

# Reducing Radicalism Transformation: Reviewing the Role of Government through the Programs of Deradicalization

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## Abstract

Initiatives to promote democracy in Indonesia continue to face several difficulties and hurdles. One of the major concerns is the emergence of radical ideas arising and hiding under the guise of democracy. Due to globalization, radicalism has evolved rapidly and taken on new forms. Considerable efforts are needed to maintain democratization in Indonesia, according to Pancasila, the foundational philosophical theory. This qualitative research uses descriptive analysis and data-gathering methods based on a review of current literature, such as news, journal articles, and books. The findings show that radical ideology in Indonesia has evolved and penetrated government bodies and people's social lives. Terrorist-affiliated radical organizations, many of which have been disbanded, morphed into different forms to adapt to the community's social lives. The transformation of radicalism in Indonesia necessitates a concerted effort on the part of the government as a state entity capable of deradicalizing education and preventing radical ideology.

Upaya untuk memajukan demokrasi di Indonesia terus menghadapi beberapa kesulitan dan rintangan. Salah satu kekhawatiran utama adalah munculnya ide-ide radikal yang muncul dan bersembunyi di balik kedok demokrasi. Akibat globalisasi, radikalisme telah berkembang dengan cepat dan mengambil bentuk-bentuk baru. Diperlukan upaya yang cukup besar untuk mempertahankan demokratisasi di Indonesia, sesuai dengan Pancasila, teori filosofis yang menjadi dasar negara. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan analisis deskriptif dan metode pengumpulan data berdasarkan tinjauan literatur terkini, seperti berita, artikel jurnal, dan buku. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ideologi radikal di Indonesia telah berevolusi dan merasuk ke dalam lembaga-lembaga pemerintah dan kehidupan sosial masyarakat. Organisasi radikal yang berafiliasi dengan teroris, yang sebagian besar telah dibubarkan, bertransformasi ke dalam berbagai bentuk untuk beradaptasi dengan kehidupan sosial masyarakat. Transformasi radikalisme di Indonesia membutuhkan upaya bersama dari pemerintah sebagai entitas negara yang mampu melakukan pendidikan deradikalisasi dan pencegahan ideologi radikal.

**Keywords:** deradicalization; radicalism; role of government; terrorism; transformation

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## Introduction

Radicalism is one of the most serious issues in Pancasila's democratic life in Indonesia. It has become a latent problem that is challenging to eliminate (Chapman 2011). Such a doctrinal, rigid, and closed perception denies diversity and only considers oneself and similar groups, which many believe was almost improbable under Soeharto's authoritarian era. However, as democracy and globalization advance, radical thoughts have become more pervasive, infiltrating governmental institutions and the lives of Indonesians and exposing them to radical ideologies (Barton, Yilmaz, and Morieson 2021).

The influence of radicalism has significantly impeded the construction of a peaceful and balanced social life, particularly by the state. The intensive waves of infiltration into Indonesian society's bodies and communities have resulted in radical ideology changes in Indonesia (Putra 2019). Freedom of expression and thought as part of the democratic principles can be both a guard against radicalism and a 'mask' to perpetuate it. In Indonesia, democracy is often viewed as the freedom to express one's thoughts and opinions. Nonetheless, this freedom serves as a mask for certain groups to put forward their vested interest and agendas under the guise of democratic principles (Woodward 2008). Some even contend that divergent opinions within individuals or groups, including opinions about sensitive issues that may incite horizontal conflicts like those related to belief, are not inherently problematic.

The wave of democracy in Indonesia and the collapse of the Suharto regime opened up a broader political arena in Indonesia (Fukuoka 2012). The 'new' freedom has prompted

expressions of religious and political ideology like never before. Every ideology is free to move, stand, and seek followers (Putra 2019). Such euphoria has allowed international Islamic movements to rise in Indonesia, influencing the local Islamic movements and turning them from friendly and inclusive to gradually hardline and militant (Mandaville and Hamid 2018). It has become a manifestation of radicalism, especially escalated by the violent incidents perpetuated by several social organizations. Such incidents were mostly motivated by Muslims' radical attitudes and tendency to impose their teachings and understandings on other parties (Mashuri et al. 2022). Radicalism has taken quite a significant shift, with ideological issues now intertwined with identity issues. Under this condition, Indonesia is experiencing the rise of the Islamist movement with a less friendly, sensitive, and tolerant face (Aji, Mauradiya, and Kurniawan 2021).

With radicalism gradually becoming an acceptable mindset, sentiments of intolerance proliferate, which might lead to acts of terrorism (Urla and Helepololei 2014). The government's initiatives and deradicalization efforts have been massive, but radicalism persists. For example, even though the Indonesian government has banned some extremist organizations, such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). Many HTI members still actively perpetuate their ideology in society. It demonstrates that radical ideology has morphed into an alternative form that may be adopted and accepted by the state and society (Widhiarto 2022).

Many studies have examined the state's role in preventing and managing radicalism. For example, Dalgaard-Nielsen (2010) has shown that radicalization is not a simple process involving many social, economic, psychological,

and ideological factors. There is no single profile of radicalism, as it can affect individuals from all walks of life and backgrounds (Borum 2011). This research has suggested that individuals who feel marginalized from mainstream society tend to be more vulnerable to radicalization.

Another research concluded that globalization, including the internet and social media, can play a role in radicalization. As such, the government needs to assume the controller role to minimize radicalization through, for instance, social media (Supriadi, Ajib, and Sugiarso 2020). The internet and social media have facilitated the radicals to connect and spread their message. Some research has suggested that online propaganda and radicalization can be effective (Bennett and Livingston 2018). Therefore, prevention and intervention strategies are needed to address radicalization (Thornton and Bouhana 2019), especially through online media. These strategies may include education and outreach programs, community engagement initiatives, and addressing social and economic inequalities. Further research is needed, for example, to understand better the factors contributing to radicalization and the most effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Different studies have revealed that extremism is a latent issue in Indonesia (Kopong 2021). It is not only a problem for social harmony and solidarity but a societal issue that can cause various horizontal conflicts in society. Intolerant behaviors result in certain sentiments, which can lead to the rise of extreme movements and terrorist acts (Rohmad 2021). Many of the previously mentioned studies emphasize extremism 'piggybacks' social media's widespread use and globalization for its propaganda. This image depicts how radicalism has evolved and morphed in

response to society's changing social conditions (Darraz 2013).

Considering the studies above, this study presents a distinctive perspective on how the state plays a role in limiting the emergence and spread of radicalism. Data shows that radicalism has transformed into an alternative form and infiltrated various elements of Indonesian society and state institutions. Therefore, the government must be more assertive as a regulator to prevent the spread of these radical views.

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The data related to radicalization was collected from literature based on news, journal article, and books. Data analysis proceeds from collecting, selecting, and describing (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014). By this technique, data on radicalism may depict deradicalization's variabilities and rising process.

Implementing policy formulation based on the proposed framework, considering Indonesia's policy on prevention and counter-terrorism, is still ineffective. The revision of the 2003 Terrorism Law into the 2018 Terrorism Law, which focuses on deradicalization, can be considered a substantial degradation from the initial attempt to prevent the development of radicalism and terrorist acts. The dissolution of several organizations identified as radical, such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and Front Pembela Islam (FPI), has not decreased radicalism and terrorist acts, such as the Surabaya and Sidoarjo bombings in 2018 and the Astana Anyar Bandung bombings in 2022 (Hapsari, Muzayana, and Iqbal 2023).

This condition indicates that the underlying issues causing radical thoughts and acts are still increasing in Indonesia. According to a previous

