

History and Policy Challenges for Counter Radicalization Policy in Central Sulawesi

Roma Tressa^{1*}, Nur Faizah²

¹Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak, East Kalimantan, Indonesia

²Badan Riset dan Inovasi Daerah Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

Article Info

Article history:

Received, 19 Mar, 2025

Revised, 29 Apr, 2025

Accepted, 30 Apr, 2025

Keywords:

Public Policy;

Deliberative;

Counter Radicalism

ABSTRACT

Central Sulawesi is one of the former conflict areas and terrorism bases in Indonesia. The government continues to prevent the community especially the youth community from becoming radicalized. This research aims to find the right policy to prevent terrorism in the future. The data analysis technique used is Soft System Methodology (SSM). The method used is descriptive qualitative, by conducting interviews with the government, community and non-profit organizations. The research findings showed that the Integrated Action Plan program for Managing Social Conflict in the Poso Regency implemented dominated by a military science 15 years ago but unable to prevent radicalization. A deliberative approach must be used to handle long-term radicalization, involving non-governmental actors as policy agents. The deliberative approach used the power of social capital, discussions with the citizen and involving the community in decision-making.

Corresponding Author:

Roma Tressa

Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak, East Kalimantan, Indonesia

Email: roma.tressa@fisip.untan.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Radicalization is the process through which individuals adopt extreme ideologies and are willing to engage in criminal activities to advance a political project, ideology, or cause to bring about social change (Center for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence, 2018). Radicalism is intricate and subject to debate, often linked with violence and terrorism [1]. Radicalism becomes a negative concept if it is followed by acts of violence with destructive power that destroys people's lives. Although radicalism is problematic, as [2] argued, it will likely be on the policy agenda for the following years.

There is a connection between the Poso conflict with extremist groups in Poso. The policies of countering radicalization in the Poso Regency are impossible to separate from the Poso conflict in 1998-2000 and the emergence of the extremist group East Indonesia Mujahideen, which is connected to the Indonesian Islamic State (NII). Various policy products were created to stop conflict and terrorists in Indonesia. During each term of leadership, each president makes policies that can protect society from acts of terrorism.

There are two approaches taken to prevent radicalization in Poso, including first, the hard approach, namely punishing terrorists and arresting individuals who sympathize with the East Indonesia Mujahideen (MIT) extremist group through security operations from 2010 to 2023. Second, the soft approach, namely the Integrated Action Plan in Dealing with Social Conflict program in the Poso Regency Area, which is in accordance with the Poso Regent's Decree Number 188.45/0474/2021 regarding the establishment of a unified team to manage social conflicts in the Poso Regency Level in 2021 to implement the Integrated Action Plan for Handling Social Conflict in the Poso Regency. However, this policy has not accommodated the non-governmental actors' interests, such as academics, community groups, media, and the private sector.

Some weaknesses of the Integrated Action Plan for Dealing with Social Conflict in the Poso Regency include:

The document of Managing Social Conflict in the Poso Regency has not described national preparedness programs and activities, counter-radicalization, and de-radicalization, pursuant to Law Number 5 of 2018 on Combating Terrorism.

The document for Dealing with Social Conflict in the Poso Regency has no way of preventing radicalization for the four target groups of the terrorism prevention strategy, namely: a) the core group or intellectual actors who are key figures who recruit people to become militants, b) militant groups or executors who are trained to carry out terror, c) support groups, namely individuals or groups who voluntarily provide supporting facilities for acts of terrorism, and d) sympathizer groups that have the potential to support terrorist movements.

The document for Dealing with Social Conflict in the Poso Regency has not involved the participation of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of the program.

In efforts to handle radicalization that involve civil society participation, handling must be carried out in a deliberative manner. Deliberative public policy is a derivation of the deliberative democracy concept put forward by Jurgen Habermas. Deliberative democracy wants to increase the intensity of citizen participation in forming aspirations and opinions so that the policies and laws produced by the governing party can come closer to the governed's expectations [3]. Consensus deliberation is a concept that is interpreted as involving citizens in voicing their preferences rationally, listening to each other, empathizing, and exchanging information openly to make decisions on issues faced by society through accountable arguments. Apart from promoting conciliation between various actors and public involvement, the deliberative process also offers transparency, public perspective, legitimacy, and accountability in decision-making [4].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of this research is descriptive qualitative, by conducting interviews with the government, community and non-profit organizations. In descriptive research, researchers carried out a description of the relationship between an event to get a complete figure of the phenomenon that occurred concerning the research problems. Data sources came from informants, events, and documents related to the research topic.

