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MORALITY BEFORE KNOWLEDGE

Research Paper

Dialectics of religious discourse, radicalism and terrorism

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Abstract
An in-depth study conducted in the context of globalization and modern social dynamics focuses on religious discourse, radicalism and terrorism. The complex interactions between religious rhetoric, radical understandings, and the emergence of acts of terrorism are discussed in this article. This research explores how religious discussions can be a fertile ground for the emergence of radical ideologies, which eventually lead to acts of terrorism, by integrating theological, psychological, and social perspectives. The research aims to gain a better understanding of the components that influence the radicalisation process by identifying the ways in which religious discourse supports radicalism. The data in this study was obtained through observation and literature review, and analyzed by content analysis. This study shows that understanding how religion, radicalism and terrorism interact is crucial to stopping and countering threats to world security because radical thinking often fuels terrorism, which uses violence as a means to achieve certain goals.

Keywords: Religious Discourse; Radicalism; Terrorism

1. Introduction

Radicalism and terrorism have become an ongoing issue amidst the discourse of religions that love peace and grace for the universe (Suradinata, 2004). Radicalism and even terrorism is the face of religion that is considered very frightening and contrary to the polite and peaceful face that is the main teaching of every religion (Suradinata, 2004). With the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika", Indonesia has been teaching the concept of a multicultural country since the beginning of its prosperity (Suradinata, 2004). The establishment of Prambanan and Borobudur, two monumental temples, demonstrate peaceful living in a multicultural society during the Hindu heyday. Similarly, the principle "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika", written by Mpu Tantular in his book Sutasoma around 1384-1385, was used by the "founding fathers" to bind the nation. This shows that religious harmony and multicultural life were well established during the Majapahit kingdom.

Mahatma Gandhi as the Father of Non-Violence stated that religion is not meant to separate people from each other, it is meant to unite them. It is a calamity that today religion has been so distorted that it has become a cause of strife and carnage" (Prabhu&Rao, 1967; Ellsberg, 2004). However, many acts of violence are carried out in the name of religion and

in defense of the truth. Considering the spirit of its past, Indonesia should be a great nation, multicultural, and respectful of everyone who adheres to their religion and beliefs. However, in the name of religion, every citizen is responsible for safeguarding the great nation and preventing human tragedies. Therefore, Indonesia becomes a great, developed, and dignified country. This article examines the dialectics of religious discourse, radicalism and terrorism.

2. Methods

This article is the result of qualitative research that examines the dialectics of religious discourse, radicalism and terrorism. The data in this study were obtained through observation and literature study. The data was analyzed using content analysis, which is an in-depth discussion of the content of written or printed information. The pioneer of content analysis is Harold D. Lasswell, who pioneered the symbol coding technique, which is to record symbols or messages systematically, then given an interpretation (Bungin, 2007). The content analysis method is a technique for drawing conclusions by identifying various specific characteristics of a message objectively, systematically, and generalistically. Objective means according to rules or procedures that if carried out by other people (researchers) can produce similar conclusions. Systematic means that the determination of content or categories is carried out according to certain rules (Darmiyanti & Afifah, 2021). The main discussion of this article is about the dialectics of religious discourse, radicalism and terrorism.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Universal religion and the search for common ground between religions

All religions claim or are claimed by their followers to be universal religions, and indeed universal teachings are found in all religions. Although religion is universal, there are also teachings that differ from one another. Chairman of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama K. H. A. Hasyim Muzadi in the National Gathering of Indonesian Religious Leaders, 13-14 January 2003 at Sahid Hotel, Makassar, South Sulawesi stated, what is the same in each religion should not be differentiated and what is different in each religion should not be equated. This opinion is logical, because looking at something from different angles will certainly not find a point of similarity.

Religious differences will be more profound when viewed from the teachings or creeds of each, but when associated with matters relating to human values (human values) will be found many similarities. If everyone has the same view that all religions are His creations and adherents of each religion are required to practice them as well as possible, religious harmony, peace, and prosperity of living together will be realized. To be able to understand that all religions are the creation of God Almighty requires an in-depth study of each religion, and such a study has been carried out by Mahatma Gandhi (Ellsberg, 2004) who stated.

> "I don't want every side of my house to be walled off with locked windows and doors. I want cultures from all lands to blow into my house as freely as possible. What I have is not a religion that is like a prison."

With an open view of religions, the realization that religion comes from God Almighty will foster mutual understanding and religious harmony. About this Sarvepali Radhakrishnan (2002) states.

> "By remembering the great truth dressed in different colors and speaking in different tongues, Hinduism develops an attitude of all-round generosity and not at all a fanatical faith in a rigid doctrine."

Gandhi's or Radhakrishnan's views are presumably inspired by the Vedic scriptures and the Bhagavadgītā (Radhakrishan, 1949) which state,

> "Let those who profess different religions and speak different languages, living together on this mother earth, get along like one family, just as the mother cow always gives milk to man, so the mother earth gives happiness to mankind" (Atharvaveda XII.1.45).
>
> "By whatever path or way one worships Me, by that path I fulfill his desire, O Arjuna, for all the paths they take are My paths" (Bhagavadgītā IV.11).

Religions are different paths that converge at the same point. What does it matter if we take different paths as long as we reach the same destination? In reality there are as many religions as there are people in the world. Thus Mahatma Gandhi in Hind Swaraj started in 1946 (Prabhu, 1967). Mahatma Gandhi's view is in line with the view of a contemporary Sufi Frithjof Schuon (2003) in his book Transcendent Unity of Religions, with a foreword by Huston Smith and has been translated into Indonesian Looking for the Meeting Point of Religions describes all religions leading to God Almighty both at the esoteric and exoteric levels, like various roads leading to one mountain peak, as shown in the following sketch.
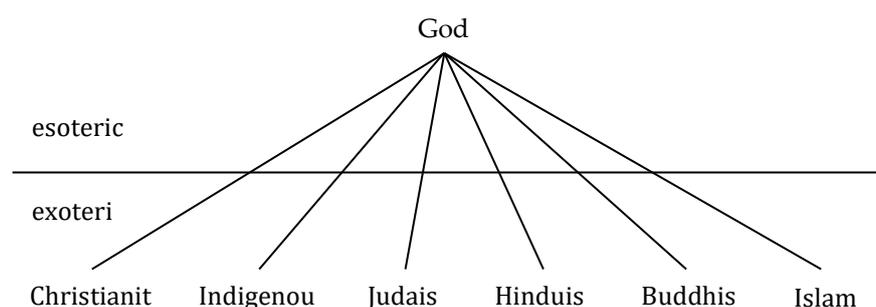

Figure 1. Various paths to God
Source: Schuon, 2003

Furthermore, about religion as a gift of God Almighty and the interpretation of religion carried out by humans with various limitations, stated by Mahatma Gandhi (Prabhu, 1967) as follows.

> "All religions are a gift from God Almighty, but they are mixed with imperfect human nature because religion uses human means. Religion as a gift of Almighty God is beyond the reach of human language. Imperfect human beings convey religion according to their language skills, and their words are interpreted again by imperfect human beings as well. Whose interpretation is to be held as the correct interpretation. Everyone is right from his own point of view, but it is not impossible that everyone is wrong. Hence the need for tolerance that does not mean indifference to one's own beliefs, but rather tolerance that relies more on common sense and purer compassion. Tolerance will give us a spiritual outlook that is as far from fanaticism as the distance between the North Pole and the South Pole. True knowledge of religion breaks down the walls of separation between one religion and another and at the same time fosters tolerance. Fostering tolerance towards other religions will give us a deeper understanding of our own religion."