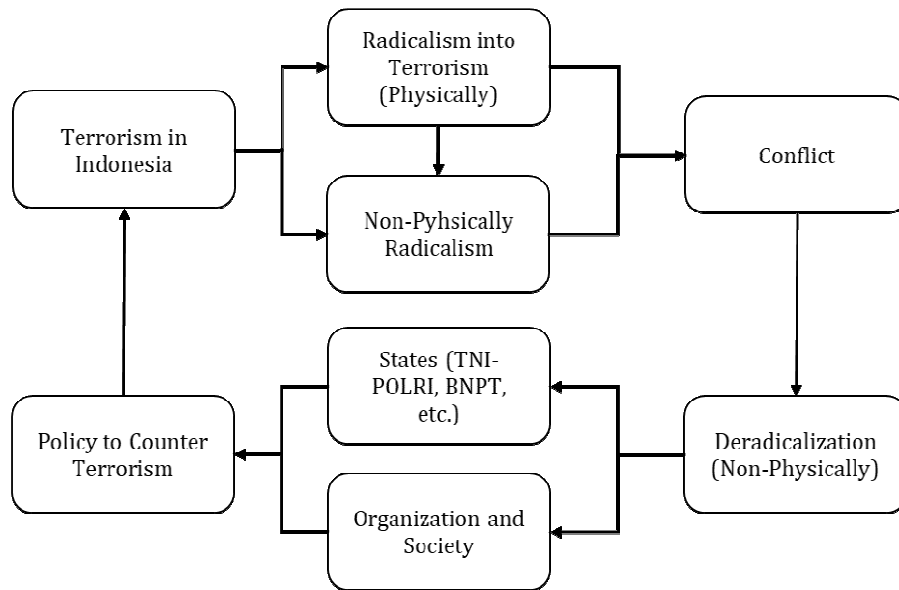
study by Hergianasari and Netanyahu (2021), after many radical organizations in Indonesia were disbanded, their movements changed and transformed into new ideas and forms, as depicted in Figure 1. These conditions make it harder for the Indonesian government to eradicate extremist activities. These extreme beliefs have been altered and adapted into new acceptable forms in Indonesian society.

Conflicts and terrorist acts continue to occur in Indonesia. This study proposes a concept that could assist the deradicalization process and inform the relevant policymaking. It can be achieved by, among other things, freeing state institutions from radicalism and increasing the enforcement of counter-radicalism policies. The

study also proposes strengthening the policy narrative through (religious) educational institutions. The final concept proposed in this study is a policy suggestion for deradicalization in response to the transformation of radicalism in Indonesia.

However, despite various efforts, there remains uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of the government's deradicalization strategies in curbing the spread of radical ideologies in society. The research problem emerging from this phenomenon is how radicalism in Indonesia has adapted to new socio-political environments and how the government's role can be optimized to address these challenges effectively.

Figure 1  
Research Framework



Source: Primary data

### **Transformative Change of Radical Movement in Indonesia**

The study considers how this issue emerged and became a latent problem in comprehending the background of radicalism. Radicalism causes acts of terror, posing a threat to plural life and state security (Kementerian Pertahanan RI 2016a).

The definitions of radicalism vary, but the definition of terrorism often includes the same terms, such as 'spread of terror' and 'acts of violence' carried out by (non-state) actors for political, religious, and ideological purposes to put forward the group's agenda of change (Institute for Economic & Peace 2024).

After the fall of the Suharto regime or the New Order, the movement and development of radicalism accelerated (Hergianasari and Netanyahu 2021). The transformation of an authoritarian regime that limited freedom of expression into a democratic era with freedom of expression allows the previously suppressed flows of ideas. A new trend of understanding an idea soared, including radicalism. It creates an arena for religious-based radicalism and movements, both covert and overt, such as the Jihad Army, Jundullah Army, the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT), and other groups officially identified by the National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) (Wardah 2021). Before the Reformation era, radical groups or any groups with a radical tendency would be crushed by the government's political and ideological repression. President Habibie, President Soeharto's successor, introduced political openness and gave community groups an impetus to express their political aspirations and interests freely (Hilmy 2015).

Examples of radicalism that have developed and become acts of terrorism in Indonesia include the Bali I bombing (2002), the JW Marriot bombing in 2003, the Bali II bombing in 2005, the Ritz Carlton bombing in 2009, the Cirebon bombing in 2011, the Sarinah bombing in 2016, the Solo bombing in 2016, the Kampung Melayu bombing in 2017, the Surabaya and Sidoarjo bombings 2018 (CNN Indonesia 2021a), the Astana Anyar Bandung bombing 2022 (Satria 2022).

Nonetheless, radical ideas do not always lead to acts of terrorism. Other forms of intolerance may emerge, such as the forced closure of entertainment venues, facility destruction, arson, and other extreme forms. FPI, led by Rizieq Shihab, is one of the radical groups that frequently resort to violence. These community organizations often clash with other groups that stand against Islamic law (Hilmy 2015).

By opposing state institutions, Pancasila, and the 1945 Constitution, radical movements seek to quickly, comprehensively, and fundamentally change society, nation, and state. These movements have grown due to several facts in Indonesia's plurality (Salamuddin 2015). When this condition develops and is not mitigated, it can lead to an excessive fanatical mindset toward oneself or one's group, to the stage where one wants to force other people or groups with a different viewpoint to behave in the same way understood by that group.

