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The Sufi order against religious radicalism in Indonesia

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This study aimed to analyse the contribution of the Sufi order in stemming religion-based violence as a form of the Sufis' response to rampant violence, extremism and religious radicalism. This study used a qualitative method in which the data were obtained through interviews, observation and documentation. Then they were analysed by using an interactive model. This study was carried out in three Sufi communities of the Sufi order Qadariyah wan Naqshabandiyah (TQN) in Indonesia, namely in Suryalaya Islamic Boarding School, Futuhiyyah Islamic Boarding School Mranggen and Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding School Jombang. The results of the study show that the three TQN orders have the concepts of dhikr and love, which are internalised in the act of Sufism. The Sufi order has the doctrines of love of God, mutual love, discourse of moderation and tolerance towards religion and other groups as the main instruments in the fight against religious radicalism. The resistance of the Sufis to religious radicalism shows that the Sufi order is cornered from attacks by formalist groups in religion. This fact reopens the historical archive of contradictions between the two major currents of Islamic thought and movement, Salafi versus Sufi. The counter-radicalism narrated by the Sufis of the three TQN communities represents their defensive attitude towards the aggressiveness of the textual and radical Salafis.

Contribution: This article contributes to prevent and reduce the rise of religious radicalism in Indonesia. The doctrines of tanbih, mahabbah, tolerance and moderatism developed by the Sufis in the three TQN communities became a source of reference and inspiration for resistance to violence and religious radicalism.

Keywords: Sufi order; cosmology; philosophy; rationalists; traditionalists; religious radicalism.

Introduction

Religion radicalism colours the development of Islam in Indonesia today (Afroni 2016; Fealy 2004; Van Bruinessen 2002). Violence and conflicts with religious nuances have increased and become a source of chaos for economic, social and political stability (Lestari & Parihala 2020; Shuja 2007; Strickler 2016). In the name of freedom of religion, expression of belief, democracy and regional autonomy, local governments are also competing to compile regulations based on local and religion such as Sariah regional regulations (Feener 2012). Such regulations often have discretionary nuances and they undermine the values of justice, togetherness and diversity (Crouch 2007). At the same time, the narratives of *jihad, hijrah, khilafah* and Islamic law adorn Islamic discourse in Indonesia, or the observers of Islamic studies call it the return of conservative Islamic diversity in Indonesia (Sebastian & Nubowo 2019).

The return of conservative Islam is marked by the revival of Salafi Islam that aims to ground Islam textually, symbolically and formally. The Salafi justifies various ways even through violence to achieve the goal that is to build Islamic community, state and government system (Brigaglia 2019; Warburg 2009).This situation triggers clashes between community groups and causes social disintegration (Holland & O'loughlin 2010; Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict 2016; Osman & Waikar 2018). On the contrary, substantive Islam is advancing with the rise of the Sufism movement either at local level or global level such as the transnational SufismNaqshbandi Haqqani (Knysh 2002; Malik & Hinnells 2006; Rytter 2014). The role of the Sufis in the socio-political life of Indonesian nation has become increasingly urgent (Fathurahman 2004; Howell 2001; Johns 1995). In contrast to Salafi Islam that carries religious formalism, the Sufism movement teaches love, which is oriented towards the substance and spirituality of religious values. In the perspective of Sufism, radical action, sadism, intolerance and extremism are mirrors of a dry and empty soul caused by a spiritual crisis. A spiritual crisis characterised by an individual's inability

to interpret life, values, morals and attitudes towards God and fellow living beings is the root of radical and intolerant actions. They claim themselves and their group are right and other groups are always wrong.

This study rejects the thesis (Woodward et al. 2013), which states that Salafi groups are not always radical and spread violence. On the contrary, Sufis are not always tolerant of other groups. According to Woodward, et al., both Salafi and Sufis have both radical and tolerant potential. Through empirical evidence in the three Qadiriyah wa Naqshabandiyah (TQN) orders in Indonesia, this study is different from the thesis of Woodward et al. (2013) who stated that Sufism has a base and a tolerant and moderate doctrine, which can be used as a symbol of resistance and counter-radicalism. Sufism campaigns for religion that is friendly and peaceful, rejects violence, extremism and radicalism (Philippon 2018) and becomes an alternative to face the radical Islam (Philippon 2020).

This study aimed to analyse the contribution of the Sufi order to counter radicalism through the teachings of dhikr, love, moderate and tolerant Sufism. This study used a qualitative method in which the data were collected through interviews, observation and documentation. These data were analysed interactively (Miles, Huberman & Saldana 2014). The study focussed on the TQN at Suryalaya Islamic Boarding School, Futuhiyyah Islamic Boarding School and Mranggen and Darul Ulum Boarding School Jombang because all the three have been the centre of well-known Sufi order since 1970 (Dhofier 1985; Van Bruinessen 1995; Zulkifli 2002). This research shows that the doctrines and traditions of the Sufis are important instruments in fighting religious radicalism in realising peace of mind and world peace.

Sufi order Qadiriyah wa Naqshabandiyah in Indonesia

The TQN is a joint Sufi order of two schools of Sufism Qadiriyah and Naqshabandiyah. In the middle of 19th century, a scholar who came from Kalimantan, Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Sambas (1803–1875), began teaching the TQN simultaneously in Mecca. The way he taught was different from other murshids who taught Sufism Qadiriyah and Naqshabandiyah separately. The merger of those two Sufi order created a new teaching (Van Bruinessen 1995; Zulkifli 2002). The Sufi order is actually an institutional aspect of Sufism.