In reality, not all have the ability to understand other religions, which results in an intolerant attitude towards other religions. Similarly, blind fanaticism that is only based on the solidarity of a community for something that is strongly believed without adequate proof, either through the field of physics or metaphysics, let alone supported by rigid dogmas that are deliberately created for the benefit of certain groups, will ultimately limit every movement and reasoning that tends to easily trigger friction and clashes of small

interests on the one hand with universal interests on the other. In the clash of interests in a world plagued by confusion, it is easy for every individual who does not have enough self-defense to be dragged into a stream of provocations that will never benefit anyone, only destruction will befall him.

As mentioned above, in matters relating to humanity, human values or in order to realize common prosperity, there are many points of convergence between religions. These points of convergence include: to live in harmony with fellow human beings, to respect His creation, to help each other, to realize harmony of life, tolerance and so on (Surpi, 2023). In an effort to improve intra-, inter- and inter-religious harmony, Svami Vivekananda's statement at the closing session of the World Parliament of Religions, one hundred and twelve years ago on 27 September 1893 in Chicago, is quoted, because the statement delivered by the famous Hindu thinker at the end of the last century is always relevant to the current situation. The speech that took the world by storm, and earned high honors was described by an American newspaper as follows: "An orator by divine right and undoubtedly greatest in the Parliament of Religion" (Walker, 1983). The precious quote was also reviewed by Jai Singh Yadav (1993), and reiterated by I Gusti Ngurah Bagus (1993), as follows.

> "Much has been said about the general foundations of religious harmony. Now I am not just staking out my theory. However, if anyone hopes that this harmony will be achieved through the victory of one religious teaching over the destruction of another, then I will say to him: "Your hope is an impossible dream".
>
> "If someone exclusively dreams of the survival of his religion and the destruction of other religions, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out that through the banner of every religion it will be written, albeit slightly opposed, "Mutually helpful and not hostile, intermingling not destroying, harmonious and peaceful and not at odds with each other" (Mumukshananda, 1992).

Based on the above description, Mahatma Gandhi's statement at the beginning of this paper can be accepted and if there is distortion, even massacres and terrorism, it is not the fault of the religious teachings but a wrong understanding of the religion they follow. Furthermore, regarding the development of religion (missionary) (Radhakrishnan, 2002) states that Hinduism can be called the world's first example of a missionary religion. It is just that it's missionary nature is different from that associated with faiths that draw people in and convert. Hinduism does not consider it a calling to bring people to a faith. For what counts are deeds and not beliefs.

On missionaries leading people to religious conversion, Mahatma Gandhi as stated by Robert Ellsberg (2004) follows. Gandhi's views on conversion and religious change must be understood in the context of the politicization associated with religious change in India "It is impossible for me to reconcile myself to the idea of change of faith in whatever form it takes in India and elsewhere today," he wrote. Christian missions in India came with the exploitative rule of empires. Before the British, a series of Indian Muslim kingdoms brought their Islamic missions. In the 1920s there were Hindu attempts, spearheaded by the Arya Samaj priests to re-convert, or in other words purify (śuddhi) those who had previously converted to Islam, even several centuries earlier. Thus Gandhi's discussions on conversion were directed against all forms of conversion (Prabhu&Rao, 1967; Ellsberg, 2004). "I am against conversion, even if known as śuddhi by Hindus, Tabligh by Muslims or Conversion by Christians. Change of faith is a process of the heart known only to God". For Gandhi, conversion was also based on what he called a fragile view of the superiority of one religion over another. "It is absurd that one will become good or attain salvation merely by embracing Hinduism, Christianity, or Islam. Purity of character and salvation depend on

purity of heart". And he said, "It would be the height of intolerance, and intolerance is a kind of violence, if you believe that your religion is superior to other religions and that you will be justified when you want others to convert to your faith".

Based on the description above, Hinduism strongly emphasizes purity or purity of heart as a form of self-transformation, because in fact the end of religious education is a change in character, from ordinary human character to human character devatā, namely humans with noble character (from manava to madhava). The endeavor to purify oneself is a step towards unity with Him, which also means fostering an awareness of true brotherhood towards all His creatures, because in this view of unity (*advaita*) all beings are brothers (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*).

3.2 Radicalism and terrorism

Religious radicalism has become a never-ending conversation, even though in the past decade discussions related to terrorism and radicalism in Indonesia have tended to recede. Forms of radicalism that lead to anarchism, violence and even terrorism stigmatize the religions embraced by terrorism. Putra & Sumaryani (2021) stated that terrorism is synonymous with the word 'terror', which means activities that create fear, horror, or cruelty committed by a person or group. The absence of a uniform definition according to international law regarding Terrorism causes different definitions from each country based on its national law to regulate, prevent and prevent and eradicate Terrorism. In this case Frans Magnis Suseno in Jawa Pos News Paper (2002) stated, "Anyone needs to realize that the term terrorist is not related to the teachings of a religion, but concerns the violent behavior of a person or group. Therefore, the terrorist label can only be erased by real behavior that is full of tolerance".

According to Ermaya (2004) radicalism is an understanding or radical flow in political life. Radicalism is a fundamental change and principle. In general and in political science, radicalism means a concept or spirit that seeks to make changes in political life as a whole, and fundamentally without taking into account the constitutional, political and social rules / provisions that are currently in force. Some also state that radicalism is an understanding of far advanced liberalism and some interpret radicalism as the same as extremism/fundamentalism. Pastor Djaka Sutapa (2004) states that religious radicalism is a movement in religion that seeks to totally overhaul an existing social order/political order by echoing violence. The terminology of "radicalism" may vary, but essentially there is a sharp conflict between the values championed by certain religious groups on the one hand and the prevailing value order at the time. The existence of this sharp conflict means that the concept of radicalism is always associated with radical attitudes and actions, which are then connoted with physical violence. The term radicalism comes from radix, which means root, and this definition is close to fundamental, which means base. Thus, radicalism relates to the ideals that are fought for, and sees problems down to their roots. Likewise, fundamentalism relates to the ideals that are fought for, and returns to the principles or basis of a teaching.

There are several reasons that give rise to radicalism in the field of religion, including, (1) a wrong or narrow understanding of the religious teachings they adhere to, (2) social injustice, (3) poverty, (4) political revenge by making religious teachings a motivation to justify their actions, and (5) social inequality or irritation over the success of others (Surpi *et al.,* 2019). Prof. Dr. H. Afif Muhammad, MA (2004) states that the emergence of radical groups (in Islam) is due to socio-political developments that make marginalization, and then experience disappointment, but these socio-political developments are not the only factor. In addition to these factors, there are other factors that can lead to radical groups, such as economic inequality and the inability of some members of society to understand the rapid changes taking place.

Religious radicalism occurs in all religions. In Hinduism, the emergence of radicalism appears to be a response to the Mogul Emperor's conquest of India, as well as the British colonization of India, which was followed by conversion from Hinduism to Christianity by missionaries at that time. Among other radical responses were the rise of Bajrangdal, Rashtriya Svayam Sevak (RSS) and so on. In addition to radical movements, in accordance with the character of the leaders, there were efforts to anticipate the conversion movement with the birth of religious organizations, one of which is popular today is the Arya Samaj (noble society) founded by Svami Dayananda Sarasvati (1875) with followers spread throughout India. Svami Dayananda Sarasvati is also understood among Hindus as a radical, for ordaining those who are marginalized (the Pariahs whom Mahatma Gandhi called Harijans/followers or sons of God) and have converted back to Hinduism and for those who want to study the Vedic scriptures and perform Vedic rituals (such as Agnihotra) are initiated into Brāhmaṇa (by giving a garland of Upavita threads). Svami Dayananda Sarasvati made a breakthrough by returning to the Vedic teachings on the classification of society on the basis of duties and obligations called varna (choice of profession) and not the term caste as a distortion of varna. This division of professional society (anatomy of society) is eternal and is not based on birth or hereditary inheritance, but on the basis of talent (guṇa) and work (karma). Svami Dayananda Sarasvati's actions were opposed by the orthodox who held only to tradition and contradicted the scriptures. Svami Dayananda Sarasvati's radicalism did not take the form of anarchy, let alone lead to terrorist acts.

