

## **Counter-radicalism and Moderate Muslim in Jember**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper marks an attempt to understand and explain the cultural movement of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah -two moderate Islamic organization with the largest mass in Indonesia - in countering the penetration of religious radicalism in Jember --one district in East Java. Despite using a different platform and approach, namely Islam of Archipelago and Islam Progressive, but the two organizations have the same prophetic political mission to fight all forms of radicalism in the name of religion. This paper argues that both the organization itself, it is still as a progressive pillar of Indonesian civil Islam who are concerned in fighting the agenda of tolerance, pluralism and democracy. Both also always positioned itself as an anti-thesis and always take opposition to radicalism forces. However, religious radicalism is a serious threaten especially to fight the agenda of diversity and peaceful coexistence of religious differences. So far, this paper intends to elaborate progressive ideas among moderate Muslims -NU and Muhammadiyah-- in consolidating themselves to stem the flow of radicalism.*

### **Abstrak**

*Tulisan ini mengulas gerakan kultural kalangan Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) dan Muhammadiyah –dua organisasi Islam moderat dengan massa terbesar di Indonesia— dalam melakukan counter terhadap penetrasi radikalisme agama di Jember –salah satu daerah kabupaten di Jawa Timur. Kendatipun menggunakan platform dan pendekatan berbeda, yakni Islam Nusantara dan Islam Berkemajuan, namun kedua organisasi itu sama-sama memiliki misi politik profetis untuk melawan segala bentuk tindakan radikalisme yang mengatasnamakan agama. Tulisan ini sendiri berargumen bahwa kedua organisasi itu, masih menjadi pilar progresif bagi kekuatan civil Islam Indonesia yang concern dalam memperjuangkan agenda toleransi, pluralism dan demokrasi. Keduanya juga selalu memposisikan diri sebagai kekuatan anti-tesa yang selalu beroposisi dengan berbagai kekuatan radikalisme. Bagaiapanun, radikalisme agama merupakan ancaman serius bagi, terutama agenda penciptaan koeksistensi damai bagi keragaman dan perbedaan umat beragama. Tulisan ini bermaksud untuk mengelaborasi gagasan-gagasan progresif dari kalangan muslim moderat –dalam hal ini NU dan Muhammadiyah-- dalam mengonsolidasikan diri untuk membendung laju pergerakan radikalisme.*

**Keywords Moderate Muslim, Radicalism, Pluralism, and Democracy.**

## A. Introduction

Strengthening the religious radicalism after the New Order era did not get reactive response by the moderate Muslims in Indonesia. In countering radicalism, they prefer to use a cultural way to violence. What Nahdlatul Ulama (Revival of the Religious Scholars) and Muhammadiyah (Muslim reformist association) --two moderate Islamic organization<sup>1</sup> with the largest mass in Indonesia-- has done, for example, in consolidating, socializing and internalizing the moderate Islamic values that are tolerant, plural and democratic through educational institutions, publishing, *majlis ta'lim* (religious study group), and information publication in mass media, especially social media, is a series of cultural forms of de-radicalization. Through the paradigm of religious movements, where NU has developed *Islam Nusantara* and Muhammadiyah has designed the Progress Islam (*Islam Berkemajuan*), both are equally committed to strengthening the moderate Islamic Indonesia in competition to stem the tide of religious radicalism.

Meanwhile, the response of moderate Muslims in Indonesia against religious radicalism, not only takes place at the national level, but has spread to many regions and even to rural districts. This is quite understandable considering the expansion of understanding and religious radicalism has penetrated into various sectors of life across geographical boundaries, cultural, and religious. However, this understanding has been widely spread not only through the missionary movement physically by jumping directly to the people who do the radicalism proponents. The spread of the radicalism virus takes place effectively, especially through social media networks. Therefore, it is not surprising if the seeds of radicalism not only grow and thrive in urban areas but also in rural areas. The terrorists are arrested by Densus 88, for example, not only from the

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<sup>1</sup> The two organizations can be classified into moderate Islam due to their non-violent theological standpoint. These two organizations, in addition, agree with the idea of Unified State of the Republic of Indonesia (*NKRI, Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*), one of the most latent issues propagated by Muslim hardliners in the country. For both of them, the form of Unified State of the Republic of Indonesia, with Pancasila as its ideological basis, UUD 1945 as its constitution basis, and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* as its slogan, are considered to be able to accommodate the substantive elements of moderate Islam, the theological vision of which is blessing for all universe (*rahmatan lil'alamin*). Masdar Hilmy, "Wither Indonesia's Islamic Moderatism? A Reexamination on the Moderate Vision of Muhammadiyah and NU", *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 7 No. 1, 2013, 32.

urban educated people, but also from lower-class rural population. Moreover, the radicalism has systemically spread through the learning materials in schools.