Data Collection Method

Data collection methods in this research consisted of observation, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, data analysis techniques used Soft System Methodology (SSM) developed by Peter Checkland, including situations considered problematic, problem situations expressed, root definitions of relevant systems, conceptual models, comparisons with reality, and debate about change.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History of Poso Conflict Handling

The Poso conflict occurred in four waves of riots, namely the first wave on December 25, 1998, the second wave on April 11, 2000, the third wave on May 23, 2000, and the fourth wave on 3-29 November 2021. This conflict has killed hundreds of people, with 19,507 families displaced or 78,030 people, and 8,030 housing units suffered severe damage [5]. The conflict grew because it received support from religious leaders of each conflicting community.

The first stage of rioting occurred on December 24, 1998, due to clashes between Christian and Muslim youth, which then escalated into a social conflict and was linked to the political interests of specific groups who, at that time, were in the process of regent succession in Poso Regency [6]. The existence of religious sentiment in the Poso conflict became a bonding for both parties to strengthen each other's in-group and out-group structures in mobilizing the masses based on religious identity. The second and third riots in May 2000 spread to Morowali. The fourth riot on 23-29 November 2021 was a civil war where the conflict was a religious holy war that had to be fought [7]. Cinu's research report (2016) stated that the conflict in Poso was full of military business interests in the form of trading ammunition and firearms, which were rented to the conflicting parties. Handling conflicts was done through security operations, but could not resolve the conflict. Furthermore, the Malino Declaration was held on December 20, 2001, using a religious approach.

In 2002, there was a reconciliation policy for handling refugees through a strategy for refugees returning to Poso and community empowerment. In line with the recovery of Poso's condition, a case of misappropriation of Poso social recovery assistance funds provided by the central government amounting to fifty-eight billion rupiahs emerged and involved several officials from the Poso Regency and Central Sulawesi Province. According to Adjintoro (2004), one of the reasons for the prolonged Poso conflict was because of the elite's economic interests, which were full of nuances of corruption but had never been thoroughly investigated.

Handling the East Indonesian Mujahideen (MIT) extremist group

In 2010, the extremist group East Indonesian Mujahideen (MIT) was formed to carry out terror, carry out jihad for the Islamic State of Indonesia, and take revenge for resolving the Poso conflict in the past, which was unfair to Muslims [8]. This group received support from a religious leader who was later sentenced to prison. The Judgment No. 629/Pid.Sus/2014/PN.Jkt from the East Jakarta District Court states that Ustad Yasin ordered Santoso to carry out military activities in the form of assembling bombs, introducing weapons, and shooting practice using bullets, receiving material about jihad to fight against those who had a different understanding from his teachings or thought as a form of *amaliyah* [9].

During the reign of Megawati Soekarno Putri, the Bali Bombing incident occurred. The government implements Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (Perpu) Number 1 of 2002 Law Number 15 of 2003 about the Elimination of Terrorist Criminal Acts. Presidential Instruction Number 4 of 2002 followed this step. The Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs then released a decision number 26/Menko/Polkam/11/2002 regarding the formation of the Terrorism Eradication Coordination Desk (DKPT) [8]. Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian National Police and Law Number 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Armed Forces regulate the division of the Indonesian National Armed Forces institution from the Indonesian National Police. Security operations were carried out to crack down on terrorists in Poso.

During the reign of President Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004-2014), Presidential Regulation No. 46/2010 regarding the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), Presidential Regulation Number 46 of 2010 concerning the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), Law Number 17 of 2011 concerning State intelligence were issued, and carrying out security operations.

