

UNDER THE SHADOW OF TOLERANCE, PEACE, AND DEMOCRACY: TRACING BACK THE ORIGINS OF RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE AND RADICALISM IN INDONESIA

***(DI BAWAH BAYANGAN TOLERANSI, PERDAMAIAN DAN DEMOKRASI:
MENJEJAKI KEMBALI ASAL USUL KEGANASAN DAN RADIKALISME
DALAM BERAGAMA DI INDONESIA)***

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Abstract

As a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia is internationally often imaged as a country that has two contradictive faces: on one side is a good example of the presence of tolerance, peaceful, and democracy in a pluralistic of sociocultural life; while on the other side sometimes illustrated as a less safe country, intolerance with the minority religious groups which is indicated by various violence acts in the name of religion and radical religious movements, and a democracy as well, which tends to bustle with procedural rather than substantive democracy. This paper is intended to provide an adequate explanation based on the image formation which contradictory each other before finally arriving at a series of conceptual formulation possibilities in managing Indonesia towards the ideal, humane, and dignified images. In order to record the imaging process, the authors attempted to employ a narrative approach which treated equally both at global and local levels referring to availability of the study results so far, including the results of research conducted by the author. The focus elaborated in this paper refers to the contradictory of key concepts: tolerance-intolerance, peace-violence, and radicalism in religious domain in Indonesia.

Keywords: tolerance, peaceful, democracy, violence, radicalism, Indonesia.

Abstrak

Sebagai sebuah negara dengan penduduk Islam terbesar di dunia, Indonesia sering digambarkan sebagai negara yang mempunyai dua wajah yang bertentangan: satu sisi adalah contoh yang baik dari kehadiran toleransi, damai, dan demokrasi dalam pluralistik kehidupan sosial budaya; Sementara di sisi lain kadang-kadang digambarkan sebagai negara yang kurang selamat, tidak bertoleransi dengan kumpulan agama minoriti yang ditunjukkan oleh pelbagai tindakan keganasan atas nama agama dan gerakan agama radikal, dan demokrasi juga, yang cenderung untuk kesibukan dengan prosedur dan bukannya Demokrasi substantif. Kertas kerja ini bertujuan untuk memberikan penjelasan yang mencukupi berdasarkan pembentukan imej yang bercanggah antara satu sama lain sebelum akhirnya datang pada satu siri kemungkinan rumusan konseptual dalam mengurus Indonesia ke arah imej yang ideal, berperikemanusiaan, dan bermaruah. Untuk merekodkan proses pencitraan, penulis cuba menggunakan pendekatan naratif yang sama-

sama merawat kedua-dua peringkat global dan tempatan merujuk kepada ketersediaan hasil kajian setakat ini, termasuk hasil penyelidikan yang dijalankan oleh penulis. Tumpuan yang dikemukakan dalam makalah ini merujuk kepada kontradiktif konsep utama: toleransi-tidak bertoleransi, keganasan damai, dan radikalisme dalam domain keagamaan di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: *toleransi, keamanan, demokrasi, keganasan, radikalisme, Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a large country with the population of approximately 250 million people and 17,154 islands. Historically, Indonesia was very welcome to outside influences, thus making it as a nation of diversity. That diversity is now reflected in various languages, cultures, races, natural conditions, and religions existed in Indonesia. As for the late part, Indonesia has many different kinds of it, with five of them being recognized as the official religions of the country, which are Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, and Buddha. According to statistics, Islam is the most followed religion in Indonesia.

The religion diversity sometimes creates problems that are caused by exclusivism in people's thoughts and demeanour to acknowledge their religions as the most righteous ones. That kind of perspective subsequently leads to over fanaticism which despise other religions and their believers. The inclusion of violence with radicalism is prompted by the tendency of social conflicts. The radical groups frequently use violence to acquire their needs and desires. However, the violence image is not adhered to those radical groups directly. To put the categorization simply, religious radicalism is "a strict and violent religious behaviour."

The emergence of political issues concerning with Islamic radicalism is a certain challenge for the Muslims to answer it. This issue is actually not something new among the International concerns. Islamic radicalism that is thought as a socio-historical phenomenon is a common notice in global and political discourse. It is hugely boosted by the power of media to form certain perspective among societies in the world. Islam is misconstrued a lot as the next threatening and radical ideology after communism. There is no political turmoil that is more threatening than the revolting of Islamic movement, which is often labelled as Islamic radicalism. Accusations and propaganda calling Islam as a supporter of radical actions has been an International rhetoric (Madjid 1995).

Issues of religious concerns have been developing lately. Ahmadiyah problems, bombing activities, and NII's member's recruitment are all related to religious aspects. These emerging issues unfortunately do not reflect the supposedly religion purpose, which is to bring peace and tolerance above all. Instead, the situation now brings Islam to the images of being extreme, forcing, and intolerant. This condition has made some other people to consider Islam as a religious associated with radicalism. When it is obvious that the issue makes most of the people unsettled, there are also those who are interested to find the reasons. People, especially Muslims are now highly concerned and uncomfortable with this situation since radicalism is a deviance to the true doctrines of Islam.

Furthermore, radicalism will also bring fear, suspicion, and other negative impacts to the society with its presence. The advanced radicalism even blatantly perceives other religions as wrong, and that Islam is a religion that everyone must embrace. Hence, they do not stop for being extremists. They even go further to force Islam to other people. To defend this belief, they do not hesitant to use violence, to the point of creating their own bombs and detonating them in the middle of crowded places. These extreme faith and behaviours certainly scare a lot of people and prompt unsettling conditions in society. How there can be a belief so extreme that it is willing to sacrifice its own people, has been the thought that build curiosities about the motivation behind it all. What things that can prompt them to have a blind faith to extremism has been a matter that had been talked for years among people who are interested to investigate the whole issue. Unbeknownst

to them, this phenomenon is not a freshly new problem. It has its own history and is rooted deeply into its believers with unbelievably wide connection across the world. Young individuals who are frequently targeted as the radical groups' members are those affected by their expanding influence to acquire certain goals which surely concerning for every component of society in Indonesia.

GENEALOGY OF RADICALISM

As a matter of fact, radicalism is a general matter which always appears in any religion, not only Islam. It is tightly related with fundamentalism that is signified by people's tendency to acknowledge and practice their religion values. Fundamentalism can be called as an ideology that makes religion as a highly believed principal in every individual or society's life. It usually leads to radicalism and violence when the tendency to accentuate religion in every life aspect is recognized and even protected by political and social conditions in the society. People sometimes are confused with the terms "fundamentalism" and "radicalism". They tend to group them together, when the two terms are actually different, though they come from the same root. Fundamentalism is more of a belief to establish back the religion fundamentals, in which the effect can be either negative or positive, while the negative excess from the effort coming from fundamentalism is called violence outbursts and extreme radicalism (Roy 2005).

The genealogy of religious radicalism was caused by several reasons. In Islamic case there were at least two cases that brought upon violence outbursts to contemporary Islam. The first reason was due to the pressure coming from the most dominant political force, in which some of Islamic groups' freedom to express their opinion was oppressed. Meanwhile, the second one came from the authoritative regime failures that resulted in fundamentalism and radicalism as apparent alternatives in attempts to recover the system.

The violence outbursts appear in religion beliefs when people are unprepared to face modernity and change. It is important to notice that fundamentalism itself is the spirit in religious radicalism. Armstrong (2002) did mention that the developing fundamentalism separatists are related to modernity. As radicalism can be inferred as a response to modernity, the connection between tradition and modernity should be viewed objectively. To think that there are also many negative forms of modernity is unavoidable. Modernity influence has the capability to bring damage to humanity if it is not managing well. It is normal to anticipate it, but a total anticipation that completely ