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Increasing integrative complexity on convicted terrorists in Indonesia

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Located in Indonesia, the aim of the present study was to test the dynamics of integrative complexity of convicted terrorists in a series of dialogs set by the researchers. It was expected that if the meeting containing ideas related to humanity, peace, and intergroup harmony could be able to make the attendees stay until the end, cognitive complexity of the last meeting would be higher than the first meeting. Fifty nine statements were randomly collected from thirty eight convicted terrorists who participated in the meeting. The statements, then, were scored based on the level of cognitive complexity. A measure of cognitive complexity showed significant (Wilks' Lambda = .748,

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F (3, 56) = 6.30, p < .001, partial eta² = .252) increase during the process of the four meetings; compared to meeting 1, the level of integrative complexity in meeting 2, 3, and 4 were consistently higher. The findings indicate the possibility to increase the level of integrative complexity of the members of terrorist groups in a series of dialogs by highlighting the discussion about humanity and peace.

Keywords*: cognitive complexity, integrative complexity, terrorism, aggressiveness, religious radicals, open-mindedness.*

Why is creating peace considered more difficult than creating war? One possible reason is that group members tend to favor their fellow members and derogate the outgroup members [19]. Often, members of different groups have different values in which those values are incompatible to one and another; this difference may be perceived as a threat by ingroup members. Accordingly, it can be understood why having openness to other perceptions or perspectives, which are factors of stimulating the peace process [5; 6], are harder than intentions of outgroup derogation.

Social psychological studies have found that aggressive and violent behaviors are associated with–simple and closed thinking, in which people tend to stick to their own perception per se [4; 20]. By addressing these findings, the present study aims to increase the level of integrative complexity (i.e., complex thinking) of convicted terrorists in Indonesia. We set a series of meetings with convicted terrorists, intending to open their closed belief systems and stimulate tolerant perceptions.

Integrative complexity

Integrative complexity is a measurement of an on-going cognitive process in the mind of a person. It focuses on the structures of the statement or the topic instead of the content. That is, how complex are the structures of the statements in response to a topic [18].

Complexity has two components — differentiation and integration. Differentiation refers to the ability to perceive more than one dimension or perspective on a topic. Integration refers to the ability to perceive the relationship between two or more dimensions or perspectives on a topic. The score uses a scale from 1—7, which is determined by the level of differentiation and integration: score 1 means no differentiation and integrations; score 3 means that there is a differentiation, but no integration; score 5 means there is differentiation and integration; and score 7 indicates that the basic principle or universal form of an existing system has been developed [3].

In its development, integrative complexity concept is divided into 3 structure models, which are integrative complexity in general (a model that has been previously explained), dialectical complexity, and elaborative complexity. Furthermore, elaborative complexity is a result of defending a particular point of view in a complex manner. Consider a statement that scores 3 for integrative complexity: "Peanut butter is great, not only because it is delicious, but also because it makes for a healthy meal." The main viewpoint of peanut butter is strengthened with two different dimensions which are taste-related and health-related. Hence, the two differentiated dimensions result in an elaborative differentiation [5, p. 156]. On the other hand, dialectical complexity occurs when there are multiple points of view on a certain topic. For example,

this statement: "Peanut butter is delicious, but I don't like how it gets stuck on the roof of my mouth" would be considered as dialectical complexity due to the opposing views on "peanut butter" [5, p. 156]. Nonetheless, the present project focuses only on the complex thought of the convicted terrorists based on general integrative complexity model.

Integrative complexity, violence, terrorism, and peace

Throughout studies on integrative complexity, aggressive intentions, the use of violence, and acts of terrorism consistently relate to the low score of integrative complexity. Terrorist groups were found to have simpler rhetoric than non-terrorist groups [5]. Even a study by Conway et al. revealed that the simpler the structures of the terrorist group's rhetoric, the more the terrorist group will act. In contrast, another study has shown that the higher the level of integrative complexity, the more people will avoid war or compromise with the opposite groups [6]. During times of peace, talks between conflicting groups tend to exhibit high level of complexity in comparison to times preceding the outbreak of war [16; 17]. Often, complex thinkers tend to be open to other perspectives and accept differences.

Open-mindedness and intentions to create peace

So far, in Indonesia, a number of Islamic fundamentalists (with consistently high level of Islamic fundamentalism) who were involved in terror acts or supported terrorism have turned against terrorism and inhuman acts [14]. One of the reasons for their disengagement to terrorism is because they see the negative impacts it caused toward their fellow Muslims. They also think Indonesia is not in a state of war so that peace tactics should be applied instead of war tactics [15], and they finally realized that not all outgroup members are bad.

Two *ex*-radicals, and were think-tank group, of *Jamaah Islamiyah*, Nasir Abas and Ali Imron, wrote a book describing how they became radicalized and how they finally decided that peaceful approach is more powerful in spreading their idea [1; 9]. One of the key points of why they turn against terrorism is a change from a closed-mindedness which considered fighting/*jihad*[1] against evil as the only solution to creating welfare for a society governed by Islamic law, to an open-mindedness which sees Islam as a peaceful religion that uses peaceful meanings to reach the same goal. Based on integrative complexity approach, this transformation also indicates a change from simple thinking to more complex thinking.

The present study

Now, what we can understand on the transformation from supporting terrorism to fighting terrorism is their flexibility and openness to see others in a more positive light. In dealing with this, the present study is focused on holding a dialog with convicted terrorists in penitentiaries in Java, Indonesia, which discussed the possibility of peaceful activity, society and cultural diversity, and the negative effect of violent acts on Muslim society. We expected that by highlighting dialogs related to humanity, peace, and intergroup harmony, it would increase the level of integrative complexity.

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[1] Exertion, struggle, or "Holy war" (Noor, Yoginder, & Bruinessen, 2008).

The meetings were moderated by moderate religious clerics or Muslims who have experience with peace development between Muslims and non-Muslims. Before the meetings were held, the moderators were trained on ways of how to build discussions with convicted terrorists who are usually sensitive with strangers, to develop a dialog where everybody can share their perceptions or feelings, and to avoid leading an argument or conclusion such as claiming the convicted as bad people.

Method

Sample and location

Thirty eight convicted terrorists participated in the discussion. Six participants were from Cipinang prison, located in Jakarta. Fourteen participants were from Kedung Pane prison, located in Semarang. Thirteen participants were from Batu prison, located in Nusakambangan, Cilacap. Nine participants were from Porong prison, located in Sidoarjo. In each prison, four meetings were scheduled. Five statements from the convicted terrorists were randomly sampled for inclusion in the coded sample (if fewer than five paragraphs were available, all paragraphs in the document were used). In the first meeting 59 paragraphs were collected; the second meeting 40 paragraphs were collected; the third meeting 43 paragraphs were collected; and the fourth meeting 40 paragraphs were collected. Participants who were not involved in all meetings would be excluded for further analysis.

Procedure

Data were collected through a series of 4 meetings which were set for different dialogs. Before the meetings were held, letters asking for permission were sent to each head of correctional services. After that, we invited the convicted terrorists to voluntarily participate in the meetings. The meeting themes were as follow:

The aperture. The team began the event with talks about general topics such as political activities, everyday life and current issues in prison. The objective was to build rapport with the participants; this is considered as important as we wanted to gain trust from the convicted terrorists (and also their families) Some examples of introduction on first meeting conversations are:

[...] We are from the university, a collaboration between Universitas Indonesia and State Islamic University Jakarta. Our purpose of coming here is to build friendship and secondly we have followed you through mass media, but we don't fully believe what was reported because it may be true or it may not. So we come here, to obtain answers, or talk, or objectively and accurately discuss from the first person [...]. I do not come here to patronize, [...] so we can do light talk and prioritizing objectivity. (Prof. Asep Usmar Ismail — Batu Prison, 23 January 2016).

Discussions on 'takkfiri' and refusal of violence. Nowadays, phenomenon of *takhfiri*[2] became widely spread and usually carried out by a member of radical Islamic movements. Subject who did *takhfiri* usually has a superficial understanding of the Islamic *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and base their thinking solely on textual comprehension. In this meeting, speakers would persuade participants to refuse acts of violence in the name of religion. We would lead them to think that peaceful activities are possible. Example of topics that were sent to the participants:

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[2] Declaring someone a *kafir* or unbeliever.

[...] There is a black and white distinction between faith and (Islam) called takhfir bil haq, that is how we denounce infidels, it is true because they have exhibited behavior from their remark, thought, maybe also the conviction in their heart is bil haq (the real truth). [...] There is a hadith[3] by Rasulullah PBUH, judging others as infidels when they believe that there is no God but Allah, there is no worship other than to Allah, then the denouncer is an infidel. So in conclusion denouncing others as infidels cannot be done lightly, it cannot be easily done, it should be done carefully. [...] Now, please can I have your judgment of me who for several years, more than 20 years working as a civil servant, as a lecturer [...] a person like me or maybe others here working in their own fields, can they be called as supporter of thaghut[4], [...] Can you easily judge people like us as thaghut? (Prof. Asep Usmar Ismail —Cipinang Prison, 1 March 2016).

Discussions on renouncing violence and promoting peace. Subsequent to previously presented topics, participants were also invited to be an agent of peace resolution while in prison or later on after they are released. Example of topics that were sent to the participants:

[T]hat is why we now talk of peace, if we look at the example of Nelson Mandela, we talk about the future. The future is actually ahead, so it is not the past. We actually learn about the past from the past because the past has both good and bad, we are studying today to plan for the future, something like that. [...] So when he was in prison at that time, he also formulated what the future would probably be like, so what is it in the scenario that make him says yes, this is what I think is important, we

are also developing this in Indonesia. Now, in a conflict everyone loses no one wins, but we actually want a solution, we look to the future, we see a better Indonesia. So yeah, we have to learn about the differences, this is what I think,[...] Maybe there is an opinion please sir, maybe there are different opinions, it's okay, we are having a light discussion, how was it in Poso, Tentena and also other places (Dr. Ichsan Malik — Porong Prison, 28 March 2016).

Conclusion. Speakers would make a resume of all topics discussed. Example of closing dialogs delivered by the moderators:

[...] I miss you friends. So I call on you again, and we are thankful, alhamdulillah, this is more than what we hoped for, we can have a fairly lengthy discussion and we believe it will not end here. God willing (insyallah), when there is another opportunity, with a different format, but I hope you have done your sentence then. When I see you again, it is complete, it is done. We meet outside, I often meet others who have gone out. We meet with brothers who have gone out, something like that, so hopefully what I have said is not only qodob (angry) but also wahab (blessing). Not of kasad (aim) but of rojak (hope) and part of me have met with ustad. [...] I hope Allah gives guidance (hidayah) to us [...] (Prof. Syafi'i Mufid —Kendungpane Prison, 13 April 2016).

Analysis

All meetings were voice recorded and transcribed. Data were divided based on meetings, where each meeting was divided based on prison locations. Each statement of the participants from each prison was

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[3] 'Prophetic tradition': a report on what the Prophet said or how he acted in a specific situation.
[4] Idols. In this context it means evil or bad.

randomly sampled. The selected randomized statements were translated into English. Each meeting was examined to check the level of integrative complexity. We used automatic scoring of integrative complexity developed by Conway and colleagues [7; 8]. The automatic scoring provides a single average score on the same 1—7 scale used in human scoring (see table for selected topics scored for integrative complexity).

T a b l e

Statement extracts for Integrative Complexity

Extract	Integrative Complexity score
I observed that terrorists do not create terror, they only retaliate on what have been done (BESR_3).	1
Because it is the mission for the sending of the prophet and afterward we as his *ummah* continue the *da'wah* by minimalizing infidelity so alleviating humans from their worship to no other but Allah, to Allah SWT (CSR_8).	1.5
There is one term religious community tolerance, religious tolerance, for instance they ask our help there are some that set up tents, some who are sick, some who ask for help, but in matters of worship that cannot be done. So according to me as long as they don't bother us, then there is no problem, so actually me living with those people is normal, living together as long as they are not disruptive, but if they disturb, as the Betawinese saying 'you sell, I buy', that to me is religious tolerance and religious community tolerance (BESR_1).	2
Usually in a conflict area we teach how to survive from what the enemies have done and that is positive, however those teachings remain in the local people when that area has resolved the conflict and gained peace, therefore when we exited Maluku and Poso the result was like that they tried revenge and not create conflict, they only think about how to survive and avenge what is currently happening (BESR_4).	2.5
The context of the conflict may remain in *da'wah*, but afterward it does not mean for instance that the state uses me, what I want is this, I convey that it is *Khawarij*. They are pro-democracy, I refuse, because the term *Khawarij* does not exist in democracy, it exists in *Sunnah* so it is a must. The context is I preach Islam first (BKR_20).	3
Assalamualaikum warrohmatullahi wabbarokatuh. About the slogan from Turkey that the current jihad is *ihtisodiyah* and economy indeed in Turkey they have the philosophy of mutual cooperation, that is economy-wise for example donations are collective and trustworthy meanwhile us for example when given *ihtisodiyah* just here okay I'll give 100 thousands, 100 thousands, 100 thousands, can we distribute more than 100 thousands or not, that is the lesson of *ihtisodiyah*, but what happens here is that it is divided until there is nothing left, it should have been that the 100 thousand be used for selling prepaid cellphone cards, and that would have profit, for example i sell something there is profit which i could return therefore the charity will develop, this is the difference (KMR_5).	3.5
The goal of Islam is not only economic peace, the goal of Islam is to live in Islamic way later on if there are unbelievers there, well they should be regulated, disciplined if needed be, apply some violence etc., the rule does exist in Islam then reducing the number of crimes, can be minimized but crime will never end because Allah created it as a test, crime is a form of a test for people heading in the way of righteousness so if we want to see result the research must be balanced, what is meant by success of a nation (CSR_6).	4

Extract	Integrative Complexity score
There are Islamic countries who are fighting Uni Soviet is also fighting, the point is all of us as human want to be at peace and live peacefully, we do not want to continually fight every day, our soul rejected those that we dislike but it still must be done because it has become a demand, our condition at that time was like that, meaning if you gentlemen want to be fair please survey all of Indonesia regarding the wishes of how Indonesian society is in relation to Islamic *sharia* (CUR_2).	4.5
In relation to conflict, whatever background I heard from some people it is as if intentional from the agencies or rulers who rule this country to let it happen so as if this conflict is maintained, the police will use certain moments in order to create conflict so not to fully eradicate, we thought those who are involved in the terrorist case when we are really truly want to fight for righteousness but maybe there are certain parties who made it like this so that the conflict lingers on whatever the background and I predict the axis is the best the most of the previous four each state organizer from all sides, whether that is conflict of faith or conflict of *aqidah,* social conflict, all of this is due to that, I am sure because that is the failure of Indonesia from the beginning since being free from the Dutch. Well, *wallahu'alam bisshawwab*, the irregularity of the organizer of this nation whether there is no legal format that is appropriate or the case where the actor is inadequate or not credible in organizing the state or so forth, it is chaotic now we know how confusing DPR [*House of Representatives*] is now what about the police how they attack each other, those are probably the beginning of all these conflicts today, that's all, thank you.	5

Results

As we found that frequencies of topics from meeting 1 to meeting 4 were not always the same, we used the expectation-maximization (EM) technique for data imputation on each meeting with missing score of integrative complexity. MCAR was performed for information that missing data were completely random [2].

To see differences in the level of integrative complexity from meeting 1 to meeting 4, we conducted one way repeated-measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). As shown on figure 1, the higher score was found on meeting 4 (M = 2.60, SD =.80), followed by meeting 2 (M = 2.58, SD=.77), meeting 3 (M = 2.51, SD =.68), and meeting 1 (M = 2.19, SD =.60) with the lowest scores of integrative complexity.

The result of Mauchly's test was non-significant (X^2 (5) = 9.80, p =.081) which indicated the assumption of sphericity had been met. There was significantly different level of integrative complexity, Wilks' Lambda =.748, F (3, 56) = 6.30, p <.001, partial eta^2 =.252. In particular, pairwise comparisons showed that there were significant differences in the scores of integrative complexity comparing meeting 1 to meeting 2 (p <.01), meeting 3 (p <.01), and meeting 4 (p <.001). There were no significant differences comparing meeting 2 to meeting 3 (p =.61) and meeting 4 (p = .898) as well as meeting 3 to meeting 4 (p =.46).

Discussion

The present study tested the dynamics of cognitive complexity of convicted terrorists. Although the findings showed that the arranged discussions with the convicted did not lead to counter their ideology; the meetings were shown to be successful in raising the

Integrative Complexity
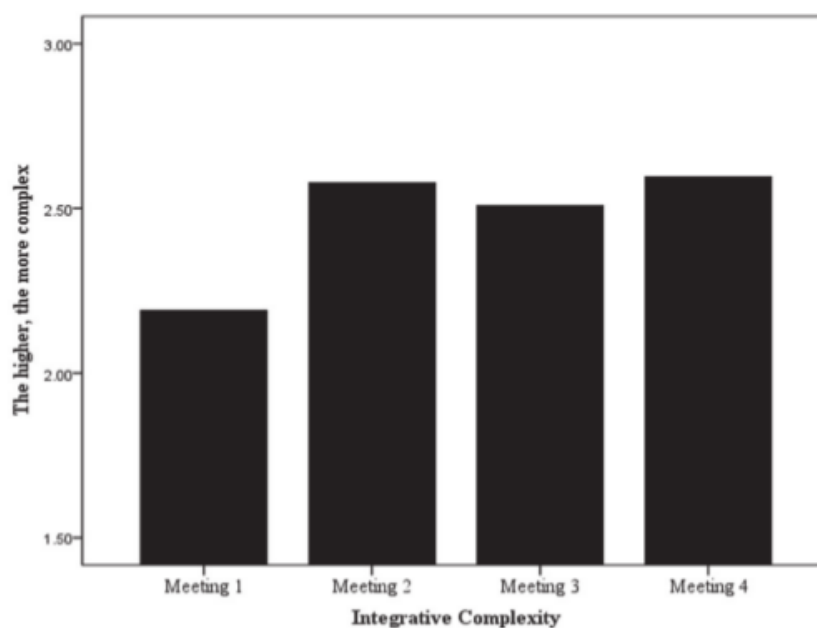
level of integrative complexity. Compared to meeting 1, the level of integrative complexity on meeting 2, 3, and 4 were consistently higher.

With these findings, we suggest that when the arranged meeting was accepted and understood solely for maintaining relationship, we may possibly be successful in reducing their suspicion and discontentment toward members outside their group. As a result, we were able to communicate with participants, and all of the attendees stayed until the end of the meeting. Positive rapport building with the participants was also considered to be well-developed. Thus, openness in dialog is highly possible, in which it could stimulate cognitive complexity to increase.

Moreover, our study focused to examine whether highlighting dialogs related to humanity, peace, and intergroup harmony could increase the level of integrative complexity of convicted terrorists. As known, the findings have shown to support our prediction. We consider that the present study did not show whether increasing integrative complexity relates to intentions to develop peace. However, as previous studies have revealed about the relationship between integrative complexity, positive attitudes and open mind [5; 6; 17], we suggest that positive perceptions among convicted terrorist participants toward others may have possibly increased.

There are evidence showing that reminding people of shared human nature can trigger humanitarian concerns and altruism [10; 11; 12]. The present findings, then, extend what has been found by McFarland and colleagues, in which reminding the sense of humanity can increase cognitive complexity.

In conclusion, we have demonstrated that if we could build a dialog with the so-called *jihadists*, i.e., radical Islamists, it would be possible to lead them to have an open mind and to see social issues in critical ways. In order to gain positive acceptance and dialog, it is important to avoid judgment that what the convicted have done is wrong. The findings indicate that there is the possibility to increase the level of integrative complexity of members of terrorist groups by having a series of dialogs highlighting discussions about humanity and peace.

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Увеличение интегративной сложности у осужденных террористов в Индонезии

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 В статье представлены материалы проведенного в Индонезии исследования, целью которого было изучение динамики изменения интегративной сложности в серии диалогов между осужденными террористами и исследователями. Предполагалось, что если участник мог продержаться до конца встречи, на которой обсуждались идеи гуманности, мира и межгрупповой гармонии, то уровень когнитивной сложности при последней встрече будет выше, чем при первой. В случайном порядке были выбраны 59 утверждений из записей встреч с 38 осужденными террористами. Далее утверждения были оценены по шкале когнитивной сложности. Проведенный анализ показал, что когнитивная сложность значительно увеличилась в курсе четырех встреч. Таким образом, по сравнению с первой встречей уровень интегративной сложности осужденных террористов при второй, третьей и четвертой встречах были стабильно выше. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о возможности увеличения уровня интегративной сложности у членов террористических групп при помощи серии диалогов, акцентирующих внимание на темах гуманности и мира.

 Ключевые слова*: когнитивная сложность, интегративная сложность, терроризм, агрессивность, религиозный радикализм, открытость.*

ORIGINALITY REPORT

5% SIMILARITY INDEX

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