

Deradicalization Narratives from Former Convicts in the Digital Space: Sofyan Tsauri's YouTube Channel Analysis

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Abstract: This paper examines deradicalization programs from the former terrorism prisoners' narratives on Sofyan Tsauri's *YouTube* channel. Through library research and data collection from digital sources using a phenomenological approach, this paper argues that Sofyan Tsauri becomes an influencer in combating radicalization through his YouTube channel which explains matters related to radicalism, extremism, terrorism, and peace that are likely to have resonance in various locations. Further, Sofyan Tsauri's move has become a vehicle for former terrorists to talk about terrorists from their perspective to overcome various barriers to knowledge hegemony. This article suggests that other terrorists and former convicts are expected to be able to replicate such methods of da'wah in the digital era that are friendly to millennials.

Keywords: Deradicalization program, cyberspace, counter-narrative, subaltern.

Abstrak: Artikel ini mengkaji program deradikalisasi dari narasi mantan narapidana terorisme, Sofyan Tsauri, melalui kanal *YouTube*. Melalui studi pustaka serta pengumpulan data dari sumber digital dengan pendekatan fenomenologis, tulisan ini berpendapat bahwa Sofyan Tsauri merupakan influencer dalam memerangi radikalisme melalui saluran media sosial dengan menjelaskan hal-hal terkait radikalisme, ekstremisme, terorisme, dan perdamaian yang kemungkinan besar akan beresonansi dalam masyarakat di berbagai lokasi. Lebih lanjut, langkah Sofyan Tsauri ini menjadi wahana bagi para mantan teroris untuk berbicara tentang teroris dari sudut pandang mereka sendiri untuk mengatasi berbagai hambatan hegemoni pengetahuan. Tulisan ini menyarankan kepada para mantan teroris lainnya untuk mampu meniru cara-cara dakwah demikian di era digital, yang ramah terhadap generasi milenial.

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Introduction

The study of deradicalization is a fresh subject in the domain of knowledge, causing multiple academic definitions and their practical needs to be debated among academics and practitioners because there is no consensus among them. In substance, deradicalization is a process of changing one's beliefs and thoughts and releasing one's radical ideologies. John Horgan, an American academic, said that deradicalization is a social and psychological process in which a person's radical commitment, involvement, and violence can be reduced to the point that a person is no longer involved in or has sympathy for acts of violence (John & Braddock, 2010). Angel Rabasa from the RAND Corporation, defines deradicalization as the process of changing a person's beliefs and their recognition of general values that apply by rejecting radical ideas or those oriented towards violent ideology (Rabasa, et al, 2011). Meanwhile, an academic from Exeter UK, Omar Ashour, defines deradicalization as a process of accepting the values of pluralism in politics and economics (Ashour & Omar, 2011). From various understandings of deradicalization, all academics believe that deradicalization is a strategic way to fight terrorism.

There are many ways to deradicalize, such as taking an individual or group approach. Deradicalization with an individual approach must understand each person's condition, such as the motivation for being radical and permissive towards terrorism and how they perceive their beliefs. If successful, the deradicalization program in the individual sector will not only be able to change their attitudes and behaviour towards terrorism, but also individual perspectives in viewing their ideology. So, the ways to deradicalize one person to another are of course different. For example in Indonesia, deradicalizing a Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) Mantiqi leader such as Nasir Abbas, of course, is different from Yusuf Adirama who became a supplier of JI weapons. Yusuf and several of his friends succeeded in being deradicalized with an economic program by creating the Dapoer Bistik Solo culinary business, but Nasir prefers to write books or be invited to various seminars, and become a government expert in deradicalization efforts.

Another way of deradicalization is as a group where the main requirement is the active involvement of group leaders in participating in the deradicalization program. If the leader of the group is already sympathetic to deradicalization material, it will be easier for his followers to be persuaded to abandon their radical beliefs.

Deradicalization versus Disengagement

The concept of deradicalization turns out to be vague for some academics and should be supplemented with disengagement which can be defined as the process of letting go of radical ideas. According to Striegher, disengagement is very important because former terrorism convicts who have received a deradicalization program will reject violence, but they do not necessarily completely abandon their extremist beliefs (Striegher, 2013). Deradicalization focuses on terror convicts to drive them not to become a recidivist in the future by joining terrorist groups or being involved in violent criminal acts. However, disengagement is said to be more complicated because they have to "brainwash" the religious and ideological views they received from their leaders in the past. Thus, the relevance of disengagement is to overcome latent dangers which may manifest one day.

Academics agree that a comprehensive approach should be taken for the effectiveness of deradicalization activities. This comprehensive approach can succeed in long-term deradicalization activities with numerous programs, such as having more moderate religious views, vocational training, financial and economic assistance, as well as guaranteeing their security in the context of the integration process in society. Striegher divides the factors of the holistic approach into push and pulls factors.

The push factor includes how the participants in the deradicalization program can reduce their belief in justifying any means to realize their dream of creating an Islamic state, such as by killing civilians, bombing buildings and infrastructure, and robbing with violence. a new start for ex-convicts of terrorism, such as creating new opportunities for them to provide incentives such as cutting their prison terms. In addition, financial support and vocational training so

that they can return to society also need to be provided. These two factors, pullers and pushers, are carried out simultaneously so that the deradicalization program is successful.

Indonesia itself is also working on deradicalization by taking the holistic approach above with a focus on terrorism convicts arrested by the police (Widya, 2020). Starting in 2005, deradicalization in the initial phase focused on how the convicts of terrorism separated from their group and then abandoned the violent ideology that they adhered to. Indonesia has also taken an approach in the form of financial support and various pieces of training aimed at them and their family members as well.

One main characteristic of deradicalization in Indonesia is the involvement of former terrorist members, especially those with prestigious positions such as Nasir Abbas where Nasir can share his past experiences with detainees. Herein lies the key factor in the success of deradicalization with stories of the tragic experiences of combatants (Islam, 2019). However, due to the lack of bureaucratic institutionalization, funding mechanisms, and competence of deradicalization officers, the success rate of this program can only be said to be sufficient. Striegher gave an example of inadequate expert competence which causes education in transforming and fighting extremist ideology to be not optimal. As a result, the program only targets detainees to let go of their views on violent behaviour, not to let go of their terrorism ideology.

Methodology

This paper attempts to look at deradicalization programs in Indonesia in the digital age and to take into account Sofyan Tsauri's Youtube channel which explains matters related to radicalism, extremism, and terrorism considered as deradicalism practice. To answer the aims of this study, qualitative data resources from the primary and secondary data have been executed. The relevant works of literature related to deradicalism were also analysed through library research and

data collection from digital sources using a phenomenological approach.

Deradicalization in Indonesia

Results and Discussion

Indonesia has serious measures to carry out the deradicalization program for convicts or former terrorism convicts. The government believes that deradicalization is the most effective way to deal with the problem of terrorism rather than a repressive way. Even though the efforts often encounter criticism from Parliament and academics, from a different perspective abroad, deradicalization in Indonesia has been considered effective.

Member of the Parliament Defense Commission Major General of The Indonesian Army (Ret.) TB Hasanuddin said the deradicalization program failed because the understanding of radicalism and the threat of terrorism still massively widespread despite receiving trillions of rupiah in funding (Safitri, 2021). In addition, Ali Abdullah Wibisono, a Terrorism researcher from the University of Indonesia, said that the deradicalization system being implemented in detention was not effective. According to him, only 30 per cent were successful in deradicalization. In fact, said Ali, detention has become a place for the socialization of radicalism and a venue for recruiting new members (Ctr & Wis, 2021).

An American observer on terrorism, Zachary Abuza, openly praised the success of the deradicalization program in Indonesia as the best in the world. For him, there is no other country that is considered successful in terms of counter-terrorism operations besides Indonesia (Abuza, 2010). This success is partly due to the existence of spiritual counselling on terrorism which is carried out well by the government. Psychologist, Sarlito Wirawan, told Time Magazine that the key to Indonesia's success in dismantling terror networks was the success of the authorities in understanding the minds of

terrorists (Febriane & Mariamah, 2013). These people, said Sarlito, were not merely extraordinary criminals, but people who were lost ideologically. So, handling them should be carried out humanely.

The implementation of the deradicalization program in Indonesia is directed by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), particularly in Deputy I for prevention, protection and deradicalization. There are seven approaches in the deradicalization program that are interrelated with one another, such as religious, psychological, sociocultural, economic, legal, political and information technology approaches. The BNPT has the right to coordinate both between government agencies and non-government institutions in implementing deradicalization programs, for example with the Ministry of Religion, Ministry of Education, Da'wah Institutions, and Islamic Organizations.

The BNPT's deradicalization program is designed to reconstruct a radical understanding of convicts or former terrorism convicts. The deradicalization program formulated by the BNPT has two classifications. The first is the deradicalization program in prisons which is carried out through the stages of identification, rehabilitation, re-education, and resocialization, as well as observation and evaluation. This program targets convicts of terrorism cases who are currently serving their prison terms. The second is the deradicalization program outside prison which is carried out through the stages of identification, counter-radicalism development, observation and evaluation. This program targets former convicts of terrorism cases and groups of people who are vulnerable to the influence of radical ideology.

The main objective of the deradicalization program is to change radical ideology or individual understanding to become moderate by debating the understanding of these radical teachings. Perpetrators of acts of terrorism in Indonesia often carry out their actions based on Jihad, or the struggle to defend Islamic teachings. Thus, the deradicalization program is designed to provide counterarguments from radical Islamic understandings by reintroducing moderate Islamic teachings that are peaceful and inclusive.

The characteristic of deradicalization in Indonesia is the involvement of former terrorist members, especially those with prestigious positions such as Nasir Abbas where Nasir can share his past experiences with detainees. Herein lies the key factor in the success of deradicalization with the stories of the tragic experiences of combatants. Nasir Abbas is a Malaysian citizen who has decided to stay in Indonesia. Nasir Abbas, the former chairman of Jamaah Islamiyah (JI)'s third mantiqi, often provided information to the Indonesian police about JI's patterns and methods of action. Nasir also wrote a book called Dismantling Jamaah Islamiyah which seeks to delegitimize various terror attacks. Nasir also openly promotes the deradicalization of combatants in other prisons. Apart from that, Nasir also participated in an open dialogue about deradicalization in the mass media, public spaces and closed meetings.

Apart from Nasir, there is Ali Imron who has helped the police a lot in identifying terror actors or activists in terror networks, including informing them of the patterns and characteristics of equipment and bomb assemblies that are unique to JI networks. The most crucial information from Ali Imron was related to the arrest of the terrorist Dulmatin in Pamulang, South Tangerang, in March 2010. The police, who previously did not recognize the face of the target who had been stalked for months, finally handed a portrait of the target's face to Ali Imron who then confirmed that the target is Dulmatin.

However, due to the lack of bureaucratic institutionalization, funding mechanisms, and competence of deradicalization officers, the success rate of this program can only be said to be sufficient (Striegher, 2013). Striegher gave an example of inadequate expert competence which causes education in transforming and fighting extremist ideology to be not optimal. As a result, the program only targets detainees to let go of their views on violent behaviour, not to let go of their terrorism ideology.

In line with the results of the research above, the Head of the National Agency for Combating Terrorism (BNPT) at that time, Ansyad Mbai, said in 2011 the number of people who had been arrested in connection with terrorism crimes reached around 600

people, 500 of whom had been tried and 210 people had been released from prison. Of the 210 people who have been released from their sentences, as many as 22 people (about 10% of convicts who have been released) are detected to be involved in terrorism crimes again (Antara, 2011). When undergoing deradicalization, the behaviour and words of a convict or ex-convict of terrorism can be good, but they still maintain their ideology in upholding an Islamic state. As experienced by Abdullah Sunata, who previously actively assisted the police in exposing terror networks when he was still in prison and received parole because he was deemed to have behaved well while in prison. After his release, Sunata returned to the terrorist network and was involved in the military camp case in Aceh. Reflecting on the Sunata case, we can judge that reciprocity in the form of leniency that is often applied by the authorities for the willingness of terrorist detainees to cooperate with the police is not always effective in preventing terrorist detainees from returning to their old habitat. The granting of conditional release to Sunata on the grounds of good behaviour while in prison also reflects a bureaucratic system that views terrorism issues as ordinary criminal matters.

Another example is the case that happened to Air Setyawan, who died in a siege in Jatiasih, Bekasi, West Java in August 2009. Previously, Air was arrested in 2004 in connection with the bombing of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. However, the crime evidence was insufficient, so Air was forgiven. The director of the Peace Prasasti Foundation (YPP) Noor Huda Ismail said that he had met Air who did not show any signs of radical behaviour that could lead to acts of violence. After that, it was revealed that Air, apart from being involved in the plot to bomb the Marriott-Ritz hotel, was also involved in the plot to attack President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's motorcade from Cikeas.

Deradicalization in the Digital Age

The process of deradicalization is a crucial factor in breaking up terrorist violence. Responding to violence with violence has proven ineffective in cutting down the roots of violence, so the

deradicalization process—besides carrying out legal proceedings against convicts—becomes significant. On the other hand, the process of radicalization occurred massively because of the use of technology in the dissemination of terror ideology through communication in cyberspace. The phenomenon of cyberspace has become a new trend in communication because of its effectiveness—capable of reaching all parts of the world without geographical barriers—and efficiency because of how cheap it is to operate. However, some consequences must be borne, when surfing in it one can drift in the swift currents of illusion. The more we enter the grip of the virtual world, the more we have the potential to get lost in fake social relations, including the world of terrorism. Klausen argues that ISIS is very aggressively using cyberspace as a global cyber war tactic in Syria. ISIS uses Twitter as well as Youtube—for example on the AL-Muhajiroun channel—to create an illusion to the global audience that they are stronger than they actually are (Awan, 2017).

The phenomenon of using cyberspace by ISIS is rife in carrying out this propaganda as cyber jihad where they often target groups of teenagers as their recruitment targets. They often make videos inviting them to join design and editing under the ISIS propaganda division, such as the video showing Bahrumsyah alias Abu Muhammad Al-Indonesia inviting Indonesian Muslims to join ISIS. Apart from that, there is also a video of Abu Jandal Al-Indonesia challenging Commander Moeldoko to fight in Syria. Provocative and propaganda videos like this have an impact on brainwashing young people and those who sympathize with ISIS. Through this cyberspace instrument, ISIS spreads the glamorization of extremism where at the same time they move, carry weapons, and fight with a calm and cool impression, and at the same time, ISIS stirs sorrow and fear for their acts of terror, which makes ISIS propaganda become an effective radicalization tool through cyberspace. This new narrative battlefield is as stated by Arquilla that ISIS is currently using online networks to produce and cause hostilities in a virtual environment (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 2001).

Bandura (Awan, 2017) explains Social Cognitive Theory which states that online communication also has an impact on the social

environment which will later help a group form motivational factors that make cohesion between its members stronger. Human behaviour, according to this theory, is often shaped by environmental influences or personality traits. The virtual world is a fertile ground where someone can get friends according to their characteristics. Therefore, usually, these people, even though they don't know each other and use anonymity in communicating online, will have a cybermob mentality (cyber mobs) that often bully or support certain issues or figures. Therefore, social media platforms, especially Twitter, are considered clouds like ISIS megaphones where they always give likes, hashtags, and retweets so that an issue from ISIS, such as a live update on victory in war, can reverberate throughout cyberspace globally.

The concept of cyberspace is a digital place where there are many identities with inter-cultural, cross-language, and cross-nation people travelling freely. Like a square, everyone in it can enter but does not automatically become part of a particular group or community. This concept comes from Juergen Habermas, where he divides public space into public space and the public sphere. The difference between the two is that public space is not a vehicle for a healthy exchange of ideas, argumentative political debates, as well as other ideas in responding to everyday realities, such as the internet which can be a vehicle for accessing accounts. The existence of a verandah is only a place for someone to convey his feelings, but it does not necessarily become a trigger for constructive critical debate building civilization. It is just a reflection on a reality that is faced, even though it gets comments or retweets on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and others, it is just an ordinary response from fellow account owners (Nasrullah, 2015).

Meanwhile, the public sphere has three principles. First, the disregard for status. The public space may not discuss equal status with the ruling authorities, but instead, there is equal opportunity to express a reality. It is more important to present ideas and ideas that will win claims for acceptance from the public at large. If the public cannot accept that, at least the idea will stick in the minds of the public. Second, there is a common concern for public issues so that there can

no longer be a monopoly on a work of other cultural products by any institution, including religion. Thus, the interpretation will be more varied if the material is presented in a public space. Third, is the principle of inclusiveness in which public media can access various discussions of ideas in public spaces, so that each other has the right to express opinions or even become a spokesperson or public representative.

In public spaces, communication channels are opened as wide as possible. In fact, this social media platform is an alternative for citizens in seeking and obtaining information, which was previously provided by traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers. However, some excesses must be endured, namely information traffic becomes blurry, out of focus, and ambiguous to a certain point, and humans find it difficult to distinguish between true news and hoaxes. A person's expertise is no longer valued because everyone has their own channel (Jati, 2016).

ISIS and various terrorist organizations—most of them using anonymity in cyberspace—are able to build imaginary ideal worlds and utopias that cybersurfers then perceive as real. Therefore, deradicalization efforts must also utilize cyberspace instruments to contribute to giving another colour to the digital public space so that it is not dominated by radical narratives. The internet is filled with terror content, from videos of violence to procedures for assembling bombs, even though it is replaced with efforts to provide socialization about reconciling narratives. Now is the time for cyberspace to become a virtual public sphere where there are debates between narratives from various groups to defend their interests in front of the public podium. At least there are several best practices and the potential for using Youtube media in socializing deradicalization programs, one of them is Sofyan Tsauri's channel.

Why does it have to be Sofyan Tsauri?

Sofyan Tsauri, a former police officer who became the main supplier and trainer of firearms in terrorism in Aceh, whether he intends it or not, is now participating in deradicalization by utilizing

digital technology. Sofyan has a YouTube channel called Sofyan Tsauri channel with nearly 15.5 thousand subscribers with 333 videos viewed and watched by nearly 1.5 million people (Sofyan Tsauri's YouTube account statistics are attached below). Sofyan Tsauri's video promotes Islam rahmatan lil alamin which is complemented by a background on how he can be exposed to radicalism and terrorism. On his YouTube account channel, Sofyan Tsauri also frequently interviews ex-convicts and convicts of terrorism who have admitted their mistakes and returned to the Republic of Indonesia, such as the Bali Bombing prisoner, Ali Imron. Sofyan also collaborated with Youtuber Deddy Corbuzier—who has 19.7 million subscribers—in a video that was watched by 1.4 million people.

The creativity of Sofyan Tsauri above, if analyzed through Edward Said's point of view through the concept of Orientalism, is an effort to make narratives about terrorism and its community actors can be conveyed to the public according to the wishes of Sofyan Tsauri, et al. Which mean that is formed later is not a result of judgment by Western researchers, local researchers, or authorities through instruments of knowledge. Edward Said said that subjection and colonization were always carried out by developed countries against third-world countries. In order for imperialism to last, culture and knowledge are also used as tools to make third-world citizens comply. This cultural production then gave birth to a superior which was represented by the West, and an inferior which was attached to the colonized nations. "My self and the others", said the invaders.

Even though physical colonization is almost non-existent, submission in the form of penetration and interference by the Western world in the ideological, political, economic, social and cultural fields still occurs. There is a state of tension created by the Imperialists. In the world of knowledge, there is still the arrogance of Western scientists that all the complexities that occur in developing countries must be analyzed using a Western point of view and methodology. Determination of the definition should be made in the logic that is believed by the West. Scientific publications and journals must be written in the channels they create in the language of authority: the

West. If these criteria are not met, then a work of knowledge will be considered as a lowly substandard work and gradually its voice will be lost from the public. In this context, colonialism in the modern era also makes Islam an antagonistic construct in civilization. Edward Said gave the example of Algeria's national liberation war from France which is considered by the West as a paradigmatic case of Islamic anti-colonial resistance. Edward, quoting Pierre Bourdieu, said that the arrangement of the Islamic religion had now taken on a function in the colonial era (Mutman, 1993).

Talking about postcolonial is also inadequate without noticing Gayatri Spivak's perspective regarding subaltern—originally used by the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci—which refers to the community of nations where they live under the shadow of Western hegemony. This term is not only applied to the oppressed class in the social, political, economic and cultural fields but is also related to restrictions on any livelihood access. These subaltern groups are sometimes not aware that they are in the shadow of a hegemonic structure. This object is used by the West for storytelling but then sadly, rearranged furthermore into a story under the views of the West, which is then disseminated back to the subaltern society. In the end, if all perspectives were monopolized by the Western lens, colonialism in its most discursive form would actually be taking place. As a consequence, Western nations will continue to excel culturally because their products are set as the standard (Setiawan, 2018).

Therefore, according to Spivak, the effort to recapture the existence of the subaltern should proceed. People like Sofyan Tsauri must be supported so that the discourse he produces is not marginalized by colonial-tinged narratives that frame Sofyan Tsauri's story from a certain point of view and interests. Sofyan Tsauri's question is about how an appreciation of expression, the point of view that he experiences himself must be raised to the public by himself without the need to be represented by another entity. The Sofyan Tsauri channel should be an example of how former terrorists talk about terrorism in the digital space.

This method may be an inspiration and balance the radical narratives that exist in cyberspace so far. How to communicate through blogs, websites, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, telegram, or virtual world chat rooms are increasingly popular along with the development of technology in the information field. Sofyan Tsauri's account is a form of counter-cyber-terrorism, where so far there has been netizen worship regarding the ideal Islamic state concept of a caliphate system because of the massive narratives spread by extremist and terrorist groups. The concept of caliphate and legitimate government is toghut, for example, is a form of simulacrum in cyberspace, that is, there is no longer a boundary between the real and the imaginary. There are lots of examples that we can find when individuals and groups who worship the concept of the Islamic caliphate then leave for Syria and become members of ISIS. Through the internet media, sweet promises are given to them that the solution to injustice in the social and economic fields they are experiencing is the caliphate system. Health, education, energy and various human needs will be provided by the caliphate fairly without paying a penny. Then, those who defend the banner of the caliphate, will live gloriously or die in a martyr's condition with the reward of heaven and dozens of angels. The propaganda of this model certainly attracts the interest of a person or even a group of individuals to migrate.

Through the internet, terrorist actors can also provide opinions on the current government system and the position of a religion or group. If it doesn't match what they feel is subjective, then they give the impression that they are under pressure and their existence is threatened. They provide the imagination and the illusion that if a particular religion or group is in power and their ideology is applied kaffah (overall) then humanity will live at an ideal level. Apparently, the concept offered was able to attract followers. After gaining attention with the utopian propaganda they spread through the internet, terrorist groups provide radical understanding on the internet for self-radicalization by followers who surf in cyberspace. If this follower is loyal, then he will be recruited into a terrorist group which can later help find funding through donations or acts of fraud. If it is

acute, these followers obediently carry out someone's orders to carry out acts of terror such as suicide bombings. All of this is done through the internet or cyberspace media where actors often interact with each other—those who give orders and those who are ordered—never have physical contact. Therefore, the radical narratives in cyberspace must be fought with certain antithesis.

The following are examples of some content from Sofyan Tsauri to fight cyber radicalism on his channel:

1. PAC IPNU Nationality Talkshow – IPPNU Temayang (Tsauri, 2021)

"This radical group limits the truth within their group. Their religious understanding is so exclusive. They even dare to disobey their parents because they work as civil servants. As a result, these parents are not used as guardians in marriage. People like this will usually call the congregation at the mosque in front of the house called the mosque a heretic for doing things that the Prophet SAW did not do. This is dangerous. There are also stories about Indonesian Army members who just got weapons. What he did the first time instead was shot at the police station. The examples above are because we chose the wrong coach in recitation."

2. Get to know the figure of Sofyan Tsauri from the eyes of Ustadz Haris Amir Falah—a former high-ranking member of the Indonesian Mujahidin Council and the Anshorut Tauhid Congregation (Tsauri, 2021).

"Someone asked, could Sofyan Tsauri be an intelligence agent? Well, if he is an intelligence agent, then surely he won't be detained for 10 years. If I was detained for 5 years. If Sofyan is wise, then he should have come here by Pajero."

...

"Is terror set by the police? Wow, according to senior brothers like us, that sentence is called insulting. It should be work that needs to be appreciated as a series of faith, hijrah, and jihad. What about Munkar we have to do amaliyah. That is indeed the program in our haraqoh group. If for example, there are people who are together, that's someone

else's business. But if it's as if we're told to bomb here and there to become puppets of the police, how come we're like idiots?"

3. Ali Imron Exclusive Interview – Batch 91 Asykari Afghanistan – Bali Bomb Convicts – Islamic Boarding School Caretaker in Lamongan (Tsauri, 2020).

"Regarding the attack on the police, what I heard was that initially these brothers attacked the police because they arrested us, Bali Bomb convicts. Yes, they should be grateful that we were arrested and tried. We're bombers. If we bombed Arabia, we would have been decapitated. This brother's thought is immoral, it needs to be straightened out."

...

"The thinking of Jemaah Islamiyah is that it does not allow its members to attack the apparatus, government and state symbols. Noordin M. Top attacked the Ritz Carlton in 2009. He knows Dr. Azhari was shot by the Densus in Malang, but he still bombed American and foreigners, instead of taking revenge on the police. That's why we were accused of being ISIS sympathizers as sluggish Aqidah. We have existed since DI/TII then became JI, then you go to Afghanistan and we can all kill techniques."

...

"I did not welcome ISIS, which was also led by Zarkouwi. Until there was a blank for me to sign the allegiance, but I refused. Moreover, ISIS is takfiri. We at JI have a basis. So don't be amazed by the people who proclaimed an Islamic state, we are immediately euphoric and want to join in droves to Syria. We have to think about it, especially when there will be bloodshed."

4. Outspoken Syahrul Munif to Sofyan Tsauri. Munif is a JAD member affiliated with Abu Jandal Al-Yemeni. Munif for 5 months was assigned to Hararia – Aleppo, to guard the border with Bashr Assad's army which was only 500 meters away. Now, Munif sells vitamin products. (Tsauri, 2020).

"After arriving in Syria, I just found out that ISIS members there easily view other people as an infidel, and are judgemental to other groups. Those who do not want to join ISIS will be said to be apostates and may be killed. My conscience cannot accept this. Then, I went home and was sentenced for 3 years."

...

"Finally I decided to return to the Republic of Indonesia because I was guaranteed that people could worship Allah in peace in Indonesia. Now I wonder why the government in the eyes of ISIS is so easy to disbelieve. I remind you that we should not easily get carried away by the understanding of takfiri. Come on, let's study religion seriously together. Don't feel like reading a verse of the Quran over and over as if you already understand all of Islam. We also make more friends, don't make more enemies. Also, don't judge other Muslims easily. We must believe that the upholding of Islam is God's business. We as creatures must continue to do good deeds."

...

"Just hitching a promotion, this is my selling product, a vitamin supplement called Calyna."

5. Understanding in Religion with Yahya alias Haedar—a Jabhatun Nusroh (JN) combatant from Pasamanan, West Sumatra who is affiliated with Al-Qaeda. He fought against the Bashr Assad regime for 2.5 years, but JN's conflict with ISIS made him lose against Assad. (Tsauri, 2020).

"Many people from West Sumatra have pledged allegiance to ISIS who are scattered in Moro, Marawi and others. I joined under Katibah Abu Harris Al-Falestine to guard and secure the area. However, in the midst of the battle with Assad, ISIS forced the others to pledge allegiance to him as the caliphate. As a result, the Liberation of Syria

was almost successful, but because ISIS attacked from behind and making JN infidels in Aleppo, the fight weakened. ISIS often throws poison gas at JN camps because they think outside them, like JN as Darul Kufr, so ISIS has the right to do anything. If I count, 9 out of 10 ISIS attacks are aimed at Muslims. In my opinion, this is what causes Islam to be destroyed from within. ISIS is the Khawarij who fights the Muslims and allows idol worshippers. They were infiltrated by Western intelligence."

From some of Sofyan Tsauri's content above, in carrying out the stages of counter-radicalization and deradicalization, BNPT should also start providing education and outreach related to the character traits of the millennial generation, namely technological literacy, so that they are not targeted to become radical as a result of surfing in the digital world. For those who have been exposed to and become convicts of terrorism, we think it is necessary to facilitate individuals like Sofyan Tsauri, a former terrorist who now exists in cyberspace to spread peace and socialize Islam that is rahmatal lil alamin.

The content created by Sofyan Tsauri should be repeated with each other's creativity and amplified so that it resonates with the ears of the millennial group, especially from urban groups who are new to Islam and dazzled by the word hijrah. Other former terrorist convicts certainly welcome it, because they also don't mind being interviewed, recorded in video and audio formats, and disseminated in cyberspace. Figures of the caliber of Ali Imron, Umar Patek, Haris Amir Falah, or also Nasir Abbas need to be facilitated to create works through YouTube and podcasts as an effort to help millennials not to be lost in the vast digital desert. For example, content that can be made is Ali Imron teaching Tio Pakusadewo the Koran at the Polda Metro Jaya detention centre. Content can also be when Umar Patek raises the Red and White flag during the independence ceremony at Lapas in Sidoarjo, East Java. Besides that, appreciation for ex-convicts by providing space for them to convey their experiences is a form of rejecting the hegemony of Western knowledge which may be biased. Former terrorism convicts do not need representatives to speak out.

They can convey their point of view based on their experience, making them the authoritative agents who produce narratives or studies on terrorism and counter-radicalization in Indonesia.

Conclusion

From the description above, we can conclude that the deradicalization process is a non-stop cycle, even though the program participants have left the penitentiary. Various BNPT deradicalization programs have indeed been designed to reconstruct a radical understanding of convicts or former terrorism convicts. However, in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, it is necessary to re-emphasize the importance of using the internet as a battleground for substance. The torrent of hoaxes and fake news as well as various propaganda from radical groups to terrorists must be countered by the dissemination of news that contains soothing content. The global world today is borderless, without space and time barriers.

Cyberspace is an effective and efficient arena because it has a long reach and is relatively inexpensive to operate. However, it should be noted that someone can be trapped in the illusion and clutches of the virtual world, including in the world of terrorism. Various terrorist organizations can easily build their image and attract sympathizers by offering an ideal world imagination. This will lead to hyperreality of cyber surfers who are trapped in following the desires of these individuals or organizations to carry out terror in the real world. So, it is fitting that cyberspace now functions as a virtual public sphere where all entities have the right to convey debate in a responsible democratic climate. Counter-terrorism action efforts in the form of democratic dialogue encounters in cyberspace that can enable all elements of society, especially those who are vulnerable to the influence of terrorist organizations, must be found and made so that all groups exchange views without anonymity.

The BNPT has indeed started by creating the dutadunia.org and jalandunia.org websites, but the echoes are quiet, maybe the reason is that most of the actors are not people who have been terrorists. Collaborating with Sofyan Tsauri as an influencer to combat

radicalization, it is necessary to consider that the peace resonance produced by former terrorism convicts can have resonance in various locations. In addition, terrorists and former convicts are expected to be able to replicate the methods of *da'wah* in the digital era that are friendly to millennials.

It is important to engage former terrorist convicts to create content on various social media platforms because the culture war and knowledge war also saturate terrorism studies. Whoever is able to make a definition of something, then he is the winner in the cultural battle because the winner has the right to determine what is wrong and what is right. Therefore, former terrorist convicts must define themselves so that they are whole when viewed as subjects. If later there is a debate, it does not matter because public space must be created to discuss public interests which can strengthen democracy in the future. Like a song, the Javanese must be persistent in defending their culture by choosing to sing Didi Kempot's songs, rather than being immersed in Western and K-Pop songs to maintain the existence of Javanese culture itself. Likewise, with the narrative of terrorism, it is these ex-convicts who should be supported and given a podium so that their narrative is not contaminated by superior researchers. Finally, this article is far from perfect, therefore further research is required, especially regarding the future impact if the policy to provide stimulus to ex-convicts to work in the digital world is really performed.

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