Another radical figure was Mahatma Gandhi, a radical in thought, but gentle in action whose understanding of Hinduism was so deep that he was able to realize it. Even R. C. Zaehner (1993) equated Gandhi with Yudhisthira. Gandhi's dilemma is the same as Yudhisthira's dilemma. Mahatma Gandhi strongly emphasized Ahiṁśa (non-violence). Other figures as Hindu reformers are Aurobindo, Vivekananda and others who enlighten not only Hindus, but also humanity around the world (Mumukshananda, 1992).

As mentioned above, some Hindu reformers are also seen as radicals in the sense that they are radical in thought and gentle in behavior. However, radicalism that led to anarchism and terrorism also occurred among Hindus in India, namely the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi who was shot by people from the Rashtriya Sevayam Sevak (RSS) group, as well as the shooting of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguard, and finally the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi through a suicide bombing allegedly from the Tamil Eelam group shows that terrorism also occurs among Hindus, although the motivation is not pure and not even related to Hinduism (Prabhu&Rao, 1967).

The definitions or limitations of terror and terrorists were described in Kompas newspaper on 15 October 2002, three days after the Bali 1 bombing (Wahid, *et al.*, 2004) as follows.The words 'terrorist' (perpetrator) and 'terrorism' (action) come from the Latin 'terrere' which means to make tremble or thrill. The word 'terror' also means to cause horror. Of course, horror in the hearts and minds of its victims. Basically, the term 'terrorism' is a concept that has a very sensitive connotation because terrorism causes the killing and torture of innocent people. Furthermore, Article 1 of Law Number 15 Year 2003 on the Eradication of the Crime of Terrorism states that terrorism is a systematic unlawful act with the intent to destroy the sovereignty of the nation and state by endangering the body, life, morals, property, and freedom of the people or causing public damage or an atmosphere of terror or fear of people on a widespread basis, resulting in the destruction of strategic vital objects, people's basic needs, culture, education, economy, technology, industry, public facilities, or international facilities.

Terrorism in Indonesia is often and always in the name of religion, as recognised by the perpetrators of the first and second Bali bombings, which have claimed so many victims that it is heartbreaking for everyone. Pandit Vamadeva Shastri (when not initiated named Dr David Frawley) a Hindu intellectual residing in the United States, in his article How Does

Hinduism Answer Terrorism? Yoga, Ahiṁśa and Terrorist Attacks (2005) states. "The path of *Kṣatriya*", as mandated in the Bhagavad Gita scriptures which teach the spiritual aspects of Yoga in great detail, was taught on the battlefield, during the civil war. While some would say that this outer battle was a metaphor for an inner struggle, the truth that outer battles also took place is clear and abundant in the recorded evidence of Ancient Indian history.
Krishna, the Yoga master encouraged his disciple Arjuna, a great warrior to fight, even though Arjuna was reluctant and wanted to follow the path of non-violence. Why did Krishna encourage Arjuna to fight? There are two main points of Ahiṁśa in the Yoga tradition. The first is Ahiṁśa as a spiritual principle, followed by yogis, bikshus, sadhus, and sannyasi that encompasses nonviolence at all levels. The second is Ahiṁśa as a political principle, the Ahiṁśa of warriors or Kṣatriyas, followed by those who rule and protect society, who are allowed to fight the forces of evil in the world, including protecting spiritual people who are often unable to defend themselves and are targeted by worldly people. Krishna recommends this Kṣatriya Ahiṁśa to Arjuna for the benefit of future generations, just as Rishi Visvamitra taught Ràma and Lakṣamaṇa to destroy the evil forces that harass and kill spiritual people. This is a very old Indian tradition".

Pandit Vamadeva Shastri (2005) adds, while a violent response to terrorism may be necessary in the short term, a greater dharmic reorientation of our society is the only long-term solution. This entails not only defeating terrorists, but adopting a more responsible way of life and returning to a greater harmony with both nature and humanity. It means solving the larger global problems that include not only terrorism and religious fundamentalism, but poverty, lack of education, overpopulation, destruction of the natural environment".

In addition, the constitutional text Arthasastra also outlines various secret methods that can be used in the interest of state security. However, this does not mean that a leader can use such methods at every opportunity. However, one must know when to use these methods (Surpi, 2019). As an unusual crime, secret and closed methods of dealing with it are recommended. This aims to maintain the safety of citizens from acts of terror, prevent "frying" the issue of human rights violations by sympathizers and dwarf terrorism organizations. The strategy offered to deal with terrorism is terrorism failure. It aims to prevent the state from being accused of human rights violations (Sumaryani, 2023).

3.3 Improving the quality of national education
Tackling radicalism and terrorism in the name of religion requires the attention of all national components. With the passing of the Law on Teachers and Lecturers on 6 December 2005, it is hoped that the quality of education can really be improved, at least to catch up with ASEAN countries such as Vietnam, which has just emerged from a prolonged war. We are also behind our closest neighbors Malaysia and Singapore. Indeed, the question arises, why in Malaysia terrorism can be prevented well, while in Indonesia it is very difficult to do and the brains of terrorism in Indonesia are Malaysian citizens. These terrorist gangs have been tearing the country apart, so why is this difficult to overcome? This question is a matter for further reflection, and in our opinion, the fundamental answer is to improve the quality of national education in the true sense.

Religious education, which is an integral part of national education, should be able to develop religious education that is inclusive, that respects differences, that upholds the truth of each religion, strengthens tolerance and harmony among religious communities in order to strengthen national unity. In this regard, from a Hindu perspective, the model of inclusive religious education taught by Sri Sathya Narayana (23-11-2003), a great yogi today, a spiritual teacher who re-emphasises the importance of 5 (five) basic human values, consisting of:

1) *Satya:* truth, one should adhere to the teachings of one's religion.

2) *Dharma:* right conduct, one should always do good and right.
3) *Prema*: love, one should always develop love for all beings and the universe created by God.
4) *Shanti*: peace, one should be able to realize peace of heart and create a cool atmosphere for their environment.
5) *Ahiṁśa*: non-violence, one should not commit acts of violence, not torture or kill someone.

Furthermore, in social life, one should be able to realize/actualise 10 (ten principles of life), namely:

1) Love and devotion to the homeland, the bloodbath where we were born, do not hate or harm our own homeland and the homeland of others.
2) Honor all religions with the same respect, each religion is a path to the One True God.
3) Love all people without discrimination, as all human beings are one single community.
4) Keep your household and neighborhood clean and peaceful, and the health and happiness of the community will be realized.
5) Be generous, don't make things that turn someone into a beggar. Help the needy according to their needs and make them self-reliant.
6) Do not tempt someone by offering/giving gifts or demean yourself by accepting bribes.
7) Do not be hateful, spiteful, envious for any reason.
8) Do not depend on anyone, try to carry out yourself as much as possible, even if one is wealthy and has many servants, but community service (seva) should be carried out directly by yourself. Be a servant to yourself and others.
9) Never break the laws of our country. Obey the laws and regulations. Be a model citizen.
10) Love God Almighty, and all His creations, and stay away from sins and bad deeds.

4. Conclusions

The dialectics of religious discourse, radicalism, and terrorism are closely related and have an impact on social and political processes. Religious discussions often become a tool to spread radical beliefs that could potentially trigger terrorism. Extreme interpretations of religious teachings can lead to religious radicalism, which can encourage people to commit violence. In this context, radical thinking often fuels terrorism, which uses violence as a means to achieve certain goals. Therefore, understanding how religion, radicalism and terrorism interact is crucial to stopping and countering global security threats.

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