Considering the influence of religious radicalism has reached the crucial level in public life, it is no wonder if the various organizations in the moderate Islam area, are inspired to be actively involved in conducting de-radicalization. In Jember --an area in the eastern region of East Java that has been the setting of this study--, two moderate Islamist vanguard organizations, NU and Muhammadiyah, also take an active role in strengthening the moderate Islam as a counter to the religious radicalism and their movement. The structural elements of NU Jember (from District Board of NU/ *Pengurus Cabang NU*, Institute for the Study and Development of Human Resources /*Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Sumberdaya Manusia*, Committee for Religious Problems Solving/ *Lajnah Bahtsul Masail*, the Institution of Press and Publications/ *Lembaga Ta'lif wa Nashr*, NU Women's Organization/ *Muslimat*, and NU Younger Women's Organization/ *Fatayat*, Ma'arif NU Institute of Education), for example, regularly hold *tadarus* (lecturing), *halaqah* (Islamic study circle), seminars, education and training, and publishing of the results of thinking and the *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah* studies. Moreover, the cultural elements of NU Jember also take an active role in conducting the various activities that are correlated with the strengthening *Aswaja* and simultaneously de-radicalization.

The same thing has been done also by Muhammadiyah Jember. This modernist Muslim organization, is as busy as the NU in conducting internal consolidation through strengthening of faith, moderate Islam concept and religious vision that also derived from the *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (Followers of the Prophet's Tradition and Congregation) <sup>2</sup> doctrine. In some places, in the Jember district like Kencong, Muhammadiyah members involved tension and clashes with the radical groups as a result of mosques, educational institutions and their Islamic Lecturing hijacked by the radicals. The Internal consolidation has been also done by the Branch Executive Muhammadiyah Jember as a collective

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<sup>2</sup> Those who follow the Sunnah, long-hand term for the Majority Sunni branch within Islam. In Indonesia it refers to those who follow any of the four *mazhab* (school of Islamic jurisprudence), and is used by traditionalist Muslims to differentiate themselves from modernist Muslims. Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia*, (Singapore: ISEAS, 2009).

response on the Decree of the Central Board (*Surat Keputusan Pengurus Pusat/SKPP*) Muhammadiyah instructing their members to be critical of any activities of organizations and political parties in the name of religion and claims to expand their programs like Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*). It is really a political party because every political party is clearly oriented toward power. SKPP is created as a Muhammadiyah response upon infiltration conducted by the Islamic militant group considered harming not only for the Muhammadiyah members, but also the moderate Islam values that are tolerant, pluralistic, and democratic, and integrity of the Republic.<sup>3</sup>

It should be recognized that the de-radicalization movement performed by moderate Muslims as a response to the radicalization movement launched by the radical Muslim has raised the tensions. Nevertheless, the tension and the clash that occurred between the two groups not until caused the emergence of conflict and violence. In fact, both groups can coexist in the public space of Jember that is plural and multicultural. In a certain extent, they can be tolerant not to intervene and impose their will in spreading their religion.

The tolerance behaviour is considered to contribute significantly in creating the peaceful condition in Jember. Furthermore, this paper intends to understand and clarify the conditions for the creation of a peaceful coexistence between the majority of moderate Muslims and the radical Muslim minority in Jember. Specifically, the study focus on a description of the cultural response of NU and Muhammadiyah -two vanguard moderate Islamic organizations-- in conducting de-radicalization and also in maintaining peaceful coexistence, especially among internal Muslims in Jember.

## **B. The Local Context of Diversity in Jember**

Jember actually is an area that is quite unique. In contrast to some surrounding areas, Jember which has an area of 3293.34 km and a population of 2,231,793 people, has no indigenous people, as Banyuwangi who has indigenous ethnic named *Osing* and Probolinggo area that is famous with their *Tengger* ethnic. The Jember residents come from multiethnic. At the beginning of its development, there were three major

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<sup>3</sup>See SKPP *Muhammadiyah* Number: 149/Kep/I.0/B/2006 on the Policy of *Muhammadiyah* Central Board Regarding the Organization Consolidation and the *Muhammadiyah* Charitable and Business.

ethnics of Jember that dominate the region, namely Java, *Madura* and *Osing*. The arrival of the western part of Java, *Madura* and *Osing* massively to the Jember region, were driven by a fundamental factor which is economic motives. The opening of the estate by the Dutch government is identified as a trigger massive migration flows of people from outside Jember.