Furthermore, under the leadership of President Joko Widodo, Law Number 5 of 2018 regarding Amendments to Law Number 15 of 2003 concerning the Determination of Government Regulations in Lieu of Law Number 1 of 2002 regarding the Elimination of Terrorist Criminal Acts and Presidential Regulation Number 7 of 2021 addresses the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism in 2020-2024 were issued as well as continuing security operations to deal with extremist groups in Poso. At the Regency level, the Poso Regent's Decree Number 188.45/0474/2021 was issued about Establishing an Integrated Team to Manage Social Conflict at the Poso Regency level in 2021 to carry out the Integrated Action Plan for Managing Social Conflict in the Poso Regency. However, this document still has several shortcomings, namely:

The Integrated Action Plan Document for Dealing with Social Conflict in the Poso Regency has included preventing terrorism aspects. However, it has not outlined programs and activities for national preparedness, counter-radicalization efforts, and de-radicalization strategies yet, as mandated by Law Number 5 of 2018 concerning the Eradication of Terrorists' Criminal Acts. Hereinafter, it was outlined in Government Regulation Number 77 of 2019 addresses the Prevention of Criminal Acts of Terrorism and the Protection of Investigators, Public Prosecutors, Judges, and Correctional Officers.

The Integrated Action Plan Document for Managing Social Conflict in the Poso Regency has not contained procedures for preventing radicalization for the four target groups of the terrorism prevention strategy, namely: a) core groups or intellectual actors who are key figures who recruit people to become militants, b) groups militants or executors who are trained to carry out terror, c) supporting groups, namely individuals or groups who voluntarily provide supporting facilities for acts of terrorism, and d) sympathizer groups that have the potential to support terrorist movements (BNPT Deputy I Strategic Plan 2010-2014). The Poso government should concentrate on efforts to prevent radicalization among these four target groups.

The Integrated Action Plan Document for Managing Social Conflict in the Poso Regency only involves the participation of governmental actors in program formulation, program implementation, and program evaluation.

Policy Challenges for Counter Radicalization in Poso Regency

The research findings presented that the policies for radicalization prevention in the Poso Regency were elitist or determined by elites at the central and regional levels. Policies for handling radicalization were faced with the interests of governmental actors who dominated the program. There were two approaches taken to prevent radicalization in Poso, including first, the challenging approach, namely taking action against terrorism perpetrators and apprehending supporters of the East Indonesia Mujahideen (MIT) group through security operations from 2010 to 2023. Second was the soft approach, namely the Plan for Managing Social Conflict Through Integrated Action in the Poso Regency program. This policy has not accommodated the interests of non-governmental actors such as academics, community groups, media, and the private sector.

Handling radicalization in Poso should be carried out in a deliberative manner that involves citizens in the policy process. In a context where the state is not the sole agent formulating and applying policies (planning and implementing agency), The complex relationships between actors play a crucial role in formulating, deciding on, and implementing public policies. Governance term without government, which was first popularized by Rosenau and Czempriell (1992), may be an almost appropriate metaphor to describe

the expansion of power and the limited role and capacity of government nowadays.

Therefore, radicalization prevention documents should contain the following aspects:

The rules document of Managing Social Conflict in the Poso Regency should outline national readiness programs and initiatives for counter-radicalization and de-radicalization in compliance with Law Number 5 of 2018 on the Eradication of Terrorism Criminal Acts.

The document for the Integrated Action Plan to Handle Social Conflict in the Poso Regency must contain preventing radicalization procedures for the four target groups of terrorism prevention strategies, namely: a) core groups or intellectual actors are vital figures who recruit people to become militants, b) groups militants or executors who are trained to carry out terror, c) supporting groups, namely individuals or groups who voluntarily provide supporting facilities for acts of terrorism, and d) sympathizer groups that have the potential to support terrorist movements.

The Integrated Action Plan Document for Handling Social Conflict in the Poso Regency must involve the participation of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of the program.

