YLP in groups that have been exposed to radical ideologies. It is important because, so far, they have an attitude that closes the space for dialogue in solving various problems; thus, violent methods were preferred to change the existing order according to their understanding.

One of the efforts to eliminate this rigid attitude is through multicultural education oriented toward social transformation. In other words, educational activities develop wisdom in understanding various things and awareness, attitudes, and behaviors to be more respectful of the diversity of religions, cultures, and communities. With this understanding, multicultural education can include religious and general education simultaneously with the nuances of "Indonesian" since it is responsive to the opportunities and challenges of religious, cultural, and community pluralism in Indonesia. Of course, multicultural education here requires not only “religious education” but also “moderation education.”

Moderation education means education that is not only limited to introducing ex-convicts to the teachings of their religion but also includes teaching them to

appreciate the humanitarian vision of the religious teachings. It is necessary to face the era of globalization so a narrow and paradoxical national view does not confine those religious people.

Therefore, multicultural education for ex-terrorists in Indonesia has at least two functions. The first function is to support the religious needs of ex-terrorists to strengthen their faith. In this case, religious education means the availability of mainstream religious information. The second function is to promote mutual respect between followers of different religions, inter-religious harmony, and national unity and integrity.

Thus, the orientation of multicultural Islamic education for former terrorists related to this social transformation confirms that Islam as a religion is genuinely revealed for humans, not humans for religion. Hence, one of the main parameters for assessing the merits of religious attitudes is to use standards and categories of humanity (*insaniyah*), not ideology and group sentiments. In a more practical context, the indication of humanity is, for example, in the form of sincerity to realize a democratic state life, uphold the values of justice, and knit harmony in living together in differences.

### **3. Multicultural Islamic Education Approach to Former Terrorists**

In this study, it was found that YLP used specific approaches tailored to the needs and characteristics of ex-terrorists. As described in the previous discussion, the main problems faced by terrorist groups are related to three things: mindset, societal stigma, and job problems. The YLP management then adopted these three basic things in nurturing and educating former terrorists to have a more moderate perspective, behavior, and religious experience.

This approach is vastly different from the four approaches introduced by James A. Bank: the contribution method, enrichment method, transformative method, and method of decision-making and social action in multicultural education, which also uses various approaches in its implementation (Bank, 1993). This difference makes sense because, in his paper, Bank operationalizes the approach in the context of the formal education curriculum (Ball, 2006).

In the case of YLP, the approaches used in training inmates of terrorists, ex-jihadists, and the families of terrorists can be classified as follows:



**a. Rational Approach**

The main problem of terrorist actors is their beliefs and ideologies towards a reality they think is true. This truth comes from the mindset that becomes the standard of truth for them. Therefore, the ideal world becomes a mirage to be achieved by radical groups in realizing a world order that is “more Islamic” and has a heavenly scent as they aspire.

Accordingly, this ideological problem is one of the approaches YLP uses to invite dialogue with rational reasoning about the standard of truth. The recognition of universal truth, which is the meeting point of religions, encourages the appreciation of the human values advocated by YLP. This global-universal value also crosses religions, cultures, and countries. Religious goodness is seen as the sincerity of someone who believes in God and is willing to do good to others. In the context of living in a pluralistic society and state, this type of religiosity that emphasizes a humanitarian orientation gets its appreciation and emphasis for YLP.

Through the “*Jalan Terang*” study initiated by the YLP, many invited figures from the TNI, Polri, BNPT, bomb victims, and Ali Fauzi himself to provide cognitive stimulus through the intake of the latest information about how to be a good Muslim. Ali Fauzi, on many occasions, has emphasized the importance of tolerance and maintaining the integrity of the nation and state against former terrorist actors (Observation in YLP official).

For Ali Fauzi and his companions at YLP, this ideological problem does not base its scientific activities solely on cognition and skill and others. However, everything is done based on their intentions and intrinsic motivation from the most profound conscience to fulfill God's rules. Therefore, science and conscience are unity and totality, which leads to the *rabbani* soul. For example, when taking a rational approach to the dangers of committing acts of treason through terrorism, YLP tries to develop and explore theoretical and practical concepts, which do not only stop at “the fact” but also “the fact behind the fact,” which they do, for example by cooperating with terrorist families and terrorists. Also, bombing victims sit down with former terrorists. This principle is what the researchers call the divine-rational approach (*aqliyah-tauhidiah*), which connotes not separating science from religious and moral values. Here, science and ethics are interwoven in one coherent, dialectical, and integral breath (Ma'rifah, 2012).

Through this approach, ex-terrorists will grow into people who love peace, can live in harmony, are stable and virtuous, fully believe in God's infinite mercy and His unparalleled justice, and live in harmony with the broader community. Moreover, a rational approach is essential in multicultural Islamic education, considering that in living together, truth often requires mutual understanding, so communication and dialogue are fundamental elements. On this basis, YLP often conducts what researchers call "communicative pedagogy" and "dialogic pedagogy" for perpetrators and former terrorists.

This rational approach, which requires communication and a dialogical process, presupposes that the subject is seen only to exist jointly with other subjects in the praxis of building a more moderate ideology. Learning activities here become meaningful when there is a dialogue between subjects and there is participation in it. Therefore, a rational approach must be applied to create a dialogue about multicultural Islamic education. This application implies that, in an outward orientation, a rational approach demands that the world of education, especially Islamic education, is willing to carry out a dialogue process with tradition and socio-cultural realities (social conditions and expectations) to understand the necessity of diversity and its significance in life. Meanwhile, in the inward orientation, the rational approach demands that the principles of understanding and empathy underlie all Islamic education activities (Sadler, 1989).

Consequently, Islamic religious education for former terrorists must have its distinctive style and character. It must be dynamic and dialectical, so it is not justified if religious education only focuses on conservatively preserving tradition and neglects to respond constructively to environmental demands on the Indonesian and global plains. Not only that, multicultural Islamic education for ex-terrorists also has a significant role in fostering solidarity. Not only with fellow Muslims but also in growing buds of harmony based on nationality between elements of society so that the atmosphere of harmony and togetherness becomes a reality even though they have lived their lives as terrorists.

Therefore, it is not surprising that YLP seeks to understand and think about what the material being taught means to itself and what the material means to its students. As such, the unique feature of the deradicalization process has a strong character that the companions and coaches of former terrorists are also former terrorists; it is quite effective considering that the minds of terrorist actors tend to be more understandable to those involved in acts of terror.

One of the meanings inserted in the religious reasoning of former terrorists is related to the development of how to live and work together with others. Thus, YLP is more reflective in Islamic education, emphasizing synthesis, dialogue, and caring. Synthesis means that teachers or *ustadz* at YLP always combine learning materials with existing social realities, especially the backgrounds of former terrorists. The meaningful dialogue developed by teachers at this foundation also emphasizes developing the ability of ex-terrorists to be good listeners and agile in reasonably giving religious arguments. Meanwhile, caring means that teachers at YLP are attentive, responsive to needs, and care about the fate of terrorists while in prison, especially when they leave prison.

Further, the rational approach in multicultural Islamic education for former terrorists is to dialogue about religious education by avoiding educational activities and reasoning patterns which Mahmud Arif termed domestication (Arif, 2008). Domestication is a logical flow in understanding Islam, which is dogmatic and rigid and closes the door to criticism. This mode of reasoning seeks to "tame" creativity, courage to ask questions, and criticality so that scientific dialectical spaces cannot be obtained and knowledge cannot develop. In Islamic education activities for former terrorists, YLP tries to open itself to dialectics. Also, it even rejects religious messages as dogmas that do not need to be questioned and reviewed—introducing religious moderation to former terrorists, of course, by making efforts that not only convey religious knowledge through frightening threats related to heresy, sin, and hell.

Educational activities that lead to domestication are closely related to ex-convicts' curriculum (material content). With such characteristics, Islamic education will easily be expected to enlighten and empower students (read: former terrorists) or potentially inspire followers of the Islamic religion to practice and express this teaching in a more intelligent and responsible direction.

Wrong educational activities in internalizing religious teachings to ex-terrorists will foster symptoms of religious superficialities, such as narrow fanaticism and religious radicalism, negating the meaning of dialogue to weave pluralism.

#### **b. Psychosocial Approach**

In the psychosocial approach, knowledge becomes more valuable if there is a contextualization process. It means making it more factual and having a concrete contribution socially. In this case, YLP makes efforts to recognize the existence of terrorists as human beings with the right to change. As such, terrorists still in prison or released have the right to be respected as human beings with human rights.

The psychosocial approach taken by YLP is realized by supporting the families of terrorists, visiting them in prison as a form of empathy, and inviting the children of terrorist perpetrators to get a proper education. The way that it touches on the psychological aspect has a significant impact on the radical ideological changes of the terrorists (Interview with Faqih Luqman, December 23, 2021).

It is considered that the radicalization process is a model emphasizing its social exclusion aspect. According to this model, radicalization occurs because some people experience social exclusion; individuals are isolated or disconnected from the community system, are not well recognized by society, experience dis-socialization, and ultimately lose opportunities and individual rights. This feeling of alienation, for YLP, is very dangerous as it can potentially lead to terrorist networks again (Zulian & Bachtiar, 2020).

This psychosocial approach, referring to Will Kymlicka's opinion, is used by YLP to provide recognition, respect, and justice to minority groups (read: terrorists/ex-terrorists), both regarding their rights as the community members, religious adherents, citizens, and universally human (Kymlicka, 1996).

This approach is also essential in implementing multicultural education, which James Banks declared as education for people of color. This understanding is in line with the understanding put forward by Sleeter, who commented that the articulation and practice of multicultural education is the antithesis of repressive and oppressive behavior or actions (Lei, 1965).

Thus, what YLP has done is also an important note in the deradicalization process in Indonesia. The efforts to prevent and eradicate terrorism in this country must not be carried out by ignoring human values and rights. Not infrequently, violent acts to deal with terrorism actually cause new problems, giving birth to endless grudges for the perpetrators and sympathizers of radical groups. Several informants the researchers met admitted that they hated the government and the police precisely because of their often repressive and inhumane actions against terrorist survivors.

### **c. Life Skills Approach**

Radicalism and violence in the name of religion, the focus of Islamic education at YLP, cannot be attributed to religious ideology alone. From the perspective of social sciences, the factor of religious belief even tends to contribute only a few percent to the emergence and development of radicalism and violence in the name of religion. Apart

from ideological factors, many other factors cause the emergence of radicalism, terrorism, and jihadism, such as social dislocation and sociological deprivation, repression, and victims of political marginalization, economic inequality, and other structural inequality factors (Sinagatullin, 2003).

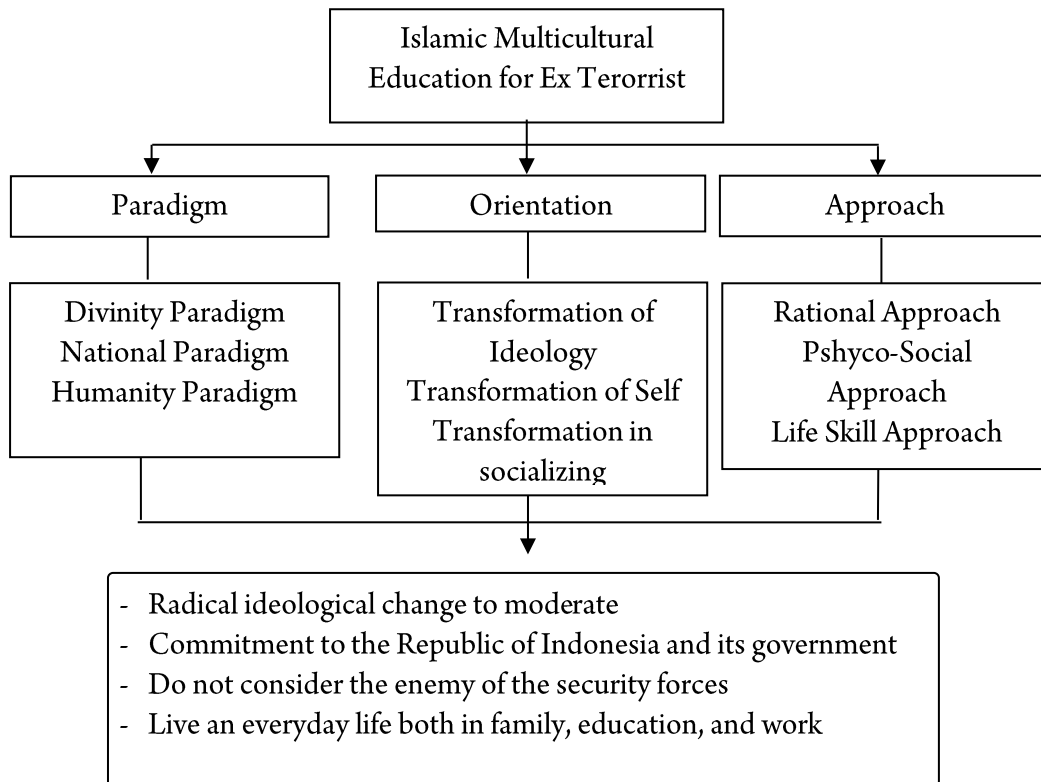
Indeed, becoming radical requires an ideological belief system firmly entrenched in a Muslim's mind. However, the belief system alone does not necessarily make people radical, cruel, and have the heart to drain the blood of others who disagree with them. Empirical facts indicate that the sociological exposure of radical groups to the reality of life considered unfair is the main trigger in giving birth to the ideology and movement of radicalism and terrorism. Many former terrorists whom YLP trained admitted that their radical attitude rose precisely because of feelings of oppression and injustice in witnessing the death sentence of their colleague: Imam Samudra cs.

Through the guidance of an ideologue, the radicalism doctrine is carried out by showing a series of "sufferings" among Muslims in various parts of the world, such as in Palestine, China, Bosnia, and others, subjected to oppression by Western countries. It means that ideology and religious understanding are not the only factors causing radicalism and terrorism to emerge. When disclosed in detail, structural factors, such as oppression, power struggles and politics, and social injustice, contribute more to the emergence of radicalism and terrorism.

Admittedly or not, the more knowledgeable (*alim*) in the religious sciences, the more polite, friendly, and affectionate one will be. The ideological process and the thickening of radicalism and terrorism occur when a person only knows religious knowledge from the outer skin or surface. When he goes more profound, the knowledge of religion will make it easier for someone to understand the difference; alias will not be absolutely the truth believed. From here, the existence of YLP becomes a definite mirage. They are here to provide various provisions to deflect radical ideologies through various forms of empowerment for former convicts, with the excuse that feelings of inferiority, feeling of being oppressed, and others disappear.

The provision of life skills provided by YLP is also a brilliant idea. YLP conducts this effort by providing job training to former terrorists, sewing, working as factory workers, giving business capital, and others (YLP work program documentation). The empowerment of former terrorists is truly relevant since it is very relevant to one of the goals of deradicalization: the ability to socialize again and contribute positively to the broader community. In more detail, empowerment can lead ex-terrorists to:

1. Help develop the communication and interpersonal skills they need for dialogue, dealing with disputes, and learning different approaches
2. Help develop critical thinking to investigate claims, verify rumors, and question the legitimacy and appeal of extremist beliefs
3. Help develop resilience to counter extremist narratives and acquire the social-emotional skills they need to overcome their doubts and engage constructively in society without resorting to violence
4. Develop a critical attitude toward information and help students to engage in constructive, peaceful collective action



Schematic: Multicultural Islamic education model for ex-terrorists

Looking at the discourse on the counter-radicalism process above, it can be understood that two interrelated orientations exist: ideological and social changes. Both must go hand in hand towards religious moderation, at least reducing acts of violence in the name of religion. On the other hand, among the crucial aspects causing the birth of radicalism and terrorism is the perspective or understanding of religion. Terrorism in various escalations and patterns of cases that occur plurally shows that it is carried out

by people who, in their appearance, show “religious” accessories. Thus, people must not close their eyes that the source of extremism, terrorism, and radicalism is a minimal level of understanding of religious literacy. Through this fact, it is very relevant to practice multicultural Islamic education with an orientation of religious learning and a mutually reinforcing nationalism.

### C. Conclusion

This research is motivated by the critical fact that community entities also have an essential role in deradicalization. Thus, it is crucial to conceptualize the discourse of multicultural Islamic education oriented toward ex-terrorists. Through this paper, the researchers want to argue that there is a need for an idea about multicultural Islamic education that specifically educates ex-terrorists. The formulation is that the community can use a multicultural Islamic education paradigm that integrates integrally between aspects of divinity (*rabbaniyah*), humanity (*insaniyah*), and nationality (*wathaniyah*) simultaneously. In addition, as an ontological basis, the above paradigm is oriented to simultaneously form self-transformation, ideological transformation, and social transformation as parameters for ex-terrorist ideological change. This output can be done, among others, by applying rational, psychosocial, and life skills approach.

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