In the next development, the processes of social change in Jember had brought this area to be the most dynamic urban areas and open with a complex ethnic configuration compared to the surrounding areas that included in the zone of the horse hooves region. The ethnic diversity in Jember history had no raises many social tensions triggered by the attitude of ethnocentrism. Perhaps, the absence of a culture that is truly dominant, can be identified as a factor that can suppress the emergence of a dominant majority culture, where the majority of ethnic culture creates the domination of the ethnic minorities as Bruner findings when examining the relationship between the ethnic groups in Medan and Bandung.<sup>4</sup>

Instead, the ethnic diversity in the process of interaction is able to bring a cultural construction that is well known as hybrid culture<sup>5</sup> characterized by openness, assertiveness, friendliness and tolerance. The values have been the system –like *safety valve*-- which guarantee coexistence and cooperation in a pluralistic society such Jember.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>The study results of Edward M. Bruner who use the concept of the dominant majority culture in understanding the pattern of relations between ethnic groups in Medan and Bandung tell that the existence of a dominant majority culture determines the shape of inter-group relations in the region. Medan is a city that consists of a number of minorities in the absence of a dominant culture that between ethnic groups growing fierce competition and inter-ethnic relations are tense. While in Bandung, the dominant culture is Sundanese culture as the culture of the majority; the entrants must adjust to the culture and the relations between ethnic groups are more open and relaxed. See Edward M. Bruner, *The Expression of Ethnicity in Indonesia*, in A. Cohen (ed.), *Urban Ethnicity*, (London: Travistock, 1973), p. 251-280.

<sup>5</sup>A Cultural expert of Jember, Ayu Sutarto makes semiotic marking the Jember's hybrid culture with the phrase "*Jowo yo Jowo ning dudu Jowo, Meduro yo Meduro ning dudu Meduro*". It means, the Javanese who becomes a Jember resident in fact it was indeed a Javanese but its status is no longer a pure Java. Similarly, the Madurese settled in Jember is actually the Madurese person but no longer pure Madura. This Scientific Oration was delivered at the National Seminar in the Framework Konfercab NU Jember, 4 June, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> As stated by M. Atho Mudzhar that in a society increasingly plural and multicultural any social elements need to see the identity and existence of each which may be a display or a development would disturb or even threaten see another identity and existence. All of them require a system that can guarantee the coexistence and cooperation in the

In addition to the ethnic and cultural diversity, Jember is also characterized by the religions diversity. Not only the religions are officially recognized by the state to grow and develop in Jember. The Variety of denomination, organizations and religious groups, are influenced the dynamics and social plurality of Jember. The position of the Islamic religion itself is quite special in the life of Jember's society. As in other parts of *Nusantara*, Islam becomes the religion of the majority embraced by the Jember people. It can be said, 90 percent of the Jember population is Muslim. BPS data said that Jember residents who embraced Islam are around 2,099,349 people, 13.222 people are Catholics, 26.780 people are Protestants, 3,708 people are Hindu, 3,466 people are Buddhist, and others are 46.<sup>7</sup>

Although Islam has successfully positioned itself as a mainstream religion, it does not necessarily become a dominating majority that deny the existence of other religions. The existence of religions other than Islam can not be seen as the others, or simply be positioned as a religion complementary. Every religion has its existence and each of which has the right to live, thrive and coexist with Islam on an equal basis. In fact, all religions and religious sects that are in internal or external Islamic environment can flourish. All that would not have happened without a great tolerance of religious people in Jember in facing diversity and difference.<sup>8</sup>

### C. Some Features of Radical Islam

Who actually incorporated into the radical Islamic groups? Is there any radical Islamic group in Jember? A number of questions arose in discussions with several informants. Not all informants have a same figure of radical Islam in Jember. In fact, some of them who consider are not a group of radical Islam expressly says that in fact, the hardline groups in Jember does not exist. The religious movements such as Party of

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plurality. M. Atho Mudzhar, "the Religious Contribution Challenges in creating multiculturalism in Indonesia", *Harmoni, Jurnal Multikultural dan Multi-religius*, Vol. III No. 11. 2004, 11. All of them require a system that can guarantee the coexistence and cooperation in the plurality. M. Atho Mudzhar, "the Religious Contribution Challenges in creating multiculturalism in Indonesia", *Harmoni, Jurnal Multikultural dan Multireligius*, Vol. III No. 11. 2004, 11.

<sup>7</sup>Badan Pusat Statistik, *Kabupaten Jember dalam Angka 2010*, h. 132.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam Dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan Sebuah Refleksi Sejarah*, (Bandung: Mizan bekerjasama dengan Maarif Institute, 2009), h. 46.

Liberation in Indonesia region/Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam/FPI*), and *Salafism* in Jember, are not radical, as an act of terrorism that is often done by the jihadists. In conducting the demonstration, for example, HTI in Jember never did anarchic action. While formally FPI has gone since the Young Men's Branch of NU (*Ansor*) and the Paramilitary Wing of Ansor (*Banser*) disbanded them some time ago as a result of the national leader of FPI harassment against Gus Dur. Meanwhile, the Salafi groups in Jember indeed sound quite militant in spreading their message, but what they have spread for merely criticizing the local traditions in the religious practices considered heresy and superstition.<sup>9</sup> All these facts are not enough to say that in Jember there is a radical Islamic group.

Meanwhile, some other informants said that the existence of radical Islam in Jember is not a mere fiction, but a real presence. They judge that the movement is not limited to Islamic radicalism shown by violence in the physical sense as expressed by the terrorist who detonated the *Bali Bomb*, *Mega Kuningan Bomb*, the violence against *Ahmadiyah* congregation in Parung-Bogor, and a series of acts of terror and violence. The radical Islamic groups in Jember can be considered from the perspective of their religious tend to be dogmatic, rigid, and textual in understanding the religious texts. In other term, the feature of radical Islam is literal approach used to read sacred texts. Literal in this context means the tendency of radical groups to assert what is explicitly mentioned in the sacred texts such as the Qur'an and Hadith without taking historical context into account<sup>10</sup>.

Thus perspective has an impact on their exclusive religious attitudes and behavior, and to identify their group of religious understanding is the most truth claims, to look at the diversity of religious expression in other groups as a false, heresy, superstition, syncretic, and not authentic. As the result, they believe that it is important to correct understanding and religious practices of different groups even if by force. Even some groups of people tentatively identified radical such as HTI, not

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<sup>9</sup>See Aswab Mahasin, *Masyarakat Madani dan Lawan-lawannya: Sebuah Mukaddimah (Kata Pengantar) dalam Ernest Gellner, Membangun Masyarakat Sipil Prasyarat Menuju Kebebasan*, (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), h. XI; Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, (Washington: CCAS, Georgetown University, 1986), h. 21-22.

<sup>10</sup> Najib Ghabbian, "Political Islam and Violence", *New Political Science*, Vol. 22, No. 1. 2000, p. 77-78; Masdar Hilmy, *Islamism and Democracy in Indonesia: Piety and Pragmatism*, (Singapore: ISEAS, 2010), p. 165.

only interested to straighten people's creed that consider deviating from the purity of the Islamic teachings, but also they will try to change the socio-political order of life through the caliphate system.<sup>11</sup>

All characteristics above are evidence that the Islamic radicalism in Jember is not just a figment.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the radical Islam is not only associated with the movement of their praxis in the form of anarchy, destruction, expulsion, torture, or murder committed by their group over other groups, but also closely related to the dimensions of their perspective and ideology. One of the main keywords to identify whether groups of people categorized as radical Islamic groups lies in the dimension of violence (radicalization)<sup>13</sup> or religious militancy which they did.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Although HTI Jember in religious acts do not show the face of the grim, violent and anarchic actions, but they still have the imagination to be able to enforce sharia law in all sectors of life. As revealed in an interview with several HTI activists Jember, according to their caliphate as an Islamic social and political system remains the ideal for which they fought within the framework of changing socio-political order which now is dominated by the politics of the Western model which is seen secularism and the ringleader for damage to socio-political order of Indonesia, Interviews with HTI activist, 11-12 September 2015.

<sup>12</sup>It is quoted from interviews with informants among KH. Muhyidin Abdusshomad, August 18, 2015; Idrus Romli, August 29, 2015; Nur Hasan, August 23, 2015, and Ahmad Taufiq, August 24, 2015. If it is tracked from the existing literature, some characteristics of radicalism as expressed by informants are in tune with Horace M. Kallen's view. According to him, the social radicalism is characterized by three general trends. First, radicalism is a response to ongoing condition. Second, radicalism does not stop at the rejection, but instead continue to change the existing order with an order form to another. Third is the strong conviction of the radicalists on the truth of program or their ideology. This attitude is at the same time accompanied by another disclaimer truth system to be replaced. Bahtiar Effendy dan Hendro Prasetyo, *Radikalisme Agama: Sebuah Pengantar*, Bahtiar Effendy dan Hendro Prasetyo, *Radikalisme Agama*, (Jakarta: PPIM-IAIN, 1998), h. xviii-xviii; see also Horace M. Kallen, *Radicalism*, in Edwin R.A. Seligman, *Encyclopedia of The Social Sciences*, Vol. XIII-XIV, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), p. 51-54.

<sup>13</sup>At least there are three models of the violence that is inherent in the Islamic radical; first, the doctrinal violent, namely the understanding of literary-covered on the religious texts and just accept the truth of one-sided, second, the traditional and cultural violent, the truth-unilateral upheld making them unable to understand another truth that is different, and the religious practices that originally accommodated and subsequently convicted heretic, and the perpetrators are convicted idolaters, apostates and heathen, third, the sociological violence, namely actions anarchic and destructive of others accused idolaters, apostasy, and / or heathen. See also Abdurrahman Wahid (ed.) *Ilusi Negara Islam Ekspansi Gerakan Islam Transnasional di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, Gerakan Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, dan Maarif Institute, 2009), p. 88-89.