Programming must involve the society's roles as actors and policy agents to prevent radicalization in the Poso Regency. It was in accordance with the results of [10]'s research that the most effective approach to address the problem of radicalization was to engage with the community and bring together all affected experts and practitioners to establish a network for exchanging knowledge and information in joint deliberation. The presence of society actors provides more specific information in the context of preventing radicalization. Policy agents play a role primarily in setting the policy agenda in the region, advocating the perspectives, personal encounters, and concerns of the community within the framework of cooperation against radicalization. The agent is the broadest form of participation, encompassing the possibility of acting in ways that influence the presumptions and constraints participating in [11]. Contrary to actors, agents work to influence not just the outcome of collaboration but also its structure, conditions, and objectives. Agents involved in radicalization prevention policies make collective and collaborative efforts to accommodate all parties' interests [10], [12], [13], [14].

CONCLUSION

Sustainable efforts to handle radicalization in the Poso Regency should involve deliberative civil society participation, both in the preparation of policy programs and in program implementation and evaluation. Non-governmental actors can function as policy agents who act to influence the outcomes of collaboration, its form, terms, and policy goals. The government also needs to increase society's roles by providing access to the public to obtain information and make decisions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In this chapter, we would pleased to thank Universitas Tanjungpura and Badan Riset dan Inovasi Daerah Kota Semarang. The author believes there are still many shortcomings in this manuscript. Thanks to all the people who helped in the research process. Thanks to the journal, hopefully, this manuscript can be published.

REFERENCES

- [1] Lynch, Orla.(2013). "British Muslim youth: Radicalisation, terrorism and the construction of the "other"." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 6, No. 2. pp. 241-261.
- [2] Neumann, P. (2013). *The Trouble with Radicalization*. *Journal International Affairs*. pp. 873-893.
- [3] Mardiyanta, Antun. (2011) *Kebijakan Publik Deliberatif: Relevansi dan Tantangan Implementasinya*. *Jurnal Masyarakat, Kebudayaan dan Politik*, 24 (3). pp. 261-271. ISSN p-ISSN: 2086-7050; e-ISSN: 2528-601
- [4] Abritaningrum, Y. T. (2016). *Proses Deliberatif dalam Pembuatan Keputusan untuk Peningkatan Kualitas Pelayanan Publik (Kasus Peningkatan Kualitas Pelayanan Publik dengan Partisipasi Masyarakat di Puskesmas di Kota Yogyakarta)*. Master's Thesis, notpublished, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta Kontras.(2004)
- [6] Aditjondro, George Junus. (2004). *Kerusuhan Poso dan Morowali, Akar Permasalahan dan Jalan Keluarnya*. Penerapan Keadaan Darurat di Aceh, Papua, dan Poso Dalam Pemilu 2004. Jakarta: ProPatria.
- [7] Cinu, Surahman (2016). *Agama, Militerisasi dan Konflik, Kasus Poso Sulawesi Tengah*, *Al-Fikra Jurnal Ilmu Keislaman* Volume 5 No. 1, 2016.
- [8] Asrori, Ahmad. (2015). *Radikalisme Di Indonesia: Antara Historisitas dan Antropisitas*, Kalam: Jurnal Studi Agama dan Pemikiran Islam, Volume 9, No. 2, December, p. 261) Mbai. (2014).
- [10] Holdo, Markus. (2020). *An Inclusive And Participatory Approach To Counter Radicalization? Examining The Role Of Muslim Associations In The Swedish Policy Process*. *Journal Ethnicities* Hayward. (2000).

- [12] Lindekilde, L. (2014) Refocusing Danish counter-radicalization efforts: An analysis of the(problematic) logic and practice of individual de-radicalization interventions. In: Baker- Beall C, Heath-Kelly C and Jarvis L (eds), Counter-Radicalisation: Critical Perspectives. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 223–241.
- [13] Ragazzi F. (2014). Policed multiculturalism? The impact of counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization and the ‘end’ of multiculturalism. In Baker-Beall C, Heath-Kelly C and Jarvis L (eds) Counter-Radicalisation: Critical Perspectives. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 170–188.
- [14] Thomas P, Grossman M, Miah S, et al. (2017) Community reporting thresholds: Sharing information with authorities concerning violent extremist activity and involvement in foreign conflict: A UK replication study. Research Report. Lancaster: CREST (Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats).