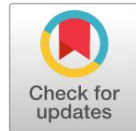


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Religious Deradicalization through Inclusivism and Multiculturalism in Islamic Boarding School Education in the United States

Ali Mufron¹ 

¹Institut Agama Islam Attarmasi Pacitan, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Background. Religious radicalism in the United States poses a significant challenge in a multicultural society, where diverse religious and cultural identities coexist. Radical interpretations of religious teachings can lead to intolerance and threaten social cohesion.

Purpose. This study examines the role of education and interfaith engagement in preventing religious radicalism and promoting tolerance.

Method. A qualitative approach was employed using literature analysis and conceptual review of deradicalization programs. Data were collected from academic publications, policy documents, and reports related to religious education, multiculturalism, and interfaith dialogue in the United States.

Results. The findings show that inclusive education and interfaith communication effectively reduce radical narratives and strengthen mutual understanding. Educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools and community-based organizations, have implemented models that emphasize dialogue, cultural awareness, and respect for diversity.

Conclusion. Educational collaboration and multifaith engagement are key strategies for preventing radicalism and strengthening social cohesion. As a practical contribution, this study supports the development of multifaith education programs that promote tolerance and cultural awareness among educators, students, and the wider community.

KEYWORDS

Religious Deradicalization, Religious Radicalism, Multicultural Education

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Correspondence:

Ali Mufron,
alimufron86@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Religious radicalism refers to a harsh and often militant interpretation of religious beliefs that can lead to extreme actions and ideologies. This phenomenon typically arises from a perceived threat to religious identity or values, prompting adherents to advocate drastic measures, including violence, to defend or promote their beliefs. Radicalism can arise within various religions and is often linked to political, social, and economic factors, making it a complex and multifaceted issue (Hannan, 2024; Zulkhairi, 2024). The increasing complexity of religious dynamics in the United States highlights an urgent need to address the challenges of religious radicalization and social division. Despite being a pluralistic society, the persistence of extremist interpretations across religious traditions continues to threaten social cohesion, fostering intolerance



violence, and weakened intergroup dialogue (Cholily, 2025; Ubaidillah, 2025). At the same time, the institutionalization of religion in public policy particularly during the administration of Barack Obama demonstrates the growing recognition of religion as a strategic component in peacebuilding, human rights, and international relations. This dual reality underscores the importance of strengthening inclusive and moderate religious education as a preventive approach to radicalization.

Previous studies have emphasized that interfaith and interreligious relations are inherently sensitive due to the presence of strong religious commitments and exclusive truth claims. However, scholars argue that these elements should not be viewed solely as sources of conflict but also as opportunities for dialogue and collaboration among diverse religious communities (Pratistha, 2025; Rosyanti, 2024). In the United States, with its highly diverse religious landscape including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism interfaith engagement has become essential in promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence (Ayumiati, 2024; Fitriani, 2024). At the same time, research has shown that radical interpretations of religious texts, particularly those that are literal and exclusive, can contribute to pro-violence attitudes and, in some cases, be exploited by extremist movements (Islamic, 2024; Ruldeviyani, 2024).

However, existing studies often generalize Islamic educational institutions, particularly Islamic boarding schools, as potential sites of radicalization without sufficiently examining their internal diversity and educational orientation. In reality, Islamic boarding schools are heterogeneous institutions with varied structures, curricula, and ideological orientations. Many of these institutions emphasize character education, spiritual development, and community engagement, promoting values of peace, tolerance, and inclusivism (Fasya, 2024; Firmansyah, 2025). This study offers a novel perspective by critically examining how Islamic boarding school education in the United States can function not as a source of radicalization, but as a medium for religious deradicalization through the integration of inclusivism and multiculturalism.

Therefore, this article aims to analyze the role of Islamic boarding school education in fostering religious deradicalization within a multicultural society. Specifically, it seeks to explore how the principles of inclusivism and multiculturalism are integrated into educational practices and how these contribute to reducing radical tendencies while strengthening interreligious understanding. By doing so, this study intends to provide a more balanced and evidence-based perspective on the role of Islamic educational institutions in contemporary society.

As the world evolves, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are confronted with various phenomena of social change and multiculturalism. Advances in information technology, socio-political dynamics, and a number of changes framed within societal dynamics all lead to questions about the resistance, responsibility, capacity, and sophistication of Islamic boarding schools in facing these major changes. Multiculturalism, which serves as a meeting point for various cultures, necessitates equality and respect amidst cultural plurality. Islamic civilization itself is nothing more than the accumulated struggles of Muslim adherents as they confront the dialectical process between the permanent normative teachings of revelation and the historicity of human experience. Therefore, Islamic boarding schools are expected to become agents of change, capable of integrating traditional values with the dynamics of modern society, and contributing to building a more tolerant, inclusive, and competitive society. Adaptation and innovation are key to navigating this complex change (Al-Hakim, 2025; Madkur, 2024).

This is where the urgency of empowering Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in the era of multiculturalism lies. Through a mutualistic symbiosis between Islamic boarding schools and related institutions, organizations, and community components, they are able to contribute and create a transformative and dialogical atmosphere toward other cultures. This collaborative pattern

can also be implemented in efforts to develop Islamic boarding school resources so they can empower themselves to face increasingly complex contemporary challenges. Islamic boarding schools, as educational institutions that not only teach religious and spiritual education, have also proven to the world their contribution to creating a calm and peaceful atmosphere of life. Because, in principle, Islam exists as a blessing for all of nature. This blessing is not intended specifically for Muslims per se, but for all humanity (Arroisi, 2024; Wardiana, 2024).

Chicago is a very pluralistic society, and there is an Islamic religious foundation in the form of an Islamic boarding school. This foundation is centrally located at the intersection of I-355 and North Avenue. Lombard, IL, Illinois, United States. The Darus Salam Foundation, known as the Darus Salam Islamic Boarding School, is easily accessible from approximately 20 suburban areas home to thousands of Muslim families. In addition to providing prayer accommodations, it also offers more than 20 classrooms, dormitories, a library, a banquet hall, a fitness center, a kitchen, and ample parking. This university has a variety of Islamic study programs, including the takmil program or 'alamiyyah certification, tahfidz al-Qur'an, takhassus hadith science, Islamic studies for high school students, Islamic law studies, the al-Qur'an Education Park and other Islamic programs (Lewiyonah, 2025; Megawati, 2024).

The presence of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in the United States reflects the growth of the country's Muslim population. In recent decades, the number of Muslims in the United States has increased, both through immigration and conversion, creating a need for more Islamic educational institutions. As faith-based educational institutions, Islamic boarding schools serve as places for Muslims to learn and deepen their faith, as well as teach Islamic values to the younger generation. The presence of Islamic boarding schools also reflects the Muslim community's efforts to maintain their identity and culture in a pluralistic society. Furthermore, many Islamic boarding schools in the United States focus on comprehensive education, including a general academic curriculum, so they can provide a balanced education for their students. Thus, Islamic boarding schools serve not only as places of religious education but also as social and community centers for Muslims in America (Nastain, 2024; Radino, 2025).

The study in this paper has several reasons: Islamic boarding schools in America play a crucial role in developing an understanding of Islam among diverse Muslim communities. This study can help us understand how Islamic teachings are interpreted and applied in different social and cultural contexts. By studying Islamic boarding schools in America, we can better understand their contribution to building harmonious and diverse communities and the crucial role they play in maintaining and disseminating Islamic values in a multicultural environment (Ahyyar, 2024; Basri, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to examine how the concepts of religious deradicalization, inclusivism, and multiculturalism are constructed and practiced within Islamic boarding school education. A qualitative approach is appropriate for this study as it enables an in-depth exploration of social and religious phenomena and facilitates the interpretation of meaning within specific cultural and institutional contexts (Amanta, 2025; Asri, 2024).

The research was conducted at the Darussalam Foundation in Lombard, Illinois, United States. This site was purposively selected because it represents a community-based Islamic educational institution actively engaged in religious instruction, social interaction, and community

development within a multicultural society. Such a setting provides a relevant context for analyzing discourses of religious moderation and inclusivity.

The research participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques, focusing on individuals who are directly involved in the institution's educational and religious activities. The participants consisted of (1) foundation administrators, (2) students, and (3) members of the congregation who regularly attend educational programs. This selection aimed to capture diverse perspectives and experiences related to the implementation of inclusive and multicultural educational practices.

Data collection was carried out through multiple techniques to ensure data richness and triangulation. These included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted to explore participants' perspectives on deradicalization, inclusivism, and multiculturalism in educational practices. Observations were used to examine real interactions and learning processes within the institution, while document analysis focused on institutional materials such as curricula, program guidelines, and official publications.

The data analysis process followed several systematic stages. First, data reduction was conducted by organizing and selecting relevant information from interviews, observations, and documents. Second, data were coded and categorized into key themes related to deradicalization, inclusivism, and multiculturalism. Third, critical discourse analysis was applied to interpret how language, narratives, and practices reflect underlying ideological and social structures. Finally, the findings were interpreted to identify patterns and relationships between educational practices and the promotion of religious tolerance.

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data, this study employed several strategies, including data triangulation (across interviews, observations, and documents), member checking to confirm the accuracy of participants' statements, and peer debriefing to minimize researcher bias. These techniques were used to enhance the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings (Auliyah, 2025; Sukmana, 2024).

Data collection in this research was carried out using several qualitative techniques, including interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to obtain detailed explanations and personal experiences from participants regarding religious education and community activities. Observation was used to directly examine interactions and practices within the institutional setting. Documentation was also reviewed to support the findings and provide additional contextual information related to the institution's programs and policies (Aditia, 2024; Sarwenda, 2024). To ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings, several procedures for validating the data were applied. The credibility of the data was maintained by carefully verifying information obtained from different sources. Transferability was addressed by providing detailed descriptions of the research context and participants. Dependability was ensured through consistent data analysis procedures and systematic documentation of the research process. Confirmability was achieved by maintaining objectivity and ensuring that the conclusions were based on evidence collected during the study. These validation strategies help strengthen the reliability and academic rigor of the research results. Through these procedures, the study aims to produce findings that are both trustworthy and meaningful for understanding the role of religious education in promoting inclusivism and deradicalization (Musahal, 2024; Shaleh, 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Religious Fundamentalism and Radicalism

In contemporary Islamic discourse, fundamentalism and radicalism are often associated with movements that seek to restore the perceived purity of religious teachings, reinforce the authority of the ummah, and re-establish Islam's historical prominence in political, social, and cultural domains. The term fundamentalism, originally rooted in the Protestant tradition, refers to a literal interpretation of sacred texts. Within the Islamic context, similar notions are reflected in terms such as Islamiyyun (Islamists), salafiyyun (followers of the early generations), and ushuliyyun (fundamentalists), although these terms carry diverse and sometimes contested meanings. While fundamentalist orientations may emphasize moral reform and social transformation through non-violent means, radicalism tends to adopt more extreme approaches, including the justification of violence. Understanding these distinctions is essential for analyzing broader issues related to political Islam, extremism, and religious-based violence in contemporary society.

Previous studies suggest that rigid interpretations of religious teachings, particularly those that reject contextual reinterpretation, can contribute to exclusivist attitudes and, in some cases, justify acts that disrupt social harmony. This tendency reflects a broader theoretical assumption that inflexible religious frameworks may hinder the development of inclusive and pluralistic perspectives. Historically, movements associated with Islamic revivalism emerged partly as a response to socio-political pressures, including Western cultural dominance and internal crises within Muslim societies. Organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan illustrate how reformist agendas were initially pursued through structured and, in many cases, non-violent means. These developments indicate that fundamentalism is not monolithic but exists along a spectrum, ranging from reformist to more rigid and potentially radical expressions.

However, the literature also highlights that certain forms of fundamentalism may evolve into more exclusionary and dogmatic positions, particularly when grounded in idealized reconstructions of a "golden age" of Islam. Such perspectives often prioritize doctrinal purity over contextual adaptability, which can lead to intellectual rigidity and resistance to social change. This aligns with theoretical perspectives that associate absolutist belief systems with tendencies toward conservatism and, in extreme cases, radicalization. Therefore, this study builds on the assumption that promoting inclusive and multicultural educational approaches particularly within Islamic boarding school contexts may serve as a strategic response to counter such tendencies. By examining these dynamics, the research aims to assess how far educational practices can support processes of religious deradicalization and whether they align with or challenge existing theoretical frameworks on fundamentalism and radicalism.

The rise of the modern conservative religious fundamentalist movement can be seen as starting with the work of Billy Graham. William Martin, in his book, *With God on Our Side, the Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America*, states that before Graham, "The religious right was dominated by figures like Carl McIntire, a warhorse who was good at many things but best at spreading hate." The rise of the modern conservative religious fundamentalist movement refers to the phenomenon where various religious groups adopt more conservative views and often reject moderation and pluralism in religion. This movement is often fueled by various social, political, and economic factors and can be found in various religious traditions around the world, including but not limited to Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism. The rise of the modern conservative religious fundamentalist movement is a complex topic and requires a deep understanding of the cultural,

historical, and social contexts of the various groups involved. Further research and discussion are needed to understand these dynamics and their impact in a global context.

The book "God, Guns and Sedition: Far-Right Terrorism in America" was written by two experts, Bruce Hoffman and Jacob Ware. In this book, the authors explain that in the US, terrorism can be carried out equally by supporters of right-wing (Republican) or left-wing (Democrat) groups. This is especially true with the upcoming presidential election on November 5th. Previously, terror attacks only targeted candidates and their winning teams. What happened in the 2021 presidential election, where Trump supporters stormed the Capitol Building, shows that the direction of terror is already shifting toward delegitimizing the election results even before the vote count is complete. This is expected to happen again this year. Beyond the presidential election, terrorism also occurs in the United States due to the "Great Replacement Theory" conspiracy theory, which states that immigrants will displace white people. This has led to terror among US immigrants, especially in rural areas, which are Republican vote banks. Recent terrorism in the United States has also been colored by the emergence of AI, which can produce highly dangerous fake propaganda videos. Likewise, incitement from famous figures such as Elon Musk has been a factor. Therefore, the author of this book encourages the public to always seek information from more than one source to avoid excessive group fanaticism that could lead to acts of terrorism. The role of interfaith activism by religious leaders, the author believes, is also crucial in preventing terrorism because it eliminates negative prejudices against different groups, which are the initial foundation for acts of violence.

In the United States, the radicalization process occurs in four stages: The first stage, "pre-radicalization," is the period before radicalization occurs. At this stage, individuals have not yet been exposed to extremist belief systems and live relatively normal lives, although there may be aspects of their experiences and environment (e.g., isolation, discrimination) that potentially make them more vulnerable to radicalization. The second stage, "self-identification," involves an individual's introduction to and eventual adoption of an extremist belief system. The authors argue that this is sometimes initiated by individuals experiencing economic, social, political, or personal crises and that exposure to extremist views and narratives can occur through existing social networks, including friends and family, or through movements that promote those beliefs. In the third stage, "indoctrination," an individual's extremist beliefs solidify, and they view violence as necessary to support those beliefs. At this stage, individuals tend to join groups that share their terrorist views and separate themselves from individuals who do not. In the final stage, "jihadization," the goals of the terrorist group or movement become the top priority for the individual, and the final step taken is to resort to violence when the individual trains, acquires weapons, and ultimately attempts to carry out an attack.

Religious radicalism in the United States is a complex and diverse phenomenon, encompassing a wide range of groups and ideologies. In this context, radicalism is often associated with extreme understandings of religious teachings that can motivate acts of violence or intolerance. One form of religious radicalism that has received significant attention is radicalization within certain Muslim communities. Some individuals or groups may be influenced by extremist ideologies that lead them to acts of terrorism, such as the attacks of September 11, 2001. However, it is important to note that the majority of Muslims in America condemn violence and radicalism. On the other hand, there are also elements of radicalization within the Christian tradition, such as individuals involved in militant groups or those who hold extreme views on certain social issues, such as abortion or LGBTQ rights. Some of these groups may engage in acts of violence or intimidation. In the United States, various government and non-governmental initiatives have addressed the issue of religious radicalization through prevention programs, education, and

interfaith dialogue. The goal is to reduce tensions and promote greater understanding between religious communities (Auliyah, 2025; Mubarak, 2024).

Religious deradicalization in the United States is an effort to reduce or eliminate radical ideologies that can lead to extremism, violence, or terrorism based on religious beliefs. In this context, the deradicalization approach involves a number of strategies that can include education, interfaith dialogue, and social and psychological support for individuals influenced by extremist ideologies. Some important aspects of religious deradicalization in the United States include: a) Educational programs. Some initiatives focus on education to increase understanding of peaceful and moderate religious teachings. This can be done through seminars, workshops, and community-based educational programs; b) Interfaith dialogue. Encouraging dialogue between different religious groups to build understanding, respect differences, and reduce tensions can help prevent radicalization; c) Community Approaches. Many deradicalization programs involve local communities, including religious leaders, to create a supportive environment for individuals who may be influenced by extremist ideologies; d) Psychosocial interventions. These approaches focus on providing emotional and mental support to individuals to help them break out of the cycle of extremism, often involving counseling and therapy; e) Policy and law enforcement. The United States government also enforces laws against crimes related to extremism, while striving to uphold human rights and religious freedom. Despite numerous efforts to deradicalize, challenges remain due to the various social, economic, and political factors that can contribute to the rise of extremism. Creating effective policies requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach between the government, civil society, and various religious communities (Aditia, 2024; Musahal, 2024).

Internalization of Multiculturalism and Inclusivism in the United States

Multiculturalism is a concept, idea, or philosophy that encompasses a set of explanatory beliefs that recognize and value the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity in shaping the lifestyles, social experiences, personal identities, and educational opportunities of individuals, groups, and nations. Multiculturalism in Chicago is reflected in its rich ethnic and cultural diversity, creating a vibrant and diverse city. From the African-American community on the South Side to the growing Latino and Asian communities, each group brings unique traditions, languages, and customs. The city also features cultural festivals, international cuisine, and arts that reflect its multicultural heritage. However, challenges such as economic inequality and segregation persist, prompting efforts to improve integration and understanding among the different communities (Mubarak, 2024; Sarwenda, 2024).

Meanwhile, inclusive Islam is a religious ideology based on the view that other religions in the world contain truth and can provide benefits and salvation for their adherents. Furthermore, it does not merely reflect the reality of pluralism, but rather actively engages with it. Conversely, exclusivity is an attitude that views one's own beliefs, views, thoughts, and principles as the most correct, while the beliefs, views, thoughts, and principles of others are wrong, misguided, and should be shunned. Inclusive Islam in America refers to an approach that emphasizes tolerance, acceptance, and diversity within the Muslim community and interaction with the wider society. This is evident in various initiatives promoting interfaith dialogue, social cooperation, and human rights advocacy. Many Muslim organizations in America strive to bridge the gap with non-Muslim communities and support social justice issues, thereby fostering a better understanding of Islam and reducing negative stereotypes.

Several interfaith scholarsIn the United States, on several occasions on campus, we have always encouraged all religious communities to teach about the urgency of religious values by

understanding history, interconnected narratives in building solidarity, eliminating divisive narratives, promoting interfaith understanding, teaching these issues together to increase a broader understanding of prejudice, strengthen solidarity between communities, and help dismantle hatred in a more comprehensive way. The importance of understanding trigger terms in interfaith studies in the United States includes the importance of dialogue about Islamophobia and antisemitism because these terms can evoke strong reactions, and are often hurtful to many people. Therefore, it is necessary to build empathy and sensitivity. Ultimately, understanding trigger terms is about creating a respectful environment that prioritizes empathy, clarity, and openness, making it easier to handle complex topics effectively (Hidayanti, 2025; Sugiarti, 2024).

The strategic position of religious educational institutions is crucial for fostering mutually beneficial and respectful collaboration between diverse elements of society. One concrete manifestation of this integration is the establishment of a foundation for multiculturalism within the educational environment. The educational process in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) plays a crucial role in realizing the concept of pluralism within the nation and state. Essentially, education is for liberation, not domination. Education must be a process of liberation, not social and cultural domestication. Education in Islamic boarding schools plays a significant role in fostering the concept of pluralism within the nation and state. As educational institutions that integrate religious and general education, Islamic boarding schools possess values that foster tolerance, mutual respect, and understanding of differences.

The construction of pluralist-multicultural Islamic education can be positioned as part of a comprehensive and systematic effort to prevent and overcome ethnic-religious conflict, religious radicalism, separatism, and national integration. The core value of this educational concept is tolerance. Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) serve as the religious and educational bases for tens of thousands of students. It is here that these students, who will become the future leaders of this nation, are educated until they understand their roles and functions in carrying out their existence as citizens, religious leaders, or public officials. Therefore, instilling the values of respecting differences, being wise in viewing differences, and even helping each other is a fundamental part of planting the seeds of multiculturalism-based Islamic boarding school education. Because this type of education is a critical pedagogy, reflection, and becomes the basis for action for change in society, multicultural education develops democratic principles in social justice (Muzayanah, 2025; Wardi, 2024).

Islamic boarding schools in the United States, like those in other countries, have varying focuses depending on the goals and philosophies of each institution. While traditional Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia generally focus more on Islamic religious education, some Islamic boarding schools in America have adopted a more inclusive and pluralistic approach. Pluralism in Islamic boarding schools in America includes interfaith dialogue, an approach that encourages students to understand and appreciate the various religious and cultural traditions around them, fostering better relationships between the Muslim community and other communities. Islamic boarding schools in America also integrate local values with Islamic teachings, making education more relevant in a multicultural society and emphasizing universal values such as justice, compassion, and respect for others, which are particularly relevant in a pluralistic society (Lutfauziah, 2024; Muhammad, 2024).

Islamic boarding school multiculturalism upholds the principles of particular faith and privacy, but these particular religious values serve as a source for realizing religion as a blessing for the universe, namely by realizing synergy in social interactions and not positioning religious practices as a competition for the values and truths of one religion over another. The reality of

cultural differences is responded to positively as something given (sunnatullah) from Allah SWT, and He has designed this diverse life for a reason and purpose. Differences are, in fact, a blessing that must be upheld and preserved. For example: Fathers and mothers have differences that should not be emphasized, but rather an awareness of these differences as a cornerstone for complementing each other in achieving a more dynamic life. Multiculturalism in the context of Islamic boarding schools can indeed be seen as an effort to harmonize particular principles of faith with universal values that prioritize harmony and mutual respect. Islamic boarding schools, as Islamic-based educational institutions, have a responsibility to instill the understanding that although each religion has unique beliefs and teachings, this should not be a barrier to coexistence in a diverse society (Aulia, 2024; Fathorrahman, 2024).

The concept of particular and private faith refers to the beliefs held by individuals or communities in practicing their respective religious teachings. However, within the framework of multiculturalism, it is important to recognize that each religion can make a positive contribution to the peace and well-being of humanity. By understanding that religious truth should not be viewed as competition, but rather as a way to complement and enrich one another, Islamic boarding schools can act as bridges in fostering synergy among diverse communities. Through interfaith dialogue, inclusive education, and social practices that prioritize cooperation, Islamic boarding schools can help foster harmonious social interactions. Universal values such as love, justice, and mutual respect should be the foundation for building good relationships among communities, regardless of differences in belief (Hasan, 2025; Mumtaz, 2024).

Multiculturalism is a meeting point for various cultures, necessitating equality and respect amidst cultural plurality. In this context, Islamic boarding schools in the United States are required to be proactive, responding by presenting students who critically and creatively engage in dialogue with local and foreign cultures, while simultaneously modifying these cultures into new cultures that can be adopted and developed within the Islamic boarding school and its environment. Multiculturalism in the United States refers to the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity that exists in this country, as well as the ways in which various groups interact and contribute to society as a whole (Abdurrahman, 2024; Marliyati, 2026). The United States is known as a "land of opportunity" and a "mosaic" of cultures, where people from diverse backgrounds come in search of a better life. Multiculturalism in the United States is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, reflecting a long history, challenges, and achievements. While much progress has been made toward recognizing and celebrating diversity, much work remains to achieve greater equality and understanding among cultural groups.

Table 1. Analysis of religious dynamics, radicalization stages, and multicultural integration

Category	Key Findings & Discussion Points
Religious Fundamentalism	Movements seeking to restore religious purity and historical prominence. It exists on a spectrum from moral reform (non-violent) to rigid literalism. Inflexible frameworks may hinder inclusive perspectives and social harmony.
Radicalism & Terrorism	Radicalism adopts extreme approaches, including violence. In the US, terrorism is linked to both right-wing and left-wing ideologies, fueled by election delegitimization, "Great Replacement Theory," and AI-generated propaganda.
Four Stages of Radicalization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-radicalization: Vulnerability due to isolation/discrimination. 2. Self-identification: Adoption of extremist belief

	<p>systems via social networks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Indoctrination: Extremist beliefs solidify; violence viewed as necessary. 4. Jihadization: Resorting to violence and carrying out attacks.
Deradicalization Strategies	A collaborative approach involving educational programs on moderate teachings, interfaith dialogue to build empathy, community-based leadership involvement, and psychosocial interventions (counseling).
Multiculturalism & Inclusivism	A philosophy recognizing cultural diversity as a source of identity. Inclusive Islam promotes active engagement with pluralism and bridges gaps between religious groups to dismantle prejudice and "trigger terms."
The Role of Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)	Positioned as strategic institutions for "critical pedagogy." They serve as a foundation for multiculturalism by teaching tolerance, universal justice, and the concept of <i>sunnatullah</i> (diversity as a divine gift).
Integration in the US Context	US-based Islamic institutions adapt by integrating local values with Islamic teachings. They promote the "Mosaic" concept, where students creatively dialogue with both local and foreign cultures to foster social synergy.

This table synthesizes the complex relationship between religious fundamentalism, the systematic stages of radicalization, and the strategic role of multicultural education in the United States. It highlights that while fundamentalism exists on a spectrum of reform, its evolution into radicalism often follows a four-stage process moving from initial vulnerability to active "jihadization" fostered by rigid interpretations and socio-political pressures. To counteract these tendencies, the findings emphasize deradicalization through interfaith dialogue and the proactive "internalization of multiculturalism" within educational institutions like Islamic boarding schools. By reframing religious diversity as *sunnatullah* (a divine gift) rather than a competition for truth, these institutions serve as critical bridges that replace exclusionary narratives with universal values of justice and social synergy.

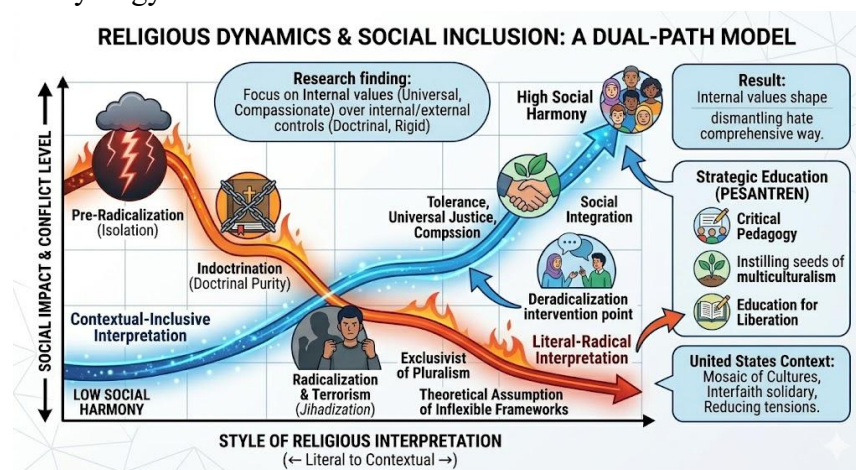


Figure 1. A dual-path model of religious interpretation and social outcomes

This figure presents a dual-path model illustrating the divergent social outcomes of religious interpretation styles within the context of contemporary multicultural societies. The Contextual-Inclusive path (blue line) demonstrates that as institutions like Pesantren adopt critical pedagogy

and "Education for Liberation," students move toward higher social harmony, driven by values of tolerance, universal justice, and compassion. Conversely, the Literal-Radical path (red line) depicts the systematic descent into conflict through the four stages of radicalization beginning with isolation (pre-radicalization) and moving through indoctrination toward jihadization. The model identifies a crucial "Deradicalization intervention point" where strategic interfaith dialogue and educational shifts can redirect individuals from the path of exclusion toward social integration, ultimately reinforcing the "Mosaic of Cultures" and dismantling structural hate.

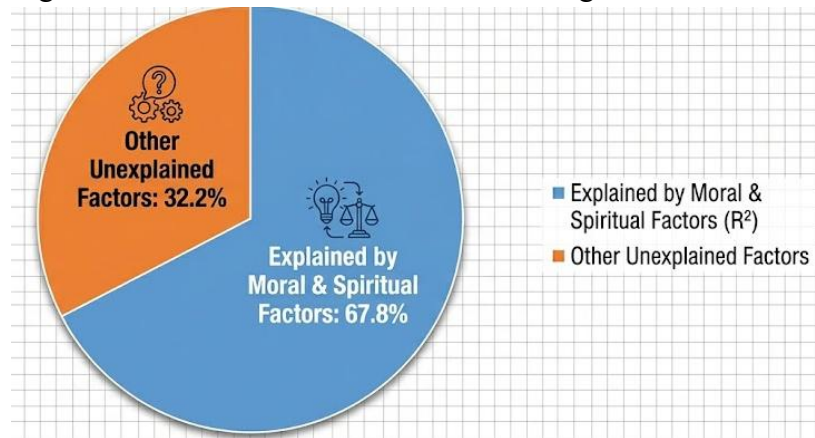


Figure 2. Proportion of variance in ethical decision-making ability (r^2)

This pie chart visualizes the statistical strength of the regression model, highlighting that 67.8% of the variance in students' ethical decision-making ability is directly accounted for by the combination of moral values and spiritual motivation. This substantial majority underscores the study's primary finding: that internal value systems are the dominant drivers of ethical behavior in online learning environments. The remaining 32.2% represents external or situational variables not covered in this specific model, such as institutional policies or technical constraints. By focusing on this "internal" majority, the research argues that character-based education specifically Islamic-based multiculturalism targets the most critical components of academic integrity.

CONCLUSION

Religious radicalism in the United States, affecting both Muslim and Christian communities, remains a critical concern, as extremist ideologies can motivate acts of violence. In response, both governmental and non-governmental institutions have implemented various initiatives aimed at countering radicalization, particularly through educational programs and interfaith dialogue. Deradicalization efforts in the U.S. focus on reducing the spread and influence of extremist beliefs by promoting a more comprehensive understanding of peaceful religious teachings. Key strategies include the integration of value-based education, the facilitation of interfaith engagement, community-based participation, psychosocial interventions to address emotional and identity-related vulnerabilities, and the enforcement of legal measures against extremist activities. However, these efforts continue to face significant challenges due to the complex interplay of social, economic, and political factors that contribute to radicalization. Therefore, effective and sustainable deradicalization policies require strong collaboration among government institutions, civil society organizations, and religious communities.

Within this context, Islamic boarding schools in the United States play a strategic role in shaping moderate and inclusive religious perspectives. Although their primary focus remains on Islamic education, many of these institutions adopt an inclusive pedagogical approach that actively

promotes interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural understanding. This approach enables students to engage with diverse religious and cultural traditions while internalizing universal values such as justice, tolerance, and compassion within a multicultural society. Multiculturalism in Islamic boarding schools is not only understood as the coexistence of diverse identities but also as a theological and educational framework that recognizes diversity as part of a divine order. Differences are therefore viewed as a source of enrichment rather than division.

The practical implications of this study highlight the importance of integrating inclusivism and multicultural values into religious education as a concrete strategy for preventing radicalism. Islamic boarding schools can operationalize these values through curriculum development that incorporates comparative religious studies, dialogical learning methods, and community engagement programs involving diverse cultural and religious groups. Additionally, teacher training programs should emphasize intercultural competence and critical thinking skills to ensure that educators can effectively facilitate inclusive learning environments. At the policy level, educational stakeholders are encouraged to support institutional frameworks that promote collaboration between religious schools and broader community networks. By doing so, Islamic boarding schools can function not only as centers of religious instruction but also as agents of social cohesion, contributing to long-term efforts in deradicalization and the strengthening of multicultural harmony in the United States.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used Google Assisted to assist in improving grammar, language quality, and overall readability of the text. After using this tool, the author(s) Carefully reviewed and edited the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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