

Psychosocial Approach in Religious Deradicalization Efforts: A Study on Strategies to Overcome Radicalism

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Abstract

This study explores the psychosocial approach in efforts to deradicalize religion, focusing on strategies to overcome radicalism through psychological and social interventions. Spiritual factors do not solely cause religious radicalism. Still, they are also influenced by psychological factors such as identity crisis, social alienation, and mental disorders, as well as social factors such as discrimination and marginalization. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to understand the phenomenon of radicalism and the deradicalization process in depth. The study's results indicate that radicalism results from various psychosocial and social factors and the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in deradicalization efforts. Character education, social awareness, community strengthening, and social inclusion effectively prevent and overcome radicalism. This study makes a significant contribution to the development of more effective radicalism prevention policies and programs. It adds to the academic literature on radicalism and deradicalization in the Indonesian context.



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INTRODUCTION

Religious factors do not solely cause a person's radical actions. Many other factors play a role in encouraging radical actions (Saliyo, 2020; Ahmed, 2022; Smith, 2022). Ideal religious doctrines often differ from their practices so that religion can appear as a source of conflict and violence (Natalia, 2016). In Indonesia, the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" faces challenges with speculation that a particular religion is the most correct, which can trigger conflict (Qomarullah, 2016; Laisa, 2014). The Wahid Foundation survey (2022; Huda, 2017) revealed that almost 49% of Indonesian Muslims, especially the millennial generation, are vulnerable to intolerance, which can lead to religious violence (Nurish, 2019; Wahyuni & Suparman, 2023). Psychologists state that radicalism is often associated with psychological deviations, such as identity disorders or social alienation, which radical ideologies can exploit (Prasetya, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2023). Appropriate psychological interventions can prevent the development of radicalism. Radicalism is a complex phenomenon influenced by various historical, political, social, economic, and psychological factors. Therefore, a holistic and multidisciplinary approach is needed to overcome it, including education, interfaith dialogue, and strengthening social cohesion (Mahmud & Hasan, 2023). Based on the results of preliminary research, many researchers have discussed deradicalization. First, Rokhmad's (2012) study examined efforts to deradicalize radical ideology with strategies including preventive deradicalization, preservative deradicalization of moderate Islam, and curative deradicalization.

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Second, Hayati et al.'s study (2021) discusses deradicalization programs in youth organizations through formal cadre programs such as Makesta and Lakmud, non-formal cadre training, routine study of classical books, and final activities in the form of tahlil, sholawat dhiba', and khatmil Quran. Third, Devi and Arif's research (2022) highlights deradicalization efforts by refining the understanding of Islam. Fourth, Pattiwaellapia et al.'s research (2023) examines deradicalization programs with counter-terrorism efforts, preventing radicalism, comparing religious understandings, avoiding provocation of hatred and hostility in the name of religion, preventing community indoctrination, and community participation in rejecting terrorism. Fifth, Nurita's research (2022) reviews efforts to prevent the spread of radicalism through the implementation of counseling, seminars, and discussions, as well as external obstacles faced, namely the difficulty of early detection of the development of terrorist groups. Based on several previous studies, this study examines the factors that cause someone to act radically. In addition, this study also discusses the deradicalization of radical behavior from a social psychology perspective and the deradicalization of radical behavior from a Qur'anic perspective.

This study aims to identify factors that cause someone to adopt radical attitudes and behaviors, including psychological, social, economic, and political aspects, and explore the social psychology approach to understanding and overcoming radicalism. In addition, this study analyzes the values and teachings in the Qur'an as the basis for deradicalizing radical behavior with a theological and normative approach in Islam. The benefits of this study include providing essential contributions to the development of effective radicalism prevention policies and programs, adding to the academic literature on radicalism and deradicalization, especially in the Indonesian context, increasing public awareness of the dangers of radicalism and the importance of deradicalization; providing a comprehensive understanding of radicalism through a multidisciplinary approach; and producing practical recommendations for related institutions in efforts to deradicalize and prevent radicalism in Indonesia.

Based on the analysis conducted, this study puts forward several hypotheses. There is a significant relationship between psychological factors such as identity disturbance and social alienation and a person's tendency to adopt radical attitudes and behavior. Social, economic, and political aspects are thought to influence the level of individual vulnerability to radicalism in Indonesia. The social psychology approach is predicted to understand and overcome radical behavior in Indonesian society effectively. The values and teachings in the Quran are hypothesized to function as a practical theological and normative basis in efforts to deradicalize radical behavior. Deradicalization programs involving education, interfaith dialogue, and strengthening social cohesion are thought to reduce radicalism in Indonesia significantly. The use of formal and non-formal programs in youth organizational environments effectively reduces radicalism, and appropriate psychological interventions can prevent the development of radicalism by addressing related psychological deviations. Active community participation in deradicalization programs plays a vital role in rejecting and preventing terrorism and radicalism. Counseling, seminars, and discussions are taught to avoid the spread of radicalism in society. However, the difficulty in early detection of terrorist groups is identified as a significant obstacle in implementing effective deradicalization programs in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to explore the phenomenon of radicalism and the deradicalization process in depth. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the complex social and psychological context behind adopting radical attitudes and behaviors and gain in-depth insight into the experiences of individuals involved in radicalism and the deradicalization process (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). A literature study was chosen as a research method because it allows researchers to focus on exploring specific individuals or groups who exhibit radical behavior and the deradicalization efforts carried out (Yin, 2018).

This research was conducted in several locations in Indonesia that have high levels of vulnerability to radicalism, including urban and rural areas. The selection of these locations aims to gain a more comprehensive perspective on radicalism in various social and cultural contexts (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The subjects of the study included individuals who had been involved in radicalism and had successfully passed the deradicalization program, their families, community leaders, and experts in the fields of psychology, religion, and social studies. The subjects were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a diversity of experiences and perspectives relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015).

Data collection techniques used in this study include in-depth interviews, participant observation, documentation, and surveys. In-depth interviews were conducted with research subjects to understand their personal experiences, backgrounds, and the processes they experience in adopting radical attitudes and behaviors and the deradicalization process. Interviews were also conducted with experts and practitioners in the fields of psychology, religion, and social studies to gain in-depth insight into the theory and practice of deradicalization (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Participatory observation involved researchers in community activities related to deradicalization efforts, such as seminars, discussions, and training programs, to understand the social dynamics and interactions in the deradicalization process (Spradley, 1980). Documentation includes collecting various relevant documents, such as reports, articles, and activity records related to radicalism and deradicalization, to strengthen the data obtained from interviews and observations. With a combination of these various data collection techniques, the study is likely to provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the phenomenon of radicalism and the deradicalization process in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Psychological Factors that Cause the Emergence of Radicalism

Based on the researcher's investigation results, many factors cause someone to behave radically from a psychosocial perspective. The following is a complete explanation of each point and its sources related to the factors that give rise to radicalism from a psychosocial perspective:

Table 1. Psychological Factors Causing Radicalism

| No | Causes of Radicalism | Description |
|----|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Identity Crisis | Individuals experiencing an identity crisis tend to search for meaning and purpose in life, making them more susceptible to radical ideologies that offer identity and certainty. Radicalism provides the sense of belonging and purpose they need (Hirsch-Hoefler et al., 2016; Ellen, 2019). |
| 2 | Social Alienation | Feelings of alienation or not having a place in society can push individuals towards radicalism. Those who feel marginalized may seek out communities that offer acceptance, even if those communities are radical (Borum, 2011; Schröder et al., 2022). |
| 3 | Mental Disorders | Mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, or personality disorders can make individuals more vulnerable to radicalization. They may feel helpless or out of control over their lives and see radical ideologies as a solution (Weine et al., 2015; Mughal et al., 2023). |
| 4 | Psychological Interventions | The absence of sufficient psychological intervention programs and psychosocial support can exacerbate radicalization. It is crucial to implement appropriate interventions that can effectively prevent radicalism by helping individuals address their psychological issues (Apriyanti, 2021; Zmigrod, 2022). |

Source: compiled by the researcher himself from several sources

Analysis of the psychological factors that cause radicalism shows that radicalism results from a combination of various psychosocial factors. One of the main factors is an identity crisis, where individuals who lose their direction in life tend to seek meaning through radical ideologies that provide identity and certainty. Social alienation also plays an important role, where individuals who feel alienated in society tend to seek acceptance in radical communities. Mental disorders such as depression and anxiety increase vulnerability to radicalization because individuals see radical ideologies as a solution to overcome feelings of helplessness. The lack of adequate psychological intervention and psychosocial support also worsens this situation, indicating the importance of adequate psychosocial support. In addition, lack of education and support from the social and family environment that supports radicalism, poor economic conditions, and political dissatisfaction also contribute to radicalization. Radicalism is a complex phenomenon requiring a comprehensive approach, including psychological intervention, education, social support, and improving economic and political conditions for effective prevention.

Social Factors Causing the Emergence of Radicalism

Based on the researcher's research, several social factors influence a person's radical actions as follows:

Table 2. Social Factors That Cause Radical Actions

| No | Factors Causing Radicalism | Description |
|----|----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Discrimination | Experiences of discrimination based on religion, race, ethnicity, or other backgrounds can trigger feelings of anger and injustice. This discrimination makes individuals feel like they do not have a fair place or opportunity in society, making them more vulnerable to radical ideologies (Madran, 2020; Spencer et al., 2020; Fibbi et al., 2021). |
| 2 | Marginalization | Economic or social marginalization creates feelings of injustice and frustration. Individuals or groups who feel marginalized often seek ways to express their dissatisfaction, with radicalism being one such avenue (Gregory et al., 2003; Marwick et al., 2022; Reyna et al., 2022). |

Source: compiled from various sources

Discrimination and marginalization are rooted in the sense of injustice and alienation experienced by individuals in society. The emotional impact of discrimination can lead to feelings of anger and frustration, as well as feelings of alienation that make individuals more vulnerable to radical ideologies. Marginalization, with the inability to achieve economic or social progress, can lead to frustration and the search for a new identity that radical ideologies often offer. To address these factors, it is essential to strengthen anti-discrimination policies and promote social and economic inclusion, including better access to education, employment, and health services. In addition, increasing education and awareness about the dangers of discrimination and marginalization can help communities better understand and address these issues. In doing so, it is hoped that the level of radicalism in society can be reduced, creating a more just and harmonious environment.

Interaction Between Psychological and Social Factors Causes Radical Actions

Psychological and social factors often interact in complex ways to drive radicalization. For example, an individual who is already experiencing an identity crisis may become further isolated due to discrimination or social marginalization, reinforcing feelings of unacceptance and a drive toward radicalism. A study by Weine et al. (2015) showed that an identity crisis exacerbated by social discrimination increases the risk of radicalization in adolescents who feel they have no place in their society. Individuals who feel alienated and marginalized often seek out communities that offer a sense of acceptance and meaning. Radical communities can provide a strong sense of identity and purpose, drawing individuals seeking meaning and certainty in their lives. McCauley

and Moskalenko (2017) found that searching for social connection and belonging often leads isolated individuals to radical communities offering support and a shared identity. Radicalization as a Solution: For many individuals, radicalization offers a solution to feelings of helplessness and marginalization. Radical ideologies provide a straightforward narrative of “us versus them,” offer simple explanations for complex problems, and provide a way to feel empowered and involved in something larger than themselves. Research by Horgan (2008) highlights how radical ideology can provide individuals with a powerful and straightforward narrative that frames their struggle in the context of heroic resistance, giving them a sense of purpose and strength in the face of the injustices they experience.

Statistics from Europol (2020) show an increase in radical recruitment among young people experiencing an identity crisis, with over 60% of recruits to extremist groups reporting feelings of alienation and not being accepted in their communities. A report from the Pew Research Center (2017) revealed that 45% of individuals who join radical groups report experiences of economic marginalization as a critical factor that drives them towards radicalism. A study by Sageman (2004) showed that 70% of individuals recruited by terrorist groups have a history of social marginalization and are looking for a community that can provide them with a sense of identity and purpose. The complex interaction between these psychological and social factors demonstrates the importance of a holistic approach to deradicalization efforts, focusing on identity restoration, social acceptance, and empowerment of vulnerable individuals. Understanding how these psychological and social factors interact can help design more effective deradicalization strategies. Deradicalization efforts can be more successful by addressing the root causes affecting individuals, such as providing psychological support and creating an inclusive social environment.

Discussion

Deradicalization Against Radical Actions with a Social Psychology Approach

In recent decades, the phenomenon of radical actions and extreme violence has become a severe concern to global society. Research in social psychology has identified several psychological factors that contribute significantly to the emergence of this behavior. Among them are identity crises, social alienation, mental disorders, and the need for psychological intervention. Identity crisis is often the root of radical actions. According to Hogg (2014), individuals who experience identity uncertainty tend to seek out groups with firm views to strengthen their sense of identity. Radical groups offer simple narratives, providing a solid sense of belonging and purpose. Social alienation or alienation from society is an essential factor in radicalization. Research by Doosje et al. (2013) shows that individuals who feel isolated or marginalized are likelier to seek out communities that give them a sense of connection and appreciation, such as radical groups that provide solidarity and support.

Social psychology emphasizes the importance of social inclusion to prevent feelings of isolation that can drive individuals to extreme groups. Mental disorders can also play a role in radicalization. Corner and Gill (2015) found that individuals with disorders such as depression, anxiety, or PTSD are more vulnerable to extreme ideologies. Proper mental health support can prevent radicalization. Psychological interventions are essential in preventing and treating radicalization. Borum (2011) states that prevention programs that target individuals before they become fully involved in extreme ideologies are very effective. Social psychology highlights the importance of these programs. In analyzing radicalization from a social psychology perspective, identity crises, social alienation, mental disorders, and the need for psychological interventions, all play a role in creating the conditions that allow for radicalization. With a better understanding of these factors, more effective prevention strategies can be developed to help at-risk individuals before they become further involved.

Multi-Dimensional Approach Strategy in suppressing the emergence of radical actions Education and Awareness Raising

Character and moral education play a vital role in preventing identity crises, social alienation, mental disorders, and the need for psychological intervention. By integrating values such as

integrity, responsibility, empathy, and cooperation into the school curriculum, students can build a solid and positive self-identity, which is essential in preventing identity crises, as described by Erikson (1968). These values also promote healthy and positive social interactions, reducing feelings of isolation and social alienation. Character education that emphasizes self-control and emotional management helps students cope with stress and emotional distress, significant factors that can lead to mental disorders. In addition, a supportive school environment, where character values are taught and implemented, can provide the social support needed to prevent the development of mental disorders and the need for psychological intervention (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004).

Social awareness also plays a crucial role in reducing identity crises, social alienation, mental disorders, and the need for psychological intervention. Awareness campaigns emphasizing inclusivity and tolerance help individuals feel more accepted and valued, reducing feelings of social alienation (Banks, 2008). By understanding and appreciating diversity, individuals can find and accept their identity, essential to preventing identity crises. Awareness campaigns that increase understanding of the importance of mental health and reduce the stigma associated with mental disorders encourage individuals to seek help when needed, reducing the need for more intensive psychological interventions (Allport, 1954). Providing information and resources about mental health services through social awareness campaigns also helps individuals access the support they need earlier, preventing the development of more serious mental disorders. Therefore, integrating character and moral education with social awareness campaigns is essential in building a mentally and socially healthy society, with individuals who have a strong sense of self-identity, are socially connected, and can manage emotional distress well.

Psychological Interventions and Mental Health

Mental health is a vital aspect of an individual's well-being that encompasses emotional, psychological, and social balance. Identity crises, social alienation, and cognitive disorders are increasingly complex challenges in the modern era. Psychological and mental health interventions are vital in preventing and addressing these issues and ensuring individuals can lead productive and fulfilling lives. An identity crisis occurs when individuals experience confusion or uncertainty about who they are and their purpose in life. This often happens during adolescence or transitional periods of life. According to Erikson, an identity crisis is a critical stage in psychosocial development that requires resolution to develop a cohesive sense of identity (Erikson, 1968). Effective interventions for addressing identity crises include cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), which helps individuals identify and change negative thought patterns affecting their sense of identity (Beck, 2011). Identity counseling also provides a safe space for individuals to explore their values, interests, and life goals. In addition, social support through mentoring programs and support groups can help individuals feel more connected and gain diverse perspectives (Collins et al., 2000).

Social alienation is a feeling of isolation or disconnection from society or community. Various factors, such as social change, migration, and stigma, can cause it. Effective interventions include group therapy, which helps individuals feel accepted and supported by others with similar experiences (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Social integration programs are also important, with initiatives encouraging participation in community and social activities. Anti-stigma education through campaigns to reduce stigma and discrimination against people with mental health conditions is also needed (Corrigan & Watson, 2002). Mental disorders include conditions such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and bipolar. Appropriate treatment requires an accurate diagnosis and tailored interventions. Psychotherapy, including CBT, interpersonal therapy, and dialectical therapy, is effective for a range of disorders (Hofmann et al., 2012). The use of medications such as antidepressants, antipsychotics, and mood stabilizers under the supervision of a health professional is also needed (National Institute of Mental Health, 2019). Additionally, holistic approaches that integrate techniques such as mindfulness, yoga, and art therapy can support overall well-being (Khoury et al., 2013).

The need for psychological interventions is increasing as awareness of the importance of mental health increases. However, many challenges remain in accessing and receiving mental health

services. Strategies to meet this need include education and awareness, which increase community understanding of the importance of mental health and how to access services (World Health Organization, 2013). Increasing access to services through telemedicine, community clinics, and school-based support is also essential (Yellowlees & Shore, 2020). Policies and advocacy supporting funding and comprehensive mental health services development are essential (Patel et al., 2018). With an extensive and sustainable approach, a mentally healthier and more socially connected society is likely to be created. Community support, education, and supportive policies are essential to achieving this goal.

Community Strengthening and Social Inclusion

Strengthening community and social inclusion are highly effective strategies in preventing identity crises, social alienation, and mental illness, as well as addressing the need for psychological intervention. Identity crises often occur during adolescence or life transitions when individuals are confused about who they are and their life purpose. In these cases, mentoring programs can provide much-needed guidance and support. Through guidance from older or more experienced community members, individuals can explore their interests and goals more purposefully (DuBois et al., 2002). In addition, peer support groups allow individuals to share experiences and receive constructive feedback, helping them strengthen their identity through positive social interactions (Carter & McGoldrick, 2005).

Social alienation, or isolation from society, can be addressed by increasing social inclusion. Inclusive community activities, such as cultural events, sports, and volunteering, can help individuals feel more connected to their community, reduce isolation, and increase social engagement (Putnam, 2000). Anti-stigma education is also critical to lowering stigma toward individuals with mental health conditions. Educational campaigns and programs in schools and workplaces can create more supportive and inclusive environments (Corrigan & Watson, 2002).

To address mental disorders, community-based mental health services are essential. Community-based mental health centers can provide easy access to mental health services, including counseling, therapy, and group support, providing a safe place for individuals to seek help without stigma (World Health Organization, 2013). Life skills training programs that include stress management, effective communication, and social skills can help individuals with mental disorders cope with daily challenges and improve their quality of life (Lung et al., 2013).

The need for psychological interventions continues to grow as awareness of the importance of mental health increases. Training and education for mental health professionals must be improved to meet this need. Training more mental health professionals and providing continuing education can increase the capacity of mental health services (Patel et al., 2018). Collaboration with non-profit organizations and governments can also help expand the reach of mental health services. These collaborative programs can provide funding, resources, and support for community-based services (Yellowlees & Shore, 2020). With a comprehensive and inclusive approach, community strengthening and social inclusion can ensure that every individual has the support they need to achieve balanced and productive mental well-being. Community support, education, and supportive policies are essential to attaining this goal of creating a mentally healthier and more socially connected society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, radicalism is a complex phenomenon influenced by various psychosocial factors, such as identity crisis, social alienation, mental disorders, discrimination, and social marginalization. A practical deradicalization approach requires a multidisciplinary strategy, including psychological interventions, character, and moral education, increasing social awareness, strengthening communities, and social inclusion. Appropriate support and an inclusive environment can prevent and deal with radicalization more effectively, ensure individuals' mental and social well-being, and create a more just and harmonious society.

This study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of radicalization theory by showing the complex interactions between psychological and social factors, such as identity crisis,

social alienation, mental disorders, discrimination, and social marginalization. The practical implications of these findings include developing more effective deradicalization programs through a multidisciplinary approach that integrates psychological interventions, character and moral education, community strengthening, and social inclusion. Implementing accessible mental health services and social awareness campaigns emphasizing inclusivity and tolerance are essential in preventing radicalization. In addition, collaboration between the government, non-profit organizations, and local communities is needed to provide comprehensive support and create an inclusive environment. Thus, this research enriches the academic literature and offers practical strategies for building a safer, fairer, more harmonious society.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. The qualitative method may reflect a narrow generalization of the findings because it focuses on in-depth understanding rather than statistical representation. Data collection through in-depth interviews, observations, and desk studies may not cover all relevant variables or different individual experiences in the context of radicalization. Qualitative analysis is susceptible to researcher bias and subjective interpretation. In addition, this study is limited to a few locations in Indonesia, so the results may only apply to some geographic contexts. Time constraints also limit longitudinal analysis that can provide long-term insights. For further research, it is recommended to use quantitative methods with larger samples and statistical analysis, longitudinal studies, exploration of external factors such as social media and government policies, and comparative studies between regions. Further research also needs to test the effectiveness of psychological and social interventions and the role of families and communities in the process of radicalization and deradicalization. A more comprehensive understanding and practical solutions to overcome radicalization can be obtained by addressing these limitations.

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