<sup>14</sup>According to David Little, there are four types of religious militancy: (1) violent intolerance; this type uses violence forcibly (Forcible action) and often involves the sacred embodiment on the meaning of necessity and public emergency as well as defining the other entitled destroyed for the sake of self-affirmation as the only one that has the right to exist and sustainable (us-versus-them); (2) civic intolerance, this second type uses legitimate political, power-oriented (state) because the state is the only institution entitled to use legitimate violence, through civic enforcement related to political and legal systems which have run as the appropriate means to achieve their goals; (3) non-



Not limited to that, the group that identified as the Islamic radical also has religious imagination and tries to make it happen at the level of reality in various ways. For example, the *Salafi* groups has the imagination to make Islamic purification movement as the Islamic Arab (read: Arabization) and reject the local rituals<sup>15</sup>. To realize their goal, the Jember *Salafi* do *syi'ar* through various media including Friday sermons, religious discourse in religious lecture groups via radio, newspapers and newsletters. The HTI group, although lately, starts showing sympathetic propaganda, but they still dream to apply the Islamic *shariah* in Jember and later the Islamic *shariah* is really applicable in all sectors of life; social, economic and politic. Meanwhile, PKS fights through the political corridor for the enforcement of *sharia* law in the national life and state system<sup>16</sup>. It is to show that the spirit of purification and religious radicalization is not only present in the form of the struggle of ideas and concepts, but it has been manifest in the praxis movement. They try to present a real alternative to the Islamic Indonesia colors that are polite and tolerant to be arrogant, violent, cruel and hateful and feel entitled to retain.<sup>17</sup>

Actually, the Islamic radicalism is not just emerged from religious organizations that have been identified as radical as HTI, MMI, FPI, the *Salafi* group etc. Even among the organizations that have been imaged moderate as NU and Muhammadiyah, there are also their members who have a religious point of view and attitude that can be said to be radical. From NU, for example, there are their members who are similar to the

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violent tolerance; this type uses religious commitment that is finer and has different implications in treating the other; (4) civic tolerance; this type uses firmer tolerance (enforced) through the country lanes, adopts laws in accordance with the norms of tolerance and non-discrimination, and enforces the laws despite legitimate violence. Muhammad Ali, *Teologi Pluralis-Multikultural: Menghargai Kemajemukan Menjalin Kebersamaan*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 2003), h. 120-121; Greg Fealy, *Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia: The Faltering Revival?* Southeast Asian Affairs, Vol. 2004, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 104-121.

<sup>15</sup> As Masdar Hilmy said that puritan agencies like Salafi groups tend to avoid what is not mentioned in sacred texts. They will consider anything existing outside of the texts as innovation or novelty (*bid'ah*) which is forbidden (*haram*) in Islam. They further argue that such Western-derived concepts as democracy, liberalism, capitalism and the like *bid'ah*, because religious texts do not explicitly mention them and, therefore *haram* in Islam. See Masdar Hilmy, *Islamism and Democracy in Indonesia*, p. 165.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Idrus Ramli, August 29, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Abdurrahman Wahid (ed.), *Ilusi Negara Islam Ekspansi Gerakan Islam Transnsional di Indonesia*, (Jakarta: The Wahid Institute, Gerakan Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, dan Maarif Institute, 2009), h. 88.

radical in addressing social-religious problems. In public morality issues, some NU members fight for *Shariah* regulation.

Jember as a religious region is one discourse among NU cadres who fights through parliament that dream to make Jember as a religious city that is really clean from the things that have been considered as the vandal of social morality. It is relevant to Jember's Motto as 'religious Jember' brought by NU cadres with getting legitimacy and support from Islamic radical groups such as HTI, FPI, and PKS either through parliamentary or extra-parliamentary. The Only difference is that the moderate Islam merely dreams the formalization of *sharia* (Islamic Law) in the form of legislation as a precondition for the creation of the social life order that is truly religious, while the Islamic radical organizations such as HTI, FPI, and PKS, they dream the establishment of *Khilafah Islamiyah* in worldwide, by placing *Nusantara* as one part in it.<sup>18</sup>

#### **D. The Impact of Radicalism Movement**

The various religious movements that have been done by the Islamic radical groups, began alarming Jember residents, especially the moderate Muslims. What the Salafi has done as an example which keeps criticizing the local ritual that is practiced among *nahdliyin*, is considered not only unethical in the context of religious life, but also start churning the moderate Muslim's feelings and beliefs, especially the Muslim traditionalists. They began to openly attack the local ritual among traditionalists over the pulpit sermon, Islamic lecturing, lecturing on the radio, and dissemination of newsletters among *nahdliyin*. In fact, the Salafi intellectuals began entering campus as a lecturer in the academic tasks also not negligent spreading purification of Salafi version. The provocative propaganda conducted among Salafi, potentially creates hot atmosphere, provokes citizens, and if it is allowed to continue, it would be triggered to be horizontal conflict.<sup>19</sup>

Evidently, some time ago there was tension between NU and the *Salafi* group of *Gladak Pakem*. It is triggered by the *Salafi* provocative speech and writings that humiliated the various local ritual of *Nahdliyin* considered stray and discredited the religious figures who have been considered as role models for *Nahdliyin* like Imam Ghazali and Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani who are claimed unfeasible to be exalted, triggering

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<sup>18</sup>Abdurrahman Wahid (ed.), *Ilusi Negara Islam.....*, h. 78.

<sup>19</sup>Interview, August 18, 2015.

the NU's members to be angry. Even the increasingly heated tension almost sparked the *Nahdliyin's* emotion to fight physically because their pride and religious beliefs have been abused by the *Salafi*. The Physical contact was finally able to avoid when the NU's elites soothed their members and solved the problems occurred. The Conflict resolution can be overcome by involving the law enforcer and the police. This needed to do because the *Salafi* group did not want to engage in dialogue in addressing the religious differences between them. Meanwhile, PKS -- despite its status as a political party-- but their action is not merely political movement, as the other political parties do. As a *dakwah* (preaching) party, PKS has the mission of religious politics. Besides the contestation over resources for power in parliament, PKS also has an interest to fight for Islam formally through parliament, one of which is the enforcement of the *sharia* law. As an Islamic political party, PKS needs mass support, to realize all of it, PKS builds a network in which the members recruited through *tarbiyah* movement either at campus, mosques, existing Islamic lecturing groups and various socio-religious groups. This program is quite effective. It is proven PKS' members recruited through *tarbiyah* movement from year to year has increased significantly. Even at the NU's area like Jember, the PKS' members and partisans can not be underestimated. It can be seen in the last legislative elections, PKS successfully got 5 seats in Jember parliament.

One thing that begins to agitate NU and Muhammadiyah, the political movements framed through the religious activities by PKS begins to create a conflict with the two Islamic organizations because the PKS' members who are militant begins to take over religious assets such as mosques, prayer groups, educational institutions, and others that have been managed by the moderate Muslims. PKS also facilitates the people to build mosques and schools considered by the moderate Muslims, rather than to provide a worship place, it is more related to political interests.

### **E. Keeping Peaceful Coexistence**

For NU and Muhammadiyah of Jember, the religious radicalism potential in Jember now and in the future is considered to be a serious threat to the values of moderate Islam that is tolerant, friendly, and anti-violence. Imagine, just now the radical Muslim movement has started troubling not only Muslims, but also people of other faiths. As a minority in Islam, the radical Muslim group has very high militancy in fighting their religious ideology. Perhaps, the radical Muslim members are quite aware

that they involve in "war of ideas" to convince Muslims that their extreme ideology is the most correct interpretation of Islam.<sup>20</sup>

Faced with the expansion of the radical Islamic movement that takes place in urban Jember, NU and Muhammadiyah respond and do not react in violent ways, but rather cultural moderate ways. Here are some praxis responses performed by NU and Muhammadiyah in fighting with the radical Islamic groups in Jember.

### **Balancing Relations**

The moderate Muslims view that the groups of people who have different religious ideas, either liberal or radical ones, are not seen as the others who must be shunned, ostracized, hated, by much less combated by violent means. They are aware that the existing diversity in society is a necessity, or in the Koranic language known as *Sunnatullah* (the order of nature)<sup>21</sup> that may not be denied. Moreover, constitutionally, the state itself is clearly to ensure the diversity and differences that exist in Indonesian society through UUD 1945.

For NU and Muhammadiyah, the radical Islamic group is considered as people who have excessive passion but not supported with enough understanding and knowledge on religion. In fact, not a few of the followers of the radical Islamic group has dogmatic understanding (not understanding Islam on a substantial level). Similarly, it is difficult to deny the fact that behind their religious movement which is full with their religious symbols in accordance with their political and ideological interests. In such situations, identity and religious symbols become the most important part, even more important than the substance of the

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<sup>20</sup>Abdurrahman Wahid (ed.), *Ilusi Negara Islam* ....., h. 43.