Historically, radicalism has long been ingrained in Indonesian society. Since independence in 1945, radicalism-related incidents such as Madiun/PKI 1948, DI/TII 1949, G 30S/PKI 1965, and several internal conflicts occurred during the Old Order regime (Hilmy 2015). The situation changed when the

Soeharto Regime took office following the March Eleventh Order (*Supersemar*) issuance. Soeharto's authoritarian leadership, which had been in effect since then, lasted over 30 years. During the Soeharto era, movements were considered a 'danger' to national integrity, and Soeharto's position was not allowed to develop. Finally, due to socio-political repression, Islamic activists, pro-democracy activists, and movements that could 'endanger' national sovereignty (Soeharto) could not develop (Umar 2010).

Following the Reformation Era, particularly during the reigns of Megawati Soekarnoputri and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the 'democratic faucet' was gradually opened more broadly, allowing for the development of Islamic activists and pro-democracy activists who previously had no space to develop under Soeharto. The repression resulted in the entry of radical transnational ideology, which contradicted Pancasila. The sharp rise in such ideology was the foundation of radicalism in Indonesia. Initially, local political discontent, marginalization, and economic disillusionment were the primary motivators for religious radicalism or radical religious movements (Asrori 2017).

However, after the formation of the movement, although religion was not a trigger at first, it has instead become a very important legitimacy and adhesive factor for radical Islamic movements. This radical movement began in Indonesia as a way to respond to communism. Aside from that, their opposition to Pancasila as the sole political principle has become the movement's target. For religious-based radicals, Indonesia's Pancasila democracy is unacceptable and must be changed, and to achieve this, Pancasila has to be shifted to

Shari'a as a solution for the state's life (Wahid Foundation 2018).

In common parlance, religious-based radicalism movements can be classified into three types. The first is a violent group supported by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al-Qaeda. This group often spreads terror and perpetuates violence to achieve its goal of gaining attention. The second group is supported by Hizbut Tahrir and Ikhwanul Muslimin, whose movement seeks to mobilize the masses to enter the government and change the political order. The third type is a group that attempts to preserve social life to become more 'conservative' in Islam. Wahhabis and Salafis are patrons of this third group. This group aims to change the understanding or teaching to become 'purer' in Islam or to be a true Muslim, starting from the way of dress and other social forms (Kholiludin 2023).

All these transnational ideologies can eventually develop and enter Indonesia in some form in the current democratic era. Social media has also become a factor in the proliferation of such ideologies. The coordinating minister for Politics, Law, and Security (Menko Polhukam) and the Indonesian Nahdlatul Ulama Executive (Indonesia's largest religious organization), Mahfud MD stated that when ideologies such as Wahhabism developed through the entrance of democracy, radicalism is likely to follow suit (CNN Indonesia 2022). In line with this, other religious organizations such as Hizbut Tahrir and FPI were disbanded in 2017 (CNN Indonesia 2020) due to their potential threats to state stability, the rise of terrorism in Indonesia, and the threat to Pancasila that they eagerly want to substitute with the ideology of their liking (Marfiando 2020).

The government's efforts to combat terrorism and the development of radical transnational ideology in the post-reform era have existed since the Bali bombing I (2002), as enacted by Law No. 15 of 2003 on Criminal Acts of Terrorism (Karolina 2020). Seeing the phenomenon of radical organizations and the increasingly massive spread of radical ideology, the government established the BNPT in 2010 via Presidential Regulation (Perpres) No. 46. The BNPT was established as a new chapter to combat terrorism using a "soft approach" (BNPT RI n.d.). As a form of revision to Law No. 15 of 2003, the government then passed Law No. 5 of 2018, which focuses on the goal of preventing terrorism through several forms such as 1) national preparedness, 2) counter-radicalization, and 3) deradicalization (Karolina 2020).

Even though the government's efforts to prevent the spread of radical beliefs and terrorist acts have taken on a new form through 'hard' and 'soft' approaches however, actions of terrorism such as the Surabaya and Sidoarjo bombings in 2018, the Astana Anyar Bandung bombing in 2022, the action of women carrying weapons at the State Palace of the Republic of Indonesia in 2022, and the Sukoharjo bombing in 2022, are proof that radicalism remains intact in Indonesia (Arjanto 2022). This spread of radicalism can be compared to the spread of a 'virus,' quick and difficult to eradicate once it has become a pandemic.

The government has committed to eliminating terrorism and radical ideas locally and globally. Then, the fundamental question is whether the government's methods of preventing and defeating terrorism have been effective. The answers will be subjective but based on several facts and conditions that occurred following the passage of Law No. 5 of

2018, as well as the multi-sectoral synergies, such as the BNPT, the state intelligence movement, the Indonesian Armed Forces and the Indonesian National Police (TNI-POLRI), and international cooperation that still allows for the development of religious radicalism. The series of terrorist acts during the second administration of Joko Widodo indicates that radicalism in Indonesia is still very much alive (Kementerian Pertahanan RI 2016b).

Kholiludin said that the concept of radicalism has evolved and taken on new forms, especially in Indonesia. His analogy is the clothing in different seasons. When the rainy season arrives, appropriate clothing is 'warm clothing,' as opposed to 'light clothing' for the dry season. This condition implies that even when radicalism is contained and prevented through various multi-sectoral policies, it can still find its way to enter and influence people's lives (Kholiludin 2023). For example, when government policies were launched and aimed at eliminating religious-based radical groups such as HTI and FPI, they transformed into new 'entities' that sustain the spirit of radicalism in Indonesia (Hergianasari and Netanyahu 2021).

The new forms continue to develop through intellectual forums, religious-based businesses, student organizations, Halawa (discussions on religious affairs), and recitations so that they can continue to exert influence (Hergianasari and Netanyahu 2021).

The spirit of radicalism has even infiltrated and entered the joints of government, universities, and intellectuals (Humas Prov. Jateng 2018). Abdullah Darraz, claimed that radical groups, including the Army and Police, infiltrated and spread ideology to the state civil apparatus (ASN) covertly. The movement was taught through the religious recitation forum. In

such a forum, a radical and anti-Pancasila ideology was introduced. The pattern is not institutional but moves through elements and activities outside the institution (CNN Indonesia 2021b).

Based on this description, Indonesia is still in crisis, with radicalism transforming and evolving into new forms, which may continue to evolve until it reaches its final form. These new forms move within the general public and state agencies, which should be free of radical ideas and support upholding Pancasila values. Therefore, government policies to suppress or eradicate the new forms of radicalism should be further studied. This situation will worsen if the government does not respond quickly and accurately by launching more appropriate policies and actions.

### **Government Role in Addressing the Radical Movement**

The government plays a crucial dual role in combating radicalism through strengthening institutional participation and reinforcing religious studies (Arifin 2016). By enhancing institutional involvement, authorities can foster collaboration between various sectors, ensuring a unified approach to prevent radical ideologies from taking root. Simultaneously, promoting religious studies creates an informed society that understands the core values of peace and tolerance within religious teachings, effectively countering misinterpretations that fuel radicalism (Pelupessy-Wowor 2016).

#### **Strengthening Institutional Participation to Support Deradicalization**

There are several ways the Indonesian government can strengthen its role in preventing radicalism through the BNPT

(National Counter Terrorism Agency) institution and the acceptance of CPNS (Civil Service Candidate Selection). Some potential strategies are as follows: Increase funding and resources for BNPT. One way to strengthen the role of the Indonesian government in preventing radicalism is to increase funding and resources for BNPT (BNPT RI 2022; Sumpter 2017). It can include increasing personnel, training and educating staff, and investing in technology and infrastructure to support counter terrorism efforts. The next step is to improve coordination and collaboration between government agencies. The government can also promote greater coordination and cooperation between counter terrorism agencies (Kurnia, Halkis, and Yacobbus 2023). Moreover, Wildan stated that the involvement of ex-terrorists in deradicalization programs will obtain a straightforward overview of the program structure and its efficacy (Wildan 2022). It can include sharing intelligence and information, establishing joint task forces, and improving communication channels.

Next, the government can strengthen community outreach and engagement. It can involve working with community leaders and organizations to promote understanding and tolerance, providing education and training on counter-terrorism and radicalization, and engaging with vulnerable populations to address their concerns (OSCE 2024). Then, the government can enhance the CPNS selection criteria. It can include prioritizing candidates with experience or training in counter-terrorism or community outreach and those committed to promoting diversity and tolerance.

