

# Preventing Radicalism by Muslim Activists: Interpreting Pancasila through Islamic Values

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**Abstract.** Radicalism in campus has become a concerning issue following the survey results of BNPT, addressing seven state universities in Indonesia to be exposed with radicalism. Looking at this concern, this study is conducted to realize the fact on the spot by revealing the thought of college students regarding Pancasila, the fundamental principles of Indonesia, which any rejection towards its values is considered as radical attitudes. This study takes college students from two state universities in Surabaya, who are also the members of extra-campus Islamic student organizations (muslim activists), as the research samples. The results show that the muslim activists interpret Pancasila as part of Islamic values. The five articles in Pancasila are believed to contain some values implemented by muslims, such as *Tauhid*, *Habblumminannas*, *Sunnatullah*, *Asy-Syuura*, and *Al-Adl*. By this way, the muslim activists are indicated to accept the values in Pancasila with no radical thoughts or behaviors.

**Keywords:** Interpretation, Islamic values, Muslim activists, Pancasila, Radicalism

## 1 Introduction

Radicalism is a big issue that haunted Indonesia for a long time with cases involving religious-extremist groups. Moreover, radicalism is considered as the forerunner of terrorism acts that often occurs in Indonesia and involves Islamic-extremist groups. The government through BNPT (the National Counter Terrorism Agency) defines radicalism (non-literal) as an attitude that desires a total change and revolutionary by overturning the existing values drastically through violence and extreme actions [1] [9]. Radicalism is one of the reasons for the emergence of thoughts, attitudes, and actions that refuse Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and the Unity in Diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) of Indonesia [1]. According to the Ideology Development Center UNESA, radicalism is categorized into four characteristics: 1) being intolerant and has no respect for other opinions or beliefs; 2) fanaticism, an attitude that justifies oneself and blames others; 3) an exclusive attitude, which is trying to be different from the habits of many people; and 4) a revolutionary attitude, the tendency to use violence in achieving goals [1].

The radical attitude that rejects Pancasila as the Indonesian ideology should be the primary concern, considering that it is related to the basic foundations of the country, Indonesia, and the existence of Pancasila is absolute since its ratification on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1945. Furthermore, this

concern is also inseparable from the BNPT survey results on May 25, 2018, which stated that almost all state universities (PTN) have been exposed to radicalism [2]. BNPT indicates that there are seven state universities in Java exposed to radicalism [8]. This survey results are emphasized by Azyumardi Azra who mentioned that campus is a nesting place for radical ideas and members of a religious group try to spread their influence to other students in radicalism cases [3] [9].

College students are the agents of change that will continue to improve and lead the nation in the future, therefore, radicalism among them is worrying. Preventive action is necessary, thus any ideas against the unity of Indonesia can be repressed or even eliminated. Following this concern, the researchers are motivated to conduct research among students related to Pancasila, especially regarding the issue of radicalism. The researchers intend to find out how Pancasila is interpreted by the college students, especially by them who are the members of extra-campus Islamic organizations (muslim activists). The researchers take extra-campus Islamic organizations as the research objects considering that radicalism and acts of terrorism in Indonesia are often imposed on Muslims. Here, the researchers conduct a research at two state universities in Surabaya addressed with the issue of radicalism by BNPT.

The research targets are the members of extra-campus Islamic student organizations, including PMII (the Indonesian Islamic Student Movement), IMM (Muhammadiyah Student Association), HMI (the Islamic Student Association), and KAMMI (the Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union). The main purpose of this research is to determine the interpretation of Pancasila by Muslim activist students and realize their acceptance toward Pancasila as the Indonesian ideology. The interpretation and the reception level of Pancasila will be analyzed by using the theory of audience reception from David Morley. Through this research, it is expected to provide an overview to the public regarding the thoughts of Muslim activist students (especially in the Surabaya area) towards Pancasila and answer the concerns about the emergence of radicalism in campus.

### **1.1 David Morley's Reception Theory**

Regarding the public reception, in 1980, David Morley proposed his conception regarding the analysis of public reception. The main question of Morley is how individuals interpret the content of texts relating to the socio-cultural background of the reader. Morley reveals three hypothesis positions of text readers [4]:

1. **Dominant/ Hegemonic Reading:** In this position, the reader accepts or is in line with the codes in the text, such as values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and meanings in full as presented and desired by the text maker.
2. **Negotiated Reading:** Negotiated is the position of the reader, which with certain limits, can accept or be in line with the text codes and also the meaning offered by the creator of the text or program, yet with certain notes/modifications reflecting his/ her position and interests.
3. **Opposition/ Counter Hegemonic Reading:** The reader completely rejects or disagrees with the text codes and meanings presented by the text creator, and then creates an alternative frame for interpreting the message/or content.

Morley's public reception theory will be used as the main instrument to classify the views/ interpretations obtained from the research participants regarding the values in Pancasila. Here,

the researchers will construct the major type of reading of the college students based on the extra-campus Islamic organization followed.

## 2 Method

The focus of this study is to realize the perspective of muslim students at state universities, who are addressed by the issue of radicalism, toward Pancasila. To achieve this goal, this study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach to analyze the descriptive social phenomena. Qualitative-descriptive research aims to present the real data (without fabrication), and the only treatment given is the research itself, which is carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation [5].

Considering that the research is related to direct public reception, the research data are obtained directly (primary data) from the respondents, selected through the research criteria, via focus group discussion (FGD). The main data sources in this study are the Muslim students of two state universities (PTN) in Surabaya that are indicated by the issue of radicalism. Surabaya area is one of the vital areas and the second largest city in Indonesia, and there are various forms of diversity or pluralism. Surabaya also reflects its high level of 'tolerance' through its city icons, including the icon with the words 'Surabaya Damai' and the icon of each religion in Indonesia which is lined up side by side in several vital places in Surabaya. It is one effort shown by the regional government to achieve the intercultural and inter-religious peace for the societies occupying the city. Therefore, the issue of radicalism in Surabaya area is such a disturbing issue for the supposed peaceful city, thus this study is conducted in the city to confront the matter scientifically.

The population of this research is Muslim students from the two state universities who are also the members of extra-campus Islamic organizations, such as HMI, IMM, KAMMI, and PMII. Meanwhile, the research sample is selected through purposive sampling by determining several specific criteria to answer the research problems. The specific criteria are including: 1) students of 2017 or below with one and a half or two years organizational experience; 2) members of (at least) one extra-campus Islamic organization; 3) active participating in the organization activities, considered through the recommendation from the head of the organization. After the data is collected, it will be interpreted and analyzed further by using David Morley's Reception Theory to determine the position of the Muslim students in accepting Pancasila based on the interpretation they have. These positions include:

1. Dominant/ Hegemonic Reading; the respondent's interpretation is overall positive. It means that the respondent is in line with or expresses full agreement with Pancasila and the values contained.
2. Negotiated Reading; the respondent's interpretation is positive in some issues, yet negative in few others. It means that in some extent, they accept the values contained in Pancasila, with a certain notes or modifications that reflect their personal positions and interests.

Opposition/ Counter Hegemonic Reading; the respondent's interpretation is negative as a whole. It means that he rejects or disagrees with Pancasila and the values contained.

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 The Interpretation of Muslim Students: "Values in Pancasila are Part of Islamic Principles"

Regarding the interpretation of Pancasila, PMII members state that the values embedded in Pancasila is already contained in Islam and emphasized in the concept of *Islam Nusantara* promoted by their parent organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). This concept is inherited from the great NU figure, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), and has been legitimated in early 2015 at the 33rd NU Congress, according to the member statements. The concept is raised due to the encouragement of *Kyai* or NU elders who want to introduce the different side of Islam, the one that can be acculturated with the culture of the Indonesian archipelago, thus it is easily accepted by the community. From the discussions with PMII members, NU is still following the views and guided by Gus Dur's ideas. The thought and the conception of Islam brought by Gus Dur himself emphasized the attitude of acceptance, openness, and tolerance for all differences.

More detailed, IMM members state that Pancasila is a manifestation of Islamic Shari'a (Islamic teachings). The five articles in Pancasila are formulated by the great Indonesian figures, who are also religious Muslim figures. Thus, when it is reviewed, each article in Pancasila contains the values brought by Islam. The first article of Pancasila, *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* or Belief in One Supreme God, contains the value of *Tauhid* (one/ single). The second article, *Kemanusiaan Yang Adil dan Beradab* or A Just and Civilized Humanitarianism, contains the value of justice which is also contained in the Qur'an ('Adl), and 'adab' or courtesy which in Islam has a broader and deeper understanding, and so on. Therefore, both Islam and Pancasila are interrelated; when referring to the Al-Quran, it contains the values of Pancasila; as well as when referring to Pancasila, it also contains the values embedded in the Al-Quran. Therefore, according to the IMM members, if someone's understanding of Pancasila is correct, then there will be no friction between the two (Islam and Pancasila), ever.

Likewise, according to HMI members (DIPO Branch) who reveal that the basic tenets of Pancasila are in accordance with Islam, from the first article 'Belief in One Supreme God' until the fifth article 'the Social Justice for All Indonesian People', Pancasila is considered as part of Islamic values and has been included in it. Therefore, it is said that any issued policies based on Pancasila will never confront the values of Islam. In a (claimed) moderate point of view, HMI members perceive the five articles in Pancasila as the ideals and the direction of the nation, Indonesia. And if Indonesia is not established based on Pancasila, it may bring chaos to various regions. Hence, the presence of Pancasila is believed to be the solution for any domestic problems occurred or internal affairs.

Meanwhile, KAMMI member states the following:

"In my opinion, Pancasila already represents Islamic Shari'a or values. Our founding fathers are also Muslims and the first article (of Pancasila) once was added by '...with the obligation to carry out the Islamic Shari'a for its adherents'. I have participated in studies and several discussions, it is said that every article in Pancasila has followed the things embedded in the Qur'an itself. It is for the reason that (the first article) 'Belief in One Supreme God' is in harmony with Surah Al-Ikhlâs *Kulhuallahuahad*, which means the

God is one. Then, the second article is also in harmony with the (other) verse in the Qur'an, until the fifth article is all in harmony with the values contained in the Qur'an."

From the information above, it is known that KAMMI members also interpret the article in Pancasila as part of Islamic values. Here, Pancasila is seen/ interpreted through the viewpoint of Islamic religiosity or Islamic teachings. It means that each of the Pancasila articles is related to the verses in the Qur'an, from the first one 'Belief in One Supreme God' which relates to Surah Al-Ikhlâs verse 1, until the last article. If the interpretation of Muslim students regarding the values of Pancasila seen from the corridors of Islamic Shari'ah above are applied in each article of Pancasila, then the below points are obtained:

### 1. *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* / Belief in One Supreme God

Diversity is *rahmatan lil'alamîn*, therefore, there is an acknowledgment toward the existence of various religions and beliefs in God in Indonesia. If the Islamic Shari'ah is taken as a guideline as well as the limit in the acceptance of diversity by Muslim students, then they are in the position of supporting the state which guarantees the independence of each individual to embrace their own religion and to worship according to their religion and beliefs. This is because in the Qur'an, there is a verse of *lakum dinukum waliadin* (QS. Al-Kafirun (109): 6) which emphasizes respect for those of different religions and not to interfere their respective worship affairs. Even the teachings of Islam forbid to impose beliefs on others, as stated in the verse *Laa Ikhrâha Fiddîn* (Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 256) which means 'There is no compulsion in embracing religion'. This guarantee the freedom of worshipping the God which is also in line with one principle in Islam, *Habblumminallah*, maintaining a relationship with the God (Allah SWT). Moreover, the first article which obliges all individuals to believe in One Supreme God also contains the teachings of *Tauhid* in Islam which emphasizes the principle of Singleness (Oneness) based on the verse of *Kulhu Allahu ahad*, 'Say that Allah is the One' (QS. Al-Ikhlâs (112): 1) [10] [11].

### 2. *Kemanusiaan Yang Adil dan Beradab* / A Just and Civilized Humanitarianism

It is about maintaining the relationship between fellow human beings (*Habblumminnas*) based on a just and civilized humanitarianism [10] [12]. It is about living side by side, related, cooperated, and establishing a good relationship between fellow human beings through *amaliyah* (acts) by trading, buying, selling (Islamic economy) and socializing with all groups . It is also about being fair and kind (civilized / having morals) to all creatures based on the teachings of Islam in QS. An-Nahl (16): 90 which states 'Verily Allah commands (you) to be fair and do good, give help to relatives, and forbid deeds vile, evil, and enmity'. This supports the main point in the second article of Pancasila which guarantees the rights and freedoms of every citizen concerning the relationship with the God, fellow human beings, with the state, as well as the freedom to express opinions and achieve a decent life in accordance to basic human rights [7].

### 3. *Persatuan Indonesia* / The Unity of Indonesia

Diversity is said as a form of necessity or *Sunatullah*, a gift from Allah SWT that must be accepted. Thus, Pancasila that conforms diversity is accepted as the basis of the nation. The thoughts expressed by Muslim students support the aspect of unity, which implies the unanimity

of various kinds of diverse styles and includes the unity of ideological, political, economic, socio-cultural, and security sense. This unity also emphasizes another Islamic value called as *Ukhuwah Insaniyah*, the sisterhood or brotherhood among humans [10].