<sup>21</sup>When it is examined there are many what God said about pluralism. Some of His word that describes it "And if your Lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one Ummah [nation or community (following one religion only i.e. Islam)], but they will not cease to disagree" (QS Hud, 118); "If Allah willed, He would have made you one nation" (QS al-Maidah, 48); "There is no compulsion in religion" (QS al-Baqarah, 256). Based on these verses, it can be understood that the oneness on religion and beliefs is not preferred by God. In addition, there should be no compulsion for someone to embrace a religion or a religious conversion. People are also free if they choose to have no religion because the right path and the wrong path have been already offered by God. It is up to each person to choose between two roads, of course with all its consequences. Husein Muhammad, *Prolog Pluralisme Sebagai Keniscayaan Teologis*, dalam Abd. Moqsih Ghazali, *Argumen Pluralisme Agama Membangun Toleransi Berbasis Al-Qur'an*, (Jakarta: Kata Kita, 2008), h. xvi.

message of religion itself, to strive for. They emphasize more on symbols, not on practicing the substance of the Islamic teachings.<sup>22</sup>

Based on the moderate principles derived from the *Aswaja* teachings; *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawasuth* (moderate), and *tawazun* (balance), as well as *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (doing good and avoiding evil)--, NU and Muhammadiyah seeks to promote cultural approaches in order to fortify their members and Muslims in general of the religious radicalism influence. *Jihad* to stem radicalism is also meant to maintain social cohesion and harmony in religious life in Jember.

Similarly to what has done by Muhammadiyah of Jember. What it is meant by two organizations is how to create checks and balances in the order of social life in Jember so that they do not deliver one force of repressive majority or radical minority. It is true that every element of diverse social has right to live on earth multicultural Jember. each of these realities should also inspire all social elements in order to live together in a big house called Jember, each social group develops tolerant attitude, and each group does not claim that their group is the rightest one, let alone each group blames other groups. When the seeds of dominating force appears from any source; not merely from the radical Islamic group, they have to be ready to be criticized.<sup>23</sup>

### **Defending Moderate Islam**

The radical Islamic Movement that is more expansive causes turning point in awareness for NU and Muhammadiyah of Jember for self-reflection on their religious movement so far. Both moderate Islamic organization now looks more serious in dealing with various forms of threats from the outside, especially religious radicalism. Based on the moderate Islam concept of *Aswaja*, both organization are serious in revitalizing and contextualizing their religious understanding, and devoting to their community. The reinterpretation process on the *Aswaja* concept continues with more contextual discourse and internalizes it to their members and Muslims in general, and people of other faiths in Jember district.

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<sup>22</sup>Abdurrahman Wahid (ed.) *Ilusi Negara Islam.....*, h. 101.

<sup>23</sup>One of important conclusion resulted from small and informal discussions along with Indonesian Muslim Student Association/Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia (PMII) and Muslim Student Association/ Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI) members in Jember which took place between August 25 and 5 September 2015.

Meanwhile, the efforts to unearth the moderate Islamic concept excavated from the *Aswaja* values are done by utilizing a variety of cultural institutions such as *pesantren*, madrasas, and various educational institutions owned by NU and Muhammadiyah ranging from basic to higher education, and the media arts and etc. The Various local media that become the NU treasures and cultural heritage are also utilized to internalizing the moderate Islamic concept such as the Islamic lectures, *yasinan*, *tahlilan*, *diba'an*, *muslimatan*, *bahtsul masa'il* groups, and various local media.

More systematically, NU of Jember conducts *Aswaja* debriefing through *Aswaja* training at NU Training Center and *tadarus Aswaja* (*Aswaja* reading session) regularly every two week. This activity is proved quite successful in giving a positive impact on the internalization process on the moderate Islamic concept. The activities of *tadarus* and training are able to bring the reconstruction of *Aswaja* discourse that is increasingly contextual. Among the younger generation, for example, *Aswaja* is not understood as *madzhab* (school of Islamic jurisprudence) that is dogmatic, but as *manhaj* (method) in understanding Islam contextually.

### Counter Discourses

The discourse reproduction either oral or written, is also used by NU and Muhammadiyah Jember intellectuals as cultural media to articulate and at the same time to counter the religious radicalism discourse. Some structural institution of NU Jember that are active enough to reproduce the discourse among others are LBM. Some time ago LBM of NU Jember launched a book that is specifically used to counter the writings of a former fundamentalist NU, named KH. Mahrus Ali. In a number of books, he published, he led a lawsuit against the practice of many local rituals performed by NU members as *Tahlil*, *Shalawatan*, *diba'an*, *tawashul*, and etc. The book entitled "Former Kyai NU Sues *Tahlil*". Together with *Ta'lif wa Nasr* Organization or NU publisher, LBM is also active in producing the religious discourse of moderate Islam through newsletter that contains the results of *bahtsul masail* (problem solving). Before the controversial discourse of Mahrus Ali came to the surface, LBM ever made a bulletin that aimed to counter the sectarian discourse propagated by the Salafist group in Gladak Pakem, Summersari, Jember. If we look closely, what NU and Muhammadiyah have done, either organizationally and personally, in spreading the Islamic moderation discourse, can be considered quite strategic as cultural finesse to unearth

and articulate an inclusive and moderate Islam without causing much destructive strain physical.