Next, the government can establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the effectiveness of its counter-terrorism efforts



(Lum, Kennedy, and Sherley 2006). It can involve establishing key performance indicators and conducting regular assessments to identify areas for improvement. Overall, strengthening the Indonesian government's role in preventing radicalism through BNPT and reviewing the CPNS selection criteria will require a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and community leaders (Muhammad and Hiariej 2021).

The government can also establish a legal framework that criminalizes terrorism and related offenses, such as financing terrorism and recruitment for terrorism (Bantekas 2003). The Terrorism Law No. 15/2003 and the Anti-Terrorism Law No. 5/2018 provide the legal basis for the government to take action against individuals and groups involved in terrorism (Karolina 2020).

The government has established BNPT as the country's primary agency responsible for counter-terrorism (Sadri 2023). BNPT is tasked with coordinating and implementing counter-terrorism policies and programs at the national level and providing technical assistance to regional and local authorities (Ulyana et al. 2023). In addition, the government has also adopted a community-based approach to counter-terrorism, which involves working with local communities and religious leaders to prevent radicalization and extremism. This approach aims to promote a more inclusive and tolerant society and address radicalization's root causes (Spalek and Weeks 2017).

The government has also implemented a rehabilitation and reintegration program for individuals involved in terrorism or extremism. The program provides counseling, education, and vocational training to help individuals reintegrate into society (McBride et al. 2022).

The government has also established intelligence-sharing mechanisms with other countries in the region to improve the effectiveness of counter-terrorism efforts. These mechanisms involve sharing intelligence and information on terrorist activities and networks and cooperating on investigations and prosecutions (Cross 2023).

In brief, the Indonesian government has implemented a multi-faceted approach to suppressing radicalism, including legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms, community-based approaches, rehabilitation and reintegration, and international cooperation (Naval Postgraduate School 2014). These policies aim to prevent and respond to terrorism and extremism while promoting a more inclusive and tolerant society.

### **Strengthening Religious Studies to Support Deradicalization**

The BNPT emphasized that the characteristics of transnational radicalism include 1) violating the constitution and ideology, 2) being intolerant, 3) violating the law, 4) using religious narratives, and 5) using intolerant narratives (Maudisha 2022). Through multi-sector collaboration, some of these criteria have become government guidelines for identifying the movement and spread of radicalism in Indonesia. The difficulty arises when the identification is clear and firm, but the concept of radicalism is still developing and transforming into new forms to survive.

Bassam Tibi attempts to explain the religious differences between Islam and Islamism in his book "Islamism and Islam." Islamism attempts to describe religious characteristics, but not in terms of 'faith,' which is then characterized by several actions, such as: 1) Attempts to change

the type of government, as practiced by the HT group, 2) Jihadism, which is identified as an act of violence, 3) Shari'atization or efforts to change the law into Islamic law, and other forms that are unrelated to 'faith,' but more related to geopolitics (Tibi 2012).

Patterns of identification like the above are still widely used in Indonesia today. With radical movements developing and transforming in Indonesia, the ideas of radicalism with the end product of acts of terrorism have shifted. It has become 'underground' religious movements (Hergianasari and Netanyahu 2021). These include recitations and other religious activities that have served as an initial entry point for infiltration (CNN Indonesia 2021b).

Radical groups typically use religious-based approaches to intellectual discussions, such as recitations and religious discussions, and several 'trick questions,' such as, "*Do you prefer Pancasila as the basis of the state, or the al-Quran as a guideline?*" "*Pancasila is man-made and pseudo in nature,*" the narrative continued. This type of narrative makes people guilty for choosing something other than the al-Qur'an, narrated as being created by God instead of Pancasila, which humans create. Another similar narrative is an invitation to develop the concept of 'NKRI with sharia ideas' or, in Bahasa Indonesia, '*NKRI Syariah Harga Mati*,' also '*Pancasila Sharia*' as an alternative when radicalism is rejected (by the government). In these ways, radicalism can enter through a more 'appropriate' form that society can 'accept' (Kholiludin 2023).

