

# Hujjah Aswaja as the Internalization of Nationalist Religious Character Value to Counter Radical Transnational Ideology in Indonesia and Germany

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**Abstract.** Radicalism is a severe issue that affects many nations, not just Indonesia. This activity at least shows how the nation will always be connected to radical international movements. Nationalist religious principles must be internalized to stop the development of extremist understanding. Indonesia and Germany collaborated and carried out this exercise to foster a welcoming religious environment. In the face of the onslaught of western extremism, Hujjah Aswaja's training provided ideas for educating the Indonesian Islamic diaspora about religion. The community service team helped for three months during the final phase's tremendous internalization of nationalist religious character ideals. The project's results point to significant increases in wawasan kebangsaan and keagamaan levels. It is anticipated that this event will be able to stimulate nationalism to Indonesia among the diaspora now residing in Germany and will serve as a catalyst for understanding keberagaman from the perspective of Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah (Aswaja).

**Keywords:** hujjah aswaja, religious, nationalism, radical

## 1 Introduction

Radicalism of religious thought and action is a serious threat today and tends to increase in the last decade [1], [2]. The various initial potentials of radicalism have actually been triggered by takfiryah understanding, where many people try to respond to infidel "fatwas" haphazardly [3]. This phenomenon also shows that radicalism is not only in the form of anarchism but also in Islamic thought itself. This can be seen in the field of fiqh of worship to the application of Islamic law in everyday life [4]. This condition will certainly affect a person's thinking style within the framework of a tolerant, inclusive and moderate religious life. In this context, radicalism of thought is far more dangerous than religious action, although both of them must be watched out for [5]. The involvement of all elements in efforts to prevent radicalism is very much needed [2], [3].

In this context, to eliminate the formation of exclusive religious groups, everyone needs to be mature in understanding the diversity that exists in Indonesia, especially to help the existence of the state [4]. The Indonesian diaspora abroad is one of the vulnerable parties to be infiltrated by extreme thoughts. This view is corroborated by various studies that have been carried out [1], [6]. This challenge is felt by various organizations that oversee the Indonesian diaspora such

as Nahdlatul Ulama' and Muhammadiyah abroad. The Pengurus Cabang Istimewa (PCI) of Nahdlatul Ulama' (NU) abroad must be able to be more moderate and take policies, strengthen the Pancasila ideology, and clarify the understanding of the religious position of its members, especially Indonesian students who are studying in their area [1]. One way that can be done to counter the language of thought radicalism is through an easy and simple explanation of religious understanding so that it can be understood more deeply. The diversity that exists in Indonesia continues to be echoed that it is a necessary thing in the nation and state. There is no single country in the world that has the highest level of ethnic, cultural, customary, religious, racial and group wealth apart from Indonesia [7].

The target of this research is the Indonesian diaspora who are currently conducting studies in Indonesia and Germany. These two countries have different types of students. Germany is located on the European continent with a more liberal lifestyle while Indonesia is a land of a thousand guardians with a Muslim majority. These two countries have vulnerabilities and vulnerability to the spread of radicalism in Indonesia. Indonesian students residing in Germany are prone to accept liberalism and intolerance towards Islam. Hate speech and the threat of radicalism became one of the strategic issues of the Indonesian Embassy in Germany. Worries about the exposure of Indonesian students in the two countries to help internalize the values of nationalist religious character through Hujjah Aswaja.

The purpose of this study was to conduct Hujjah Aswaja training in order to internalize the values of nationalist religious character for Indonesian students residing in Indonesia and Germany. This research at least provides answers to various problems of spreading radical transnational ideology originating from abroad and brought back to Indonesia by Indonesian citizens. Various parties assume that violence in the name of religion by students is actually caused by the extreme understanding of their original environment in conveying religious values. Whereas Islam emphasizes moderation, inclusiveness, and tolerance as stated in the Qur'an [7], [8], [9] such as the protection of human rights, freedom of religion, equality and equal opportunities for human rights in civil society [10].

The question is how international organizations manage policies to deradicalize religious discourse and action to prevent the spread of radical transnationalism. In this development study, the team used deductive analysis to examine the existence of the concept of religious and national insight in Germany and Indonesia, based on the eight principles of Islamic tolerance. [11] as recommended by Neuendor [12].

## **2 Method**

### **2.1 Research Models**

This research uses Participatory Action Research (PAR) [13], [14]. The design of this PAR activity was chosen based on the reasons for "action" and "change" which not only wanted to

be carried out by the researcher or research subject, but carried out otherwise. [15], [16]. PAR is also used not to make the Indonesian diaspora as objects, but to position them as subjects of activity. Moreover, campus residents (research team) are actively involved in understanding and solving the problems that surround them. While the position of the team is more as a facilitator who accompanies the subject of service to jointly formulate strategies that can be used. However, the formulation of solutions and strategies still involves the subject of devotion in the hope that if they experience similar problems in the future, they can solve the problem on their own without the help of others.