This Strategy also plays a role to filter the religious discourse in limiting the movement of radical Islamic groups, or a group of people whose their religious understanding are counterproductive to the moderate Islam. This strategy plays a role in generating alternative to the impasse direct dialogue approach which has failed to realize. As we know, when it emerged that potential problems can cause conflict between the moderate Muslim majority and a minority of Islamists, NU and Muhammadiyah of Jember always take the initiative to invite the radicals sat in one forum to debate and dialog the issues for the search of the truth or common understanding. However, every call to debate and dialogue offered by both the moderate Islamic organizations is not responded by the radical Islamic groups. Through the publication of religious discourse, each party is expected to be able to learn and understand the diversity and differences as well as similarities between them. Learning to hear and understanding others who are different, is an extremely valuable social capital that can deliver on all parties to develop a friendly attitude and tolerant of differences.<sup>24</sup>

### **Protecting Pluralism**

One important thing stated is that the reinterpretation and internalization of Islam moderates concept based on the *Aswaja* concept and always placed in the Indonesian community context. For NU and Muhammadiyah of Jember, the Indonesian community context is what has really become binding for all groups that have difference background, not only on religious ideology, but also on ethnical, cultural, and even political choice. Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution as the state basis and philosophy are final and must be upheld by all components of the nation without exception. In fact, in the context of building the nation and mankind livelihood that has social, plural and multicultural characters, the humanitarian and nationality context is undoubtedly placed in the top position with an argument that the Islamic presence on this earth is not for people who are Muslims alone, but as mercy for all universe.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Abdurrahman Wahid (ed.) *Ilusi Negara Islam*....., h. 235.

<sup>25</sup>Brainstorming delivered by some *Muhammadiyah* Jember intellectuals such as Sukarno, Kasman, Aminullah, Syafrudin, interview 5 - August 27, 2015.

If we look closely what is discussed by some Muhammadiyah Jember intellectuals is in line with Ahmad Shafii Maarif's opinion. Even, more over Maarif explains some important arguments to prioritize the humanitarian aspect in transforming the mission of Islam to the civilization development that is more humane; (1) the mission of Islam is nothing but "blessing for the universe". By making humanity as the first entrance, Muslims are encouraged to think worldly: the whole of humanity, whoever they are, in essence is a friend. In the event of hostilities, it should be resolved within the humanity framework that is fair and civilized; (2) from the humanitarian level, subsequently it goes to the nationality level, because we all live and breathe in the Indonesian state. Muslims as a whole should not be placed in the narrow hallway in the Muslim community in a limited sense; (3) humanist not created in one socio-cultural form, but in diverse forms with their own characters. These Characteristic are signs that God is the Creator, anti- uniformity, because the one-uniform can make people become poor paradigm and rigid in intercommunication; (4) in the national identity formulation context, in which NU and Muhammadiyah destined as the two main wings of the Muslims, both NU and Muhammadiyah members must have paradigm and ideas that go beyond their NU and Muhammadiyah limits. They all are an integral part of the association in three domains: humanity, nationality, and community.<sup>26</sup>

In particular, in order to put religious issues in the Indonesian and humanity context, NU and Muhammadiyah themselves have developed the three-solidarity model or in religious language is known as *Ukhuwwat Islamiyah* (the Muslim solidarity), *Ukhuwwat Wathoniyah* (the national solidarity) and *Ukhuwah Basyariyah* (the brotherhood solidarity). Three *ukhuwah* (solidarities) is expected to be a value system and the ethics foundation that has a role in developing a relationship code in the religious, national and humankind life context that are friendly and tolerant of differences and diversity, social, cultural, ethnic , and religion.

## F. Conclusion

The de-radicalization Movement that has done by the moderate Muslims, with NU and Muhammadiyah as the main pillar, is not intended to reject and even eliminate the presence of Muslim fundamentalist and

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<sup>26</sup> See Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif, *Islam Dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan; Sebuah Refleksi Sejarah*, (Bandung: Mizan bekerjasama dengan Maarif Institute, 2009), h. 199-2002.



radical groups in the public space of Jember. The movement that they have done in fact is related with their commitment to preserve and maintain the public space of Jember that is plural and multicultural. The radicalism presence sponsored by the Islamists is considered to be a serious threat to the social order in Jember. However, Jember has always been a place for diverse religious, ethnic, racial groups to be able to live alongside each other peacefully without much conflict and violence.

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