Quintan WiktoroWicz introduced several stages of radicalization in 2005, known as the "WiktoroWicz's Model." The first stage starts with an 'exogenous phase,' or a situation of political, economic, and social discontentment. The next stage is 'cognitive opening,' or the search for a new 'light of faith,' considered a

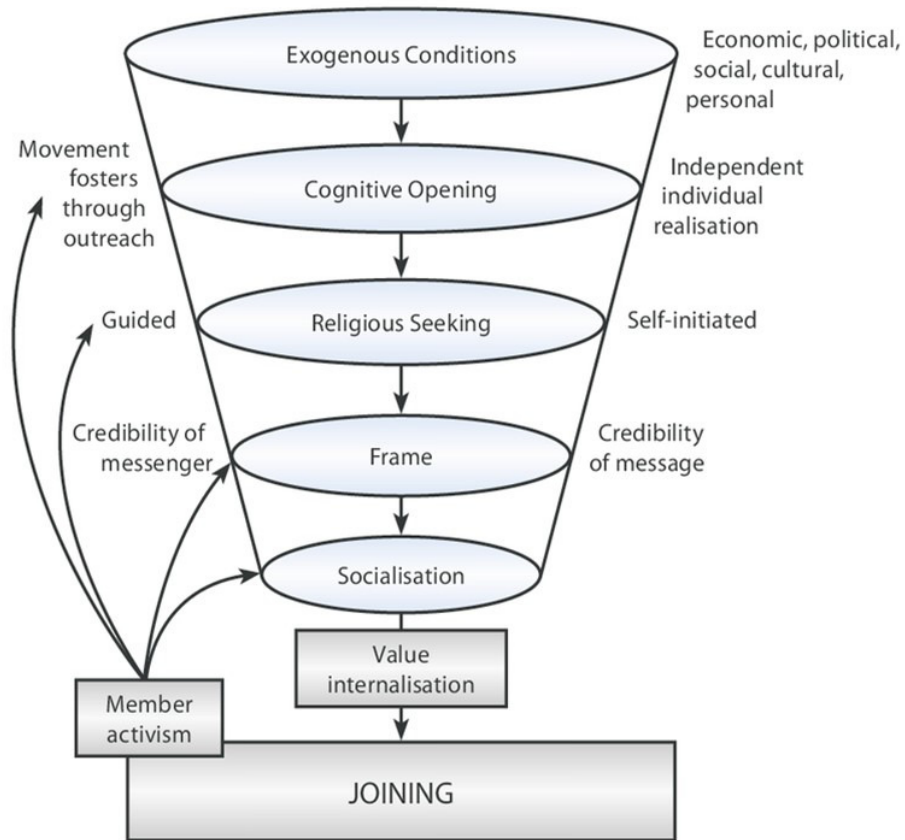
more correct representation. It is a reaction to disappointment or dissatisfaction with economic, political, and social issues. When the cognitive phase is completed, the next phase is 'religious seeking,' a type of individual willingness to seek new religious and faith paths, resulting in the 'framing' phase. This is the stage at which the individual already feels more attached, which will lead to the 'socialization' stage, followed by 'value internalization,' or the willingness to feel one emotion until, finally, the eagerness to 'join' and spread the value gained in the previous stages to others (Beutel 2009; Schmid 2013).

The WiktoroWicz's Model depicts an actual condition in Indonesia. When the government enacts a deradicalization policy against specific individuals, that person is already in a different phase than another (see Figure 2). As a result, the deradicalization phase between one person and another may be difficult. Not all individuals can complete the 'disengagement' stage when these obstacles emerge or separate themselves from these radical ideas and understandings.

Kholiludin proposes strengthening local values as a solution. This local value is linked to the presence of majority power, or, in this case, the role of religious (Islamic) organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, as well as general and religious educational institutions (*Pesantren* or the Islamic boarding school) (Kholiludin 2023).

When a religious organization can operate properly as a guardian of a conception of 'Islam as a faith,' rather than just a political belief system, it will become a 'shield' that doubles up as a religious educational institution to counter radicalism. This method can be seen in Yilmaz's study, which claims the existence of a 'theological vacuum' as a driving force of radicalism (Thompson 2023).

Figure 2  
WiktoroWicz's Model for Joining Extremist or Terrorist Groups



Source: Schmid (2013).

According to Yilmaz, a 'theological vacuum' is a situation in which religious institutions, such as Islamic education, can function properly as religious institutions while also functioning as a defensive mechanism against the expansion of radicalism. In this scenario, for example, when Islamic boarding schools, NU, and Muhammadiyah provide Islamic knowledge to society as a 'faith,' radicalism influence can be reduced

and eliminated. Evidence has been observed in Uzbekistan. Despite being predominantly Muslim, the country lacks religious educational institutions and thus lacks a foundation governing the purity of Islamic teachings. It has resulted in the acceptance of HTI. Meanwhile, Turkey has a religious-educational institution as a cornerstone that functions as a deterrent to radicalism, such as HTI (Yilmaz 2010).

Bagong Suyanto's research on 12 schools in East Java in 2019 shows the seeds of intolerance among students and the emergence of acts of persecution against other students (Suyanto 2022). Most students have grown accustomed to maintaining social distance from other students perceived to be different regarding race and religion. Behaviors like these are the seeds of radicalism. It is not uncommon for (religious) teachers to encourage students to disassociate themselves from those who are different.

This is contrary to the role of a teacher, which is essential in suppressing intolerant behaviors. They should encourage tolerant behavior instead, shaping the capital for involvement in the community environment. When the teacher (religion) can instill 'theological values' in students, the growth of radical understanding during the 'theological vacuum' phase can be prevented (Suyanto 2022) as Yilmaz argued.

With the present level of radicalization in Indonesia, deradicalization as a 'soft approach' can be carried out not only through rehabilitation, re-education, and social re-integration—the majority of which only include the instillation of Pancasila values and national values (BNPT RI 2022)—but also through prevention schemes that have been emphasized in Legislation No. 5 of 2018. These include: 1) national preparedness, 2) counter-radicalization, and 3) deradicalization (Karolina 2020), which are then combined with strengthening the role of *pesantren* as the foundation for religious institutions that can fill the void in the 'theological vacuum.' When theological gaps are not filled with 'Islam as a faith' as the primary foundation, radicalism thrives, as in Uzbekistan and England, as opposed to in Turkey and Egypt (Yilmaz 2010).

When the 'theological vacuum' can be pre-empted by religious institutions or organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, and local Islamic boarding schools that collaborate with multi-sectoral government institutions such as the BNPT, TNI, and POLRI, the radicalism phase of development as defined by WiktoroWicz's process diagram can be mitigated. WiktoroWicz's Model shows that the development of radicalism, such as the ideology of HTI after it was disbanded, will still exist and transform into new shapes and forms to be accepted into a different climate.

According to Kholiludin (2023), radical transnational ideology will not develop if the 'land' does not allow it to do so. Preventive policies based on cross-sector collaboration are needed. Of course, eliminating radicalism in Indonesia is a complex task. However, consistent efforts to follow the pattern of change in radical understanding transformation will provide a more effective prevention approach than relying on the same policies from time to time. Deradicalization policies may not be effective if the government only relies on particular prevention policies without addressing the proliferation of these radical ideas. Policies should not rely solely on 'laissez-faire' education without a government commitment to strengthening teachers' understanding of religion as a strategic actor in protecting students from radical views. 'Theological values' should be the primary basis for preventing radical views.

## Conclusion

Intolerant beliefs, inclusiveness, and chauvinism are the seeds of radicalism, which may lead to terrorist acts. It will not be easy to eradicate radicalism in Indonesia, especially as it has evolved into a new form. The government

has made various efforts, such as forming the BNPT and updating the 2003 Terrorism Law to become the 2018 Terrorism Law. This study describes how this radical understanding has manifested and transformed into a new form. The 'new form' is dangerous because it can enter to adjust to the latest government policy. For example, radicalism can be incorporated into several non-official religious forums, the most common way for radical ideas to be brought into society.

Numerous approaches can be taken to mainstream government policies to eliminate and slow the pace of radical transformation in Indonesia. Government institutions play an essential role in this context. One option to avoid exposure to radicalism is prevention through tighter selection in recruiting prospective civil servants through nationalism. Educational institutions and religions also play an essential and strategic role in preventing radicalization. Religious teachers in public schools and religious institutions play an essential role in creating the 'theological value.'

The study primarily relies on a qualitative literature review, limiting its generalizability and not offering a detailed examination of specific deradicalization programs or regional differences. As a result, future research should employ empirical methods, such as field studies and interviews with key stakeholders, to assess the effectiveness of current deradicalization initiatives.

Additionally, more attention is needed to explore how social media and digital platforms contribute to the spread of radical ideas and how digital literacy could be integrated into counter-radicalization strategies.[]

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