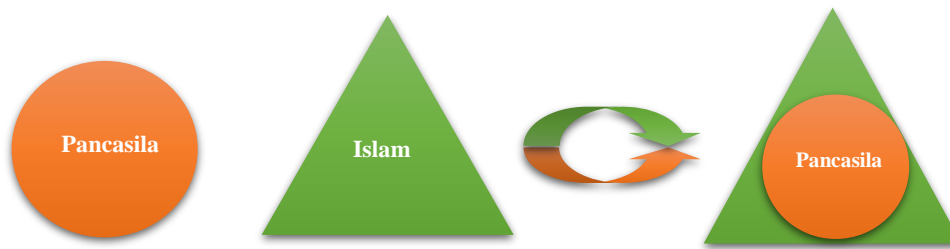
4. *Kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh Hikmat dan Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan/ Perwakilan / Democracy led by Wisdom in Deliberation/ Representation*

The muslim students support the deliberation system within democracy. The deliberation system is similar to the concept of consensus deliberation proposed by Islam through its value called as *As-Syura* [10]. Furthermore, the muslim students recognize the equality in any governmental aspects in the midst of differences by freeing other groups in proposing and choosing leaders or representatives in the government. However, they limit themselves in the election of state leader by only choosing those who are Muslims based on QS. Al-Maidah (5): 51 which reads '...don't take Jews and Christians as leaders...', except for the members of PMII who allows the acceptance and election of non-Muslim leaders in Indonesia.

5. *Keadilan Sosial Bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia / Social Justice for All Indonesian People*

If the meaning is based on Islamic principles, then the principles of justice and Islamic economics become the basis in giving the meaning for this fifth article of Pancasila. It is said in Islam, one of the paths to *Taqwa* (piety) is to uphold justice according to the verse of QS. Al-Maidah (5): 8 which reads 'Do justice because justice is closer to *Taqwa*'. Whereas in Islamic economics, there are six principles, including (1) not causing social inequality, (2) not depending on unclear fate (unclear source of income), (3) finding and managing what is on earth (maximizing the gift of Allah SWT), (4) the prohibition of the economics of usury (interest), (5) clear and recorded financial transactions, and (6) justice and balance in business [6]. The Islamic principles above are aligned with the content of the fifth articles which states that the nature resources are used for the common welfare, and that every Indonesian citizen must receive fair treatment in the social, economic, cultural, legal, and political fields, thus a balance is achieved between the personal life and the social life [7].

If we draw an outline based on the majority of the organization's opinions, we will find that the corridors of the muslim activists in giving their interpretation toward Pancasila are the values, rules and regulations contained in the Islamic religion. These corridors become the starting point of the understanding or framing used by muslim students in interpreting the values contained in Pancasila. As stated in their statements, 'the values of Pancasila are contained in Islam, and Pancasila itself is part of the Islamic principles' (look at the figure below). In other words, both Islam and Pancasila are integrated to each other. Therefore, in the national and state life of Indonesia, the existence of Islam and Pancasila should not be contradicted or in the state of rejecting each other, yet both should be carried out side by side and in the state of supporting each other for the unity of Indonesia.



**Figure 1.** The Integration between Islam and Pancasila according to muslim students.

### 3.2 The Reception of Muslim Students: Dominant & Negotiated

From the explanations on the interpretation of Pancasila by muslim students above, it can be indicated that there are at least two different opinions. Generally, all the muslim students are agreed to the values contained in each article of Pancasila. However, some of them give a slight ‘negotiation’ in some points in the article. For example, in the 4<sup>th</sup> article regarding the selection of a state leader, HMI, KAMMI, and IMM prefer to choose a muslim leader to conform to the Islamic teachings. In the other side, PMII open the opportunity for its members to select a non-muslim leader, fitting to their organization concept of *Islam Nusantara*. By this way, it can be realized that there are two kinds of acceptance made by the muslim students regarding their interpretations toward Pancasila. The first one is the acceptance by negotiation in which they provide separate boundaries and definitions for certain issues to fit the Islamic Shari’a/ teachings. Other than the matter of choosing a leader that must be a Muslim, they also give a slight different understanding toward ‘the religion equality’ (the value contained in the first article of Pancasila), that is more directed to the mutual respect between respective religions. This acceptance is owned by muslim students in IMM, HMI, and KAMMI groups. Meanwhile, the second acceptance is a total acceptance without any negotiation, as owned by the PMII group. Here, PMII states that by looking at the pluralistic Indonesian society, non-Muslim leaders are possible to be selected. Hence, if both acceptances are classified into the three positions proposed by David Morley in his Reception Theory, then the following result of analysis are obtained:

**Table 1.** The acceptance of muslim students towards Pancasila values

| Organization<br>(Surabaya Area) | Reception    |                |                |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                 | Domi<br>nant | Nego<br>tiated | Oppo<br>sition |
| PMII                            | √            | X              | X              |
| IMM                             | X            | √              | X              |
| HMI<br>(DIPO Branch)            | X            | √              | X              |
| KAMMI                           | X            | √              | X              |

Based on David Morley's Reception Theory [4], respondents with a negotiating position can accept the text codes with certain limits, with interpretation accompanied by notes that reflect

the position and personal interest. In this position, the limits presented by Muslim students are matters relating to the Islamic Shari'a, which show their position as a Muslim as well as their personal views. Meanwhile, the notes are special meanings or definitions given regarding the issue of diverse religion. The interpretation in the Negotiated Reading itself is still positive for some things, but negative for few others. The positivity here is shown by the members by accepting the elements of difference in Pancasila by remaining tolerant with others, except for things outside the lines of *Ushul* (Haq/ absolute truth), such as in the matter of choosing a leader.

Regarding the attitude to elect only Muslim leaders, it can be said that this is against the pluralism value in the fourth article of Pancasila, judging from the ex-vice president of Indonesia or Muhammad Hatta's statement which says that the purpose of the fourth article is to present a tolerance and prevent power from being controlled by the majority group (majorocracy) and powered by the minority political elite and entrepreneurs (minorocracy) [7]. With the condition of the Indonesian population, which the majority are Muslims ( $\pm 90\%$ ), the attitude of choosing leaders only from the Muslim group can cause power to be controlled by the majority group. This what makes the acceptance of Muslim students to the values in Pancasila imperfect, due to the tolerance limitation.

As for the dominant position held by the PMII group, there is full acceptance of Pancasila, including in the terms of leader election. In this position, the respondent accepts or agree with the codes in the text including values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and meanings as presented and desired by the text maker [4]. Dominant or Hegemonic Reading makes respondents have a positive meaning overall, in line with or express full agreement with the values contained in Pancasila.

What should be noted in this research finding is that the different sosio-cultural background of the muslim students or activists influence their interpretation as well as their acceptance toward the values embedded in Pancasila. This is as stated by Morley that individuals interpret the content of texts relating to the socio-cultural background of the reader [4]. Here, the sosio-cultural background is represented through extra-campus Islamic organization followed. Each organization has their respective way of thinking in defining and implementing Islamic Shari'a. IMM, KAMMI, and PMII are supposed to have similar point of view in defining and implementing Islamic Shari'a, since they have a similar opinion regarding Pancasila. However, PMII holds their own concept in defining and implementing Islamic Shari'a. It is the concept that they called as *Islam Nusantara*, proposed by their big figure in the organization, Gus Dur. Gus Dur or the ex-Indonesian president, Abdurrahman Wahid, is famously known as a pluralistic figure who gives the chance for non-muslim community to celebrate their own religion freely in Indonesia. He is also known for his openness, inclusiveness and brave statements regarding the social and political matters in the country. Due to this figure and the proposed concept *Islam Nusantara*, PMII becomes the only extra-campus Islamic Student Organization that gives a full agreement and put a full acceptance toward the values in Pancasila.

#### **4 Conclusion**

Based on the interpretations and receptions of muslim students toward Pancasila above, it can be concluded that the muslim students positively interpret the values contained in Pancasila. They state that the values in Pancasila are conforming the Islamic Sharia/ teachings, with some notes from several of them. As analyzed by Morley's reception theory, the viewpoints of muslim students toward Pancasila are included in the Negotiated Reading or acceptance with negotiation

(for IMM, HMI, KAMMI) and the Dominant Reading or a full acceptance (for PMII) with no sign of opposition. This indicates that the muslim students have a good corridor in understanding Pancasila as the fundamental values of the country, Indonesia. By this way, they are supposed to have no tendency in rejecting Pancasila as a whole, even though there are some issues negotiated based on the respective background. With no muslim students occupying the 'opposition' reception, the act of radicalism by muslim students especially the ones who joined extra-campus Islamic Organization may be avoided. Taking their statement that as long as Pancasila is correctly understood by muslims, there will be no crash or opposing act from one to another. Hence, the muslim students may prevent any radical thoughts and acts against Pancasila, and together assist the nation and the people of Indonesia toward a brighter and smarter way of life and thinking.

### **Acknowledgments**

The researchers deliver a big gratitude toward the four extra-campus Islamic Organizations, including PMII, HMI, IMM, and KAMMI, who give the researchers a chance to conduct this research as well as for the good cooperation and hospitality. Furthermore, the researchers want to deliver many thanks to all parties who give their support and assistance to the researchers in completing this research.

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