## **2.2 Participant**

This research was carried out online through a zoom meeting platform with the Pengurus Cabang Istimewa (PCI) of Nahdlatul Ulama' Germany. The target of the activity is the Indonesian diaspora who are currently studying in the two countries. This activity will be packaged in the form of training with 2 meetings in each country. The training materials have been prepared based on the results of research that has been done previously by utilizing information and communication technology. The training participants will take part in synchronous and asynchronous learning, namely face-to-face using the zoom meeting platform and by using google classroom. The number of research respondents was 89 diaspora.

## **2.3 Design and Analysis**

This research was conducted in 2 phases, namely: the first phase, the team conducted Hujjah Aswaja training by educating the participants on understanding tolerance and the spirit of religious moderation to obtain a complete understanding. This phase is carried out using a discussion model, seminar and questionnaire distribution. The second phase, conducts debriefing and strengthening the topic of nationalism to instill patriotism and defend the country. In this phase, the team provides national insight with agility techniques and national discussions. This activity aims to provide internalization of religious – nationalist character values for foreign students.

This research begins with the idea that there is a general lack of understanding and anxiety around the issue of dealing with radical transnational movements and that this can and should be addressed by universities on an ongoing basis especially with Hujjah Aswaja's training activities. This point of view is regulated in the understanding and experience of devotees, that religious nationalism and deradicalization are at an important point in their development, where stakeholders question their goals and role in developing religious moderation attitudes in students. As emphasized by Gadamer [17] every act of understanding is conditioned by the structure of the front. In this regard, the team's understanding of the current debate around radical ideology and the researchers' own views around the value of learning about religious moderation provide the front structure for the research. Thus the concept of campus resilience through the deradicalization of religious discourse and action, is the starting point for research and part of the 'front projection', which is developed through the research process.

The research design as a whole is presented as a hermeneutic spiral, which leads to stave off radical ideologies. This activity takes the interpretivist paradigm, because it explores participants' understanding of what is valuable to know and understand about Hujjah Aswaja. Such a methodology “relies on the belief that this understanding can only be accessed, or co-generated, through interactions between researchers and the researched as they seek to interpret events and make interpretations readable to one another” [18]. In general, data analysis refers to Boyatzis [19] and findings will be discussed referring to the Dinham model [20], [21].

### **3 Result and Discussion**

Talking about the nationalist religious Indonesian diaspora scheme can be interpreted as an institutional or organizational effort in strengthening nationalism and national insight. Nationalism is one of the important things in building the spirit of Indonesia [9], [22]. In a comprehensive understanding, increasing knowledge and attitudes about national insight will be directly proportional to one's religious attitude. The more moderate a person is, the more love for the homeland [6].

This research at least strengthens the argument that religious nationalist attitudes are a unity that cannot be separated and clashed with one another [23]. An increasingly polarized society and using religious images and rhetoric is a problem that accompanies religious pluralism in both Indonesia and Germany [24]. Facing this situation, the diaspora must have an understanding of religious diversity [25]. On the other hand, almost all universities in Indonesia and Germany are experiencing a spate of incidents of religiously motivated bias [5], [26]. This reflects that the existence of higher education has not been able to properly address this aspect of diversity, especially to suppress the spread of radical transnational ideology [27].

Despite the perceived crisis, academics, especially campuses, remain a popular subject and its importance is recognized by the wider community. In any way, the campus must remain a deradicalization capital which is expected to be able to navigate students towards citizens who are religious nationalists or have a high level of religious moderation [28], [29]. This activity focuses on joint efforts to prevent radical transnationalism from spreading among the Indonesian diaspora.

In the first phase, the team focused on providing a comprehensive understanding by carrying out Hujjah Aswaja training activities by educating participants on understanding tolerance and the spirit of religious moderation. From this activity the community service team delivered two main materials, namely Hujjah Aswaja and religious moderation.

The term Aswaja has characteristics (khashaish) and definitive personal boundaries (makhsush). Some Islamic groups when claiming to be followers of Ahlussunnah Wal-Jama'ah only mention these characteristics, without mentioning who the definitive personal is. While other Islamic groups mention both. This party mentions how the characteristics of Aswaja are and based on

scientific analysis, they conclude who has the right to belong to the Aswaja group because they have these characteristics. In the Indonesian context, Muhammadiyah tends to use the first paradigm, while NU uses the second paradigm. In its organizational documents, NU mentions Aswaja's characteristics as well as mentions that Aswaja is an Asy'airah and Maturidiyah group (adherents of al-Asy'ary and al-Maturidy).

Based on a study of the genealogy of groups and schools, the asariyah group gave birth to the literal thinking paradigm of Ibn Taimiyah which is followed by the current Salafi or Wahabi groups. The literalist paradigm has also relatively influenced Muhammadiyah, Persis, al-Irsyad, and so on. While the moderate rationalist group - to distinguish it from the extreme rationalist group ala Mu'tazilah - is said to have "crystallized" into the Asya'irah and Maturidiyah groups. These two schools of thought were eventually followed by NU and other Islamic organizations in Indonesia such as al-Washliyah and Nahdlatul Wathan.

Various studies have revealed that Aswaja an-Nahdliyah Education has a real contribution in efforts to counter religious radicalism [30], [31], [32]. Aswaja material lessons with moderate values (tawassuth) which are continuously instilled in students are considered capable of providing a more comprehensive and better understanding of religion. The value of moderation or tawassuthiyah developed in education is able to compromise two extreme understandings, namely the extreme right (radical) and the extreme left (liberal) [33], [34], [35].

In the second phase, the team conducted briefing and strengthening the topic of nationalism to instill patriotism and defend the country. This research was born from several previous studies including research that has been carried out by the LP2M team which at least reveals several important things, namely reviewing in detail the instruments of knowledge, attitudes and practices of religious moderation in Indonesia. From the results of this measurement, various real views on the level of religious moderation are obtained. Knowledge of Aswaja An-Nahdliyah is an important topic that will be asked to 89 respondents from foreign students (Indonesian and German). Religious attitudes and practices according to Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah (Aswaja) understanding are also an important part in formulating the right formula in measuring the level of religious moderation of students in Islamic boarding schools. The values of the Aswaja An-Nahdliyah character will later become a research finding that is able to become a reference source for developing the Aswaja learning curriculum in order to strengthen the spirit of religious moderation in Indonesia.

In strengthening the spirit of nationalism for the Indonesian diaspora, the team provided several reinforcements including topics of national and religious insight, patriotism in the era of digitalization, national integration and geostrategy. These various topics need to be addressed considering that the target is PCI NU Indonesia and Germany which have different characteristics. Hujjah Aswaja gave a positive argument, namely providing an argumentative understanding of how Muslims should respond to diversity in the country and the attitudes and behavior of the state. The following are the results of the responses of Indonesian diaspora

students in the practice of religious moderation.

**Table 1.** The results of the PCI NU Germany student practice response to moderation

No.	Statement	Never		Sometimes		Always	
		Freq (n)	%	Freq (n)	%	Freq (n)	%
P1	Maintaining diversity in religion and culture as the practice of understanding Moderation	1	1,13	3	3,37	85	95,50
P2	Be moderate and tolerant of various aspects of life and reject liberalism	0	0,00	1	1,13	88	98,87
P3	Carry out Islamic traditions that apply in the community such as tahlilan, manaqiban, maulidan, and other activities that do not conflict with Islamic teachings	0	0,00	3	3,37	86	96,62
P4	Be loyal to the legitimate government as a practice of the teachings of religious moderation	0	0,00	2	2,24	87	97,75
P5	Assuming that the NKRI is a legitimate government according to Islam	0	0,00	2	2,24	87	97,75
P6	Take an active role in guarding Islamic moderation in Indonesia	1	1,13	2	2,24	86	96,62
P7	Always put forward scientific deliberation in solving community problems	0	0,00	1	1,13	88	98,87
P8	Assume that the tradition of religious moderation that already exists in Indonesian society is in accordance with Islamic teachings	1	1,13	2	2,24	86	96,62
P9	Play an active role in maintaining and preserving local wisdom and indigenous culture that does not conflict with Islamic teachings	0	0,00	1	1,13	88	98,87
P10	Placing Pancasila as the nation's ideology and not contradicting the spirit of NU's Islamic teachings	1	1,13	2	2,24	86	96,62

In addition to formulating the values of religious nationalist characters, this study also aims to answer the challenges of Islamic moderation through international forums in the hope of being able to provide an overview in forming moderate Muslims who are polite, humanist, nationalist and responsible. From this research, an initial picture is obtained that the national spirit that is continuously fostered accompanied by a capable mastery of science will continue to be Indonesia's big capital to develop the country.

“The purpose of providing religious moderation learning, especially at PCI NU Germany, is to provide a comprehensive, comprehensive understanding in everyday life. A true moderate attitude, understanding and responding to every phenomenon that exists wisely and wisely. Moderate in thinking, moderate in behavior, moderate in action and moderate in religion” (R01-Jerman).

“The purpose of providing religious moderation learning actually focuses on efforts to create a just and balanced life between religion and the state. On the one hand, religion is a shari'a that must be implemented and maintained, but the state is also an organization that cannot be separated from religious values in its sustainability. Moderation takes part of the wasathiyah attitude which if at Indonesian universities is covered with Islamic Religious Education courses” (R05-Indonesia).

#### **4 Conclusion**

The purpose of this activity is to conduct training for Hujjah Aswaja to internalize the values of nationalist religious character for the Indonesian diaspora residing in Indonesia and Germany. From the data above, it can be concluded that through this activity we are able to determine the prevalence of the diaspora towards religious moderation and its views. Radical transnational ideology that is spreading among academics needs to be anticipated and watched out so that it does not get carried away or spread in Indonesia. As a form of this vigilance, the government continues to make various efforts to de-radicalize religious discourse and actions.

In order for the strategic plan to be successful, there must be attention from stakeholders, resonance with the higher education mission, its goals and implementation must communicate with each other and cooperate between various parties, especially the Indonesian diaspora who are abroad [35]. Commitment to building religious moderation must include the highest levels of university leadership [36]. This action will require the kind of coordination that stems from agreement on the basic terminology of ‘religious moderation’ and its implementation at a global level.

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