After the death of Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Sambas (1875 AD), the leadership of the TQN was later replaced by its caliph, Shaykh Abdul Karim Banten, also living in Mecca (Van Bruinessen 1995). Through Shaykh Abdul Karim Banten, a charismatic scholar, TQN developed rapidly, especially in Banten and Cirebon, from Sumatra to Lombok, more towards land areas. Whilst in Java, it spread through several main caliphs of Sheikh Ahmad Khatib, namely Shaykh Abdul Karim from Banten, ShaykhTolhah from Cirebon and Shaykh Ahmad Hasbullah bin Muhammad al-Maduri (Mulyani

2005). Through the persistent efforts of all the caliphs, those became four TQN centres in Java in the 1970s (Dhofier 1985).

The four TQN centres in Java are affiliated with Islamic boarding school: firstly, Rejoso, Jombang, East Java, led by Kiai Haji (KH) Ramli Tamim who took the route from Sheikh Ahmad Hasbullah; secondly, Suryalaya, Tasikmalaya, West Java, led by KH, Shohibul Wafa Tajul Arifin who took the route from Shaykh Tolhah Cirebon; thirdly, Mranggen, Demak, Central Java, led by KH, Muslih Abdurrahman; and fourthly, Pangentongan, Bogor, Java, West, led by KH, Thohi r Falak. The latter two TQN centres took a lineage from Shaykh Abdul Karim Banten (Dhofier 1985; Van Bruinessen 1995). However, Mashar's research found nine centres added by the centre in Berjan Purworejo, Sawah Pulo Surabaya, Cukir Jombang, Kencong Kediri and Dawe Kudus (Mashar 2016).

Indonesian society easily accepted TQN because it teaches the doctrine and tradition of Sufism. The community responded to this Sufistic Islam enthusiastically. The local people who were originally Hindus and Buddhists became very interested in TQN because they both shared the same passion and understanding of the cosmos and theology. Sufistic Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are brought together on the esoteric, substance, metaphysical and spiritual dimensions. These religions have the same religious substance as an instrument to get closer to God and create peace and tranquility in life (Ashori 2013; Clark 1958; Schuon 1976). These characteristics cause the community adapt to the traditional Sufi order brought by Walisongo (Sunyoto 2012). Apart from the characteristics of the Sufistic Islamic culture, the business mission and trade, the transmission of priest intellectualism also influenced the development of the Sufi order. In fact, TQN in Indonesia cannot be separated from the problems of political and social issues in Indonesia (Awaludin 2016; Turmudi 1998). The Sufi order is a solution for drug addicts (narcotics, psychotropic substances and addictive substances), a reference for the government in formulating development policies, a source of political support in general elections, participating in resolving social conflicts and being a guardian of environmental damage (Ahmad 2019; Annajih & Sa'idah 2019; Birhasani 2017; Hassanali 2010; Mulyati & Nihayah n.d.; Nimtz 1980; Türkmen 2018).

The Qadiriyah wa Naqshabandiyah, as a combination of two Sufi institutions (Qadiriyah and Naqshabandiyah), which teaches esotericism and religious substance, is in fact easily accepted by the Indonesian people because it emphasises content rather than religious symbols. More than that, the Sufi tradition places great emphasis on respect for teachers, respect for others and easy adaptation to local culture, which are the factors of TQN's existence to this day. Thus, the dynamics of TQN in Indonesia are influenced by teachings, networks of scholars, intellectualism, values and culture. Through the channels and chains of Sufi order networks in Islamic boarding schools, TQN has become one of the most popular Sufi orders that has the largest members and great influence in Indonesia.

Sufism and three Qadiriyah wa Naqshabandiyah: Doctrine, tradition and movement

Sufism has a big role in the penetration of Islam to various parts of the world. Studying Sufism is the same as tracing the paths of Islamic civilisation (Van Bruinessen & Howell 2007). The term Sufism is often associated with Sufism and Sufi order discourse. The teaching and doctrine of Sufism are about the process of purifying the soul to get closer to God. In its development, Sufism moved into a movement or actualisation of Sufism praxis. Then, it developed into an embedded institution. Sufism has three forms of activity, namely as a mechanism for cleansing the soul of the *salik*, behaviour in the mystics and Sufis movements (Huda 2017). The teachings of Sufism emphasise the substantial aspects of Islam. Islam is seen from the essence and moderation in religion (Burhani 2012). Now, the Sufism developed by the Sufi order, besides being a medium for purity of the soul and closer to God, is also a means of mobilising the masses, a solution to social conflicts and contemporary problems (Howell 2001, 2008; Van Bruinessen 1998).

The Sufism movement has become relevant in the context of the rampant radicalism movement. Sufism possesses and offers doctrines and acts of kindness, compassion, and is divinely oriented, whereas radicalism seeks to dominate and has an orientation to power and materiality. In this context, the world is an arena of competition between human civilisations. Each sect and group tries to influence and create civilisation. Sufism tries to create a peaceful and happy civilisation (Hamsyah & Subandi 2017). On the contrary, radicalism creates conflict and chaos. This fact puts interests in the struggle for power (Wilson 2013).

Competition amongst civilisations results in conflict. Thus, the phenomenon of radicalism in Indonesia is the effect of the incompatibility of Islam and Western civilisation. Van Bruinessen's research traces the genealogical roots of the emergence of religious radicalism in Radical Islam based on Huntington's theory. According to him, the radical Islam represented by the Salafist is actually not a genuine Indonesian model (Van Bruinessen 2002).

In the Indonesian context, the Sufis with their Sufi order institutions, Tarekat the Naqshabandiyah Order, the Khalwatiyah Order, the Qadiriyah wa Naqshabandiyah Order and the Tijaniyah Order, are involved in the development through social, artistic, political, cultural and national processes (Laffan 2006; Rohmana 2012). Sufis carry universal values in social life based on substantive Islamic principles. On the contrary, terrorism arises becaue of religious exclusivism, thinking very formal-legalistic, and the denial of divine and human inner voices. This group actually also does read the holy Qur'an, but it is just limited to text without context. They stutter at seeing the diversity of interpretations, cultures and religious realities. In this context, the Sufism that is rife in Sufi order institutions is a spiritual jihad as an effort to reduce anger, revenge, hegemony, exploitation and arrogance in religion. Spiritual jihad starts with cleaning the spiritual aspects of heart disease (tazkiyah al-nafs). Clean hearts and minds lead to constructive and positive behaviours (El-Aswad 2006; Hanefar, Sa'ari & Siraj 2016; Hasan & Tamam 2018; Musrifah 2019). The jihad of the Sufis is different from the radical Muslims who interpret jihad by taking up arms and war. Such a Sufism movement is the seed, potential, teachings and actions of counter-radicalism. Thus, the contribution of Sufism becomes urgent in realising peace in Indonesia's diversity.

The basis for anti-radicalism of the TQN is the teachings and traditions of dhikr, *mahabbah* [love], *muraqabah* and getting closer to God. For instance, Suryalaya Islamic Boarding School is a Sufi Order Islamic boarding school that teaches Sufism and *Kanuragan* [magic]. The Suryalaya Islamic boarding school has developed into a centre for the study of Islamic sciences and academics in general. Today, the Islamic boarding school called Inabah is known as the centre of the Sufi order and boarding school, which specifically treats people with drug dependence. It has branches throughout the country and in several other countries in Southeast Asia such as Singapore, Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia (Lestari 2012).

The Sufi order at Rejoso Jombang Islamic Boarding School that was led by KH, Romli Tamim, teaches three doctrines: firstly, practising *khafi* dhikr or dhikr in the heart with full heart, that is always thinking about God and not preoccupied with material or world problems; secondly, *Muraqabah,* which is always trying to get closer and pursue God. Students of Islamic Boarding School must always hope and be kind to God. Thirdly, *Khidmah* [devotion], which implies being loyal to teachers who have given *talqin,* dhikr, *kaifiyah* and *jam'iyah* and are also willing to provide themselves to be servants for students and the community. Competing to be 'servants' is the morality of the Sufis. The doctrine of Sufism amongst the TQN teaches about responsibility, function and social relations.

The TQN at Futuhiyyah Islamic Boarding School teaches three aspects: faith, Islam and Ihsan. Islamic teachings that emphasise worship aspects or the relationship between humans and their Gods are also classified into three levels, namely syari'at, Sufi order and essence, led by KH. Muslich Abdurrahman describes the balance of the three in the Treatise Guidelines of the Qadiriyah Wa Naqshabandiyah and *Al-Futuhah al-Rabbaniyah fi al-Thariqah al-Qadiriyyah Wa al-Naqshabandiyah* (Mu'min 2014). He teaches the basic science of Sufi order in practice, such as the virtue of dhikr to God, the manners for students towards teachers, TQN lineage, *talqin* and *baiat*, practising TQN, *muraqabah*, the opinion of scholars about the most important dhikr, about changing teachers, *khataman* and *tawajuhan*. He becomes reference for problems solving of the community, either

private and public matters. In this context, Kiai Muslih and other TQN Sufi murshids have become a place to ask students who have problems with life, economy, family, legislative and executive election issues, including dealing with the problem of religious radicalism. Through his fatwas, doctrines, rituals and behaviour, the Mranggen-based Murshid integrates doctrine and action in real life.

The Sufi order to counter radicalism

The contribution of the Sufis in countering and fighting radicalism can be traced to the doctrine and rituals of the Sufis. The real contribution of Sufism is embodied in several aspects: the more substantive teaching authority, their base on peace of mind and then both are reflected on their behaviour in the real life. Thus, such Sufis' thought and tradition are certainly different from the spirit of radicals who try to change the social order by justifying the path of violence. Through a soft approach, the main arguments regarding the important role and contribution of the three Sufi order groups, both the TQN in Suryalaya, Mranggen and Rejoso can be explained: firstly, that dhikr and mahabbah are the basic teachings for all followers of the path to always remember God and love fellow humans. Secondly, Tanbih, a life guide for Sufis teaches tolerance and respect for differences. Thirdly, Sufis teach to be moderate in attitude. These teachings contribute to stemming the flow of Islamic radicalism.

The concept of radicalism is still being debated amongst experts (Effendy & Prasetyo 1998), but principally radicalism is an ideology that encourages fundamental and simultaneous change without compromising and using violent ways to subvert well-established social, religious and political orders (Dawisha 1986; Kallen 1972). Radicalism is fuelled by religious passion, religious text, religious figure and unfair socio-political system of national and global (Azra 2016; Qodir 2013).

Overcoming religious radicalism and terrorism has been pursued through two main approaches, namely the soft power approach and the hard power approach. One of the models and soft approaches in overcoming religious radicalism is de-radicalisation (Yunanto 2005). In this context, de-radicalisation is a process of reducing, changing or eliminating anti-Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI) radical thoughts, attitudes and actions towards tolerant, moderate, nationalist thinking in line with Islamic ideals characterised by Indonesians. De-radicalisation is a multidisciplinary approach in which there are discourses and actions against radicalism as carried out by Sufis. The doctrines, rituals and anti-radicalism movements carried out by the Sufis who joined TQN can be explained here.

Dzikr and Mahabbah: Basis for countering radicalism

Recitation for the Sufis is an expression of *mahabbah* [love] and an intimate path to God. This Sufism path is a step towards reducing and overcoming religious radicalism. The radicals have the aim of changing the socio-political order frontally. They justify any ways to achieve their goals, even by using violence. Violence breaches human nature and goes against the mission of every religion, although violence becomes an option for hardline groups in Islam. Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Ikhwanul Muslimin and Front Pembela Islam (FPI) are the real examples of Islamic groups that use violence as a way of jihad for the doctrines they believe in.

Dhikr for the Sufis is like breath for the human body. Through Dhikr, God graces a person and his or her soul becomes calm. Maskuri devotee of the Naqshabandiyah Sufi order admits that the mind become calm and peaceful. He said in Abdullah (2018:1–19):

> I joined Sufi order, I got many benefits and changes. My mind is calm down every day. I feel more comfortable, calm and at ease. The mind is no longer anxious and worried about life. I can be more patient in dealing with every problem of life. (authors' own translation)

It means that dhikr in the Sufistic tradition is important and a medium to improve life behaviour. According to Ridwan's narrative:

> Abah Anom, the main mursyid of TQN Suryalaya taught all students to emphasize dhikr. He said, put the science that you have studied first and practice the dhikr *La ilaha illallah* because dhikr is like rice, when it's cooked, you just have to look for the side dishes. Dhikr is important in all the teachings of the Sufis. (T. Ridwan pers. comm., 03 August 2020)

The tenacious soul and mind are able to dissolve all restless minds. Radical action is influenced by the disconnection of the soul from the presence of God in a person. The soul which is cut off from its Lord results in a feeling of greatness, power and arrogance, which changes the presence of God. As a result, he or she acted arbitrarily and felt the most right. Meanwhile, the others were wrong and deserved punishment.

Sufis spread love to fellow humans. Mahabbah's teachings to God, in fact, brought a backflow of life. The Qadiriyah wa Naqshabandiyah followers in Central Java gave testimony that the Sufi ritual had an impact on life and more empathy for others. Nardi, a temperamental and stubborn man, became mellow and soft-hearted after joining the Sufi order. Nardi took pledge and took an oath to Murshid Naqsabandi. He became a follower of the Sufi order. His days were filled with dhikr and religious rituals as practised by Sufis. Nardi was originally dubbed the grumpy. He was angry with anyone who did not share the same opinion with him. Nardi did not hesitate to commit acts of violence even with his own family and children. By joining the TQN Sufi order, Nardi's attitude and behaviour changed. Nardi became more compassionate and empathetic towards other people, other groups or society. Sufi orders can change the behaviour of their followers (Abdullah 2018).

Thus, dhikr as the main instrument of human communication with God turns out to have a spirit of peace and to obtain

God's grace and peace of life (Abdullah 2018). Based on Tri Ridwan's experience, one of the followers of TQN Suryalaya considered the importance of dhikr in winning over hearts. Dhikr is an antidote to radicalism. Ridwan says:

> With dhikr, our hearts become gentle. It can be a media to counter radicalism. There is an Anti-Radicalism Institute in Suryalaya. Muhammad Ali bin Muhammad, Abah Anom's student, developed dzikr as media to counter radicalism in Singapore Institute. Many Indonesians make a comparative study there, even though the source is from Indonesia. Precisely at Khotijah Mosque. (T. Ridwan pers. comm., 03 August 2020)

Ridwan's explanation proves the position and function of dhikr. Dhikr accelerates the path to muqarabah and mahabbah to God and becomes a means of building social relations that are more friendly to other groups and people. For the Sufis at the TQN in Suryalaya, dhikr is a foundation for peace and at the same time the media of countering radicalism.

Referring to Syach Muslih's Sufistic spiritual advice, following the Sufi order can clear the heart of things other than God attributes. On the contrary, the result of Sufism is a heart with *muraqabah* [feeling watched over by God], *mahabbah* [love], *ma'rifat* [knowing God] and *musyahadah* [knowing God witnessing God's promises] (Hadi 2010). A heart bound by world matters is the cause of destructive behaviour. Struggle for influence, political conflict, seizure of assets, economic problems and hedonism are small parts of the world's matters that make cloudy heart that can lead to negative behaviour. This negative behaviour is different from the teachings and actions of the Sufis. Sufis teach harmony in relationships between humans and also with nature.

For Mbah Muslih, emphasising the importance of an integrated system amongst the syari'ah, the Sufi order, the nature and the ma'rifat as a unified system. His argument is based on a well-known hadith, *al-syariah aqwaly, wa al-thariqah af'aly, wa al-haqiqah ahwaly*, *syar'iat* is my word, *tariqah* is my doing and essence is everything about my existence. According to him, being committed means imitating the behaviour of the prophet and his noble character. For Sufis, imitating the prophet means a continuous process of perfecting morals. Having a noble character towards fellow humans and God's creatures is an effort to have a perfect worship of God. In the context of socio-political relations, Sufis teach the importance of respecting, empathising and honouring others as the teachings of the Prophet. Feeling as the rightest one like a radical group is not in accordance with the teachings of the Sufists and violates prophetic principles. Islam prohibits doing damage, violence and conflict on earth (Ahmad 2019; Faiz 2014; Rusydi & Zolehah 2018).

This Sufi doctrine is opposed to the radicals' understanding and behaviour. The requirement for a happy country is the fulfilment of a sense of security of both body and soul.

In his teaching, Kiai Hadi, the main murshid in the TQN at Futuhiyyah Islamic Boarding School, commented on the occurrence of riots, violence and socio-religious conflicts, both in Palestine and Indonesia. He explained that violence and riots were caused by Muslims who did not want to follow the prophet's behaviour:

> The rioting and dozens of torn down mosques like in Myanmar and Palestinian has not subsided. It is because '*Al-Islam mahjubun bi al-Muslimin*' (Islam could not advance better because of Muslims). Islamic teachings are not practiced. It is the cause of the excellence of Islam that the Muslims cannot take advantage of. Why are we left behind, why '*amaluna' amaluhum, 'amaluhum' amaluna* (Our behavior is like their teachings, their behavior is like our teachings [Islam]). According to Abdul Hadi, honesty is the main asset to build the nation. (Hadi pers. comm., 20 September 2020)

Kiai Abdul Hadi invited Muslims to heed collective agreements in the context of the state, politics, government and in social life. Violence and radicalism could impact on a disintegration of society. One of the causes is less precise understanding of Islam and the concept of jihad (Yusof, Herman & Nasir 2010). It will not occur if Indonesian Muslims could carry out the teachings of the Prophet and also respect the diversity and social contract in the state.

According to Kiai Hadi, the book of Fitnah Wahabiyyah is the work of Shaykh Ahmad bin Zaeni Dahlan, a Mufti Safi'iyyah who lived in Mecca. He wrote the book based on his experience of the two biggest slanders. The first was the emergence of Wahhabis in Hejaz who ultimately controlled Haromain. They prevented Hajj especially those from Syria and Egypt. The second was the slander from the French State controlled Egypt. Kiai Abdul Hadi recounted the opaque side of Wahhabi teachings and behaviour:

> Wahhabi, build political and military power. They expand their influence. They carry out violence to achieve their political goals including killing the people especially children and women. (Hadi pers. comm., 20 September 2020)

Kiai Hadi is also concerned with Indonesian Muslims nowadays. He said that Indonesian Muslims are the largest in the world. Islam develops without sword and war. Now many groups are busy hither and thither to disbelieve others. They seek fault from the other side. The group felt the truest. It can lead to conflict and religious violence (A. Hadi pers. comm., 20 September 2020). Returning to the teachings and behaviour exemplified by the prophet is part of overcoming the problem of religious violence. The genealogy of Sufism teachings that originate in the Prophet of God indicates that the Sufis follow in the footsteps of the Prophet.

The Prophet taught love for others. Love or *mahabbah* taught in the Sufism tradition can be used as a basis for counteracting extremism and radicalism (Smith & Woodward 2013). Sufism is a solution to religious radicalism. According to Bianca J. Smith, a lecturer at Monash University Australia, Sufism can counter extremism and radicalism. According to

him, Sufism teaches about love. 'Sufism is a form of love and can change people who are exposed to radicalism and extremism', he said in a regional workshop, themed religious education and prevention of extremism. Love becomes a tool or medium against every extremist attitude and behaviour. Smith explained that many people who were exposed to radicalism and extremism became aware because they knew Sufism. Sufi teachings become a solution to the rise of radical religious behaviour (Abshor 2019).

The Sufi order teaches love and peace. Sufi doctrines, rituals and behaviour are intertwined with *mahabbah* issues. Love will cause inclusivism and tolerance towards other parties and at the same time creating peace amongst others (Sefriyono 2020). The teachings of this Sufi order touch cognitive knowledge at the level of internalisation in real action (Ridwan, Personal communication, 03 August 2020).

For the Sufi order, the mercy of God transcends the whole things. This interpretation becomes a guide for Sufis in seeing and evaluating other people. Kabir Helminski revealed that people who live under the guidance of Alquran spirit should acknowledge God's abundant love for all religious followers. God's love will reach both believers and non-believers (Helminski 2000).

A heart filled with love can spread beauty and joy and close all doors of egoism, enmity, hatred and resentment between people. The heart has entangled in the mahabbah to God, and it no longer leaves room for hatred towards different parties, other groups, teachings and other religions. The great Sufi has never hated the marginalised groups, the vulnerable people and minorities.

For Sufis, love is the binding energy between themselves and their beloved. Without love, the dhikr will only become meaningless nonsense. The path of love is the fastest ladder to the 'aisle' to the throne of God. For the Sufis, love is the way to essence. Love is essentially the goal in all directions of the servant's activities. Thus, dhikr is an instrument for the synergy of love for Sufis. Love is a Sufistic path to achieve one goal namely God.

It is impossible for the Sufis to act harshly and radically towards other God's creatures if love has penetrated the chest. The meek attitude of the Sufis towards adherents of different religions, even with non-Muslims, polytheists or against God, can be traced from this basic concept. This attitude is the strength of the Sufis to always spread peace and beauty, and at the same time to counteract all forms of radicalism.

From 'Tanbih' and 'Mahabbah' to knit tolerance

The community of TQN in Suryalaya has the text 'Tanbih' as a reference in carrying out the rituals and practices of Sufism. For the Sufis there, tanbih is a resource in responding

to every social, political and religious development. As the ideology of extremism, intolerance, truth claims, violence and radicalism and even acts of terrorism become rife, the tanbih became relevant text for Suryalaya Sufis. The manuscript of the murshid Tanbih Shaykh Abdullah Mubarak bin Nur Muhammad (Abah Sepuh) is an inheritance to all TQN Suryalaya students. Ridwan stated:

> The development of TQN Suryalaya emphasizes the doctrine of Tanbih. It emphasizes the relationship between religion and state. It's the start where the harmony begins as a religious citizen. Suryalaya has never had a confrontation with the government which is different from the histories of Sufism. In general, Sufism has good intentions, if there is a war, it is not fighting against the people but against the wrongdoing as in Libya and in Banten. (Ridwan pers. comm., 3 August 2020)

Based on Ridwan's explanation, Tanbih is the guide for the Sufis in Suryalaya. The tanbih text is a sacred document to be read and heard in every TQN Suryalaya Sufism activity. For Sufis, the text is also a guide that must be realised in social life, tolerance and mutual love for human beings to gain happiness and safety in the hereafter according to the goals of Sufism.

Love is the essence of the teachings of Sufism. It is loving God and trying to get close by remembering Him. Love and friendship are part of the stages that must be passed by the salik in getting closer to Him. According to Al-Junayd, the essence of love in the world of Sufism means the inclusion of the nature of the Beloved God in the qualities of the lover (*salik*). Loving God means that someone approaches, hopes and uses God's morals at all times (Muzakkir 2017; Qorib 2007). One of the realisation of love is true friendship by sincerely seeing other people and groups as more worthy of respect. Imam al-Qusyairy and Naisabury narrated the expression of the great Sufi Ibrahim bin Adham to his friend, 'I never found and saw your defect, because I only saw you with the glasses of love. I always look at you with kind eyes' (Muzakkir 2017).

Sumantri and Dahwadin conveyed the results of their research that the Tanbih manuscript contains messages of peace and acts of moderation in the social life of the nation, which includes: (1) harmonisation of religious and state relations; (2) respect for older people; (3) mutual love in the form of mentoring, coaching and fostering kindness to the younger ones; (4) that humility is equal; (5) always placing collective interests above individual or group interests; (6) a generous, virtuous and warm attitude towards the poor; and (7) protecting the environment so that continuity is maintained (Somantri & Dahwadin 2020).

For the Sufis in Suryalaya, the teachings and doctrines of TQN Suryalaya offer the importance of an attitude of inclusion, tolerance and friendship on the basis of humanity. They also teach compassion for everyone, avoiding hatred, and loving others without exception. All parties must be loved. Sufis emphasise gentle and affectionate attitudes.

For them, everyone, either Muslim or non-Muslim, is a friend. Sufis do not differentiate between different schools and thoughts, all are considered friends and there is nothing worthy of fighting. Friendship is a principle in the doctrine and practice of Sufis. Sufis treat murshids, teachers, parents and others with respect and *ta'dzim* like their real parents. To people of age, they act friendly like their own brothers. They also have affection for the younger ones. The Sufis of TQN Suryalaya avoid hatred, envy and crime and have the attitude of always accepting advice from various sources (Al-Hujwiri 1993).

Sufis never view other people and differences as bad or threatening. Plurality for Sufis can be brought together at the same meeting point, as fellow servants who are struggling to get closer to the one substance. The teaching is the basis for Sufis in establishing social and political relations (Usman 2004). The interaction of a person or a group with others in notional life is built on the basis of equality. By positioning all human beings as servants of God, human behaviour in social, political and state life will become more humane and just.

Thus, for TQN Sufis, Tanbih is advice and rituals in carrying out social relations, tolerance and inclusive diversity. It contains advice and behaviours to maintain harmony amongst people, respect differences, not let disputes occur and not be easily hooked by lust and influenced by Satan's temptations. This Tanbih manuscript teaches the ethics of socialising to elders, leaders, scholars and people who are equal, lower and poor (Baidhawi 2020).

Sufis who join the TQN are encouraged to follow the advice of the murshid. The Tanbih is a form of advice to all students to be careful in thinking and acting. All students must obey Islamic teachings and be good citizens. They must follow the rules of religion and state. According to the teachings of the TQN Sufi order, obeying religion and the state is the proof of faith. The manuscript also reminds students not to be enslaved to lust, to avoid material temptations and to be aware of fanaticism and extremism (Arifin 1970).

This TQN doctrine reminds the dictum '*Al-Mu'min mi'rat al-mu'min*' that believers are a mirror for each other. According to Annemarie Schimmel, an expert on Sufism, it is the basis for the actions of the Sufis. Through love, the Sufis believe that all human beings are in the shade of the house of God's love. For them, God never differentiates human religions, beliefs and rituals. God always radiates love and compassion to all his servants, even if the servant opposes and challenges Him. This Sufistic tanbih doctrine is not just teaching, but also practising compassion, tolerance and getting rid of feelings of hatred towards others, even though they are proven to be hostile.

By practising the Tanbih teachings as a behavioural guide for the Suryalaya Order students, it can reduce and ward off radical attitudes and behaviours. It means respecting physically and spiritually, to coexist, to build social, cultural, economic, religious and political harmony. Tanbih also teaches mutual cooperation, humility and humanism. For them, strife, conflict and violence only lead to sorrow in this world and the hereafter.

For the Sufis, in economy, politics or religion, vulnerable people should not be insulted. They need to get a helping hand, be loved, nurtured and guided by gentle and persuasive advice. The attitude can return them to a holy path, repentance and towards positive things (Somantri & Dahwadin 2020).

Illustratively, Robert Frager explained that Sufis believe that every religion contains basic truths, and all religions have the same essence. Each religion has different messengers, prophets and religious leaders. Like all light illuminates the expanse of a room. Those lights are different, but the currents come from one source, namely the radiant Essence. Frager illustrates further that, as in a room full of various lights, we will not be able to distinguish from one another. The lights are essentially the same. Each light comes from a single energy. It cannot be denied; there is a stronger and brighter light. It is just that the quality of light is equally important and comes from the same source (Frager 2013).

Sufis live together in love. There was no room left for the seeds of hatred and sorrow towards other creatures of God. Love for God has closed all the doors of the ugliness, weakness and shortcomings of others. Love for God presents themselves as weak servants and do not have any strength, except the strength that belongs to Him. Through the TQN, they put the relationship amongst humans in a big stream towards love for the Creator. Love teaches life in symphony of human chanting that is close, intense, tolerant and mutually helpful in the name of humanism and divine servants.

Radicals' lack of tolerance has the potential to humiliate different groups (Van Prooijen et al. 2015). On the other contrary, Sufis' tolerance towards different religious groups, thoughts, schools and communities can overcome psychological barriers for Sufi order in social interaction. Tolerance including towards non-Muslims can overcome socio-psychological barriers and facilitate reconciliation with different groups (Zaduqisti et al. 2020). A study conducted by Zaduqisti et al. shows that a moderate attitude can pave the way for Muslims to have a positive attitude towards peace and reconciliation with non-Muslims. Thus, loving kindness, moderate thoughts and behaviour become positive energy in knitting tolerance-based peace.

Sufism and the spirit of religious moderation

Sufis have a tradition of adapting to ideas and traditions from other parties because Sufism substantially emphasises esoteric aspects in all aspects. Sufis in the three centre places teach and try to find common ground in monotheistic teachings. In responding to religious radicalism, Sufis offer polite, friendly, peaceful and moderate religiousness.

Kiai Afifuddin Dimyati or well-known as Gus Awis, the Coordinator of Education at Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding School Rejoso, explained the relation of Sufism promoted by Kiai Romli and radicalism:

> Mbah Romli's TQN teaching is against radicalism. Because it is inclusive, not exclusive. In the quotes, he does not think it was the most correct in the religious life. He also considers other people good. *Khusnudzan* is greater than *su'udzan*. Meanwhile, radicalism originates from the group's claim to be the best and right. (Afifuddin Dimyati, Personal communication, 03 Sept. 2020)

According to Gus Awis, the spirit brought by all Murshid at Darul Ulum Islamic Boarding School counter radical narrative. They never differentiate guests and other groups from the past to the present. This principle of kindness to all people and other groups is sometimes misunderstood. In fact, those who do not understand the principles of Sufism developed at Rejoso ask the direction and orientation of the Sufism that was developed in Rejoso. Gus Awis said, in the 1970s, when Kyai Mustain entered and campaigned for Golongan Karya (Golkar) party, many people protested and even split and then conflict occurred. Yet, now many are also part of the Golkar party. Based on his explanation, at that time the vision and principles of Kyai Mustain were for the benefit. To realise the common good, there must be people in other political parties for the sake of balance. According to Gus Awis, the concept of balance is a counter-radicalism. The attitude is called moderate. Taking the middle road, not extreme, Sufism as the path of the Sufis.

At the TQN Rejoso, Sufis hold Mbah Romli's, *Samrah al-Fikriyah*. It talks about suluk or *latifah* levels in the Naqshabandiyah Order. *Istighasah* is Sufis' dhikr. *Latifah* is the main key to clean the heart. A clean heart will be the source and emanation of God's grace. A clean heart affects the attitudes and behaviour of the Sufis. Gus Awis told:

> I saw my own father who was a murshid. I never saw my father angry or hate other people. His attitude was due to the fact that the Sufi order teachings was inclusive of others and accept differences. He considered that we really belong together, we didn't dominate the truth. Sufis also valued the truths of others. So what emerges was mutual respect. (Afifuddin Dimyati, Personal communication, 03 Sept. 2020)

The moderate thoughts and attitudes of the Rejoso Sufi order cannot be separated from *istighasah* and dzikr teachings of the salik. Looking for this moderate point inspires murshid and salik in religion, and then they are committed to build the substantial side of human life. The rally point value of moderation is also the energy for the meeting of Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, Shaykh Ahmad el-Tayyeb, on 04 February 2019. Sufism, religious leaders and the salik were involved in the delivery of humanitarian brotherhood documents (human fraternity document). The document confirms that in fact the common enemy of humanity is fanatic extremism, a desire to destroy one another (destruction), war, intolerance and hateful attitudes amongst humans. All these destructive attitudes are in the name of

religion. The teachings and rituals of Sufism at TQN are against these acts of violence.

Sufism traditions and rituals are in line with the policies of the Ministry of Religion, which formulate a policy of mainstreaming religious moderation. The policy is part of the solution to overcome extremism and religious radicalisation. For the Ministry of Religion, 'Religious Moderation' is characterised by four criteria, namely national commitment, tolerance, non-violence and accommodating to local culture.

The national commitment indicator is an important measure to determine a person's religious paradigm, thoughts, attitudes, behaviour and practices and his commitment to the consensus of the nation state. It can be measured from loyalty to the unitary state, acceptance of Pancasila as a state ideology, attitudes towards all forms of ideological challenges that threaten Pancasila and fostering a sense of nationalism. One of attitudes of the commitment to nationality is the acceptance of the principles of the nation as stated in the 1945 Constitution and the regulations under it. Meanwhile, tolerance is characterised by recognition and acceptance of differences, willingness to give equal rights, individual awareness, openness and receptivity (Zanakis, Newburry & Taras 2016). Religious moderation also ensures that there is no violence, both physical and non-physical, and accepts and respects the local culture of the community (Prasetawati & Asnawi 2018).

National commitment, tolerance, anti-violence and acceptance of local culture are the main aspects to serve as the indicators of religious moderation. In the view of religious moderation, practising Islamic teachings means obeying the rules, obligations and carrying out all state policies. As a good citizen, every community is obliged to practise their religious teachings within the framework of a unitary state.

Sufism teaches moderation. In other words, through a moderate attitude, Sufism means contributing to the prevention of radicalism. As it is understood that the different characteristics of radicals to moderate groups is that radicals perceive their norms, values, behaviour, culture or ideology as superior to those of other people or groups (Doosje et al. 2016). The TQN does not claim to be the most correct, but it also acknowledges the truth of different groups. This attitude became an asset for the Sufis in acting against radicalism. The depiction of the Sufi order in fighting against religious radicalism is shown in Figure 1.
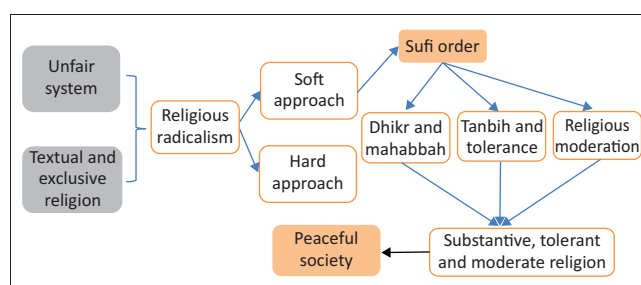

FIGURE 1: The Sufi order against religious radicalism.

Based on Figure 1, it can be understood that the occurrence of religious radicalism is caused by an unfair system, and/or a textual, exclusive and formalistic religion. Religious radicalism can be countered by two approaches, namely soft and hard approaches. Sufi orders against religious radicalism with a soft approach, namely through the teachings of dhikr and *mahabbah*, tanbih and tolerance and religious moderation. The doctrines and actions of these Sufis create tolerant, inclusive and moderate religious thought and behaviour. Through these teachings and actions, the Sufi order contributed to de-radicalisation activities to create a peaceful society.

Conclusion

The Sufi orders which have been known that they withdraw from socio-political life, in fact, have clear traces in guarding an open, moderate and tolerant religious tradition and fighting against radicalism and religious-based violence. The doctrine, thoughts and actions of Sufism as a form of counter-radicalism are evident in the three Sufi order institutions, namely the TQN in Suryalaya, Mranggen and Rejoso. The three Sufi communities have Sufism doctrines and traditions that are moderate and tolerant of other religions, sects and groups. This finding refutes the results of the study by Woodward et al. (2013), which state that both Salafis and Sufis have the potential and opportunity to commit violence and be tolerant at the same time. The love doctrine, a substantive, tolerant and moderate religious tradition displayed by the three Sufi orders, proves that the Sufis have a teaching basis against religious radicalism. The counter-radicalism campaigned by them is a necessity for the latest religious developments in Indonesia.

The three Sufi orders at TQN are promoting moderate and tolerant religion in the midst of a religiously conservative revival. The condition reminds the memory of the rivalry between revivalists and traditionalists. Revivalism promotes religious purification and seeks to return all social, religious and political problems to Alquran, hadith, the life practices of the Prophet and *Salaf* scholars. This group is dealing with the doctrines and practices of Sufism that are more accommodating to culture, locality, and contemporary problems. The spirit of the revivalists was transformed into the *Salafism* and transnational movements. They have religious doctrines and models that are textual and formalistic and tend to be radical. For the Sufis, the actions of radicals not only disrupt the stability of religion and state, but they also undermine human nature as servants of God. The relationship between fellow beings becomes disturbed because of the truth claims of the Salafi group. Thus, in this context, Sufis who try to build peace in themselves, society, the state and at a global level are challenged by the Salafi group. Therefore, the counter-radicalism promoted by the Sufis, through Sufism teachings, thinking and being moderate, as well as taking a tolerant path, is important to realise mental coolness, inner welfare and world peace.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

M. A., A. A., M. N. A. and S. M. M. contributed equally to this research article. Each of them was involved in the preparation of research design, data collection, analysis and article writing.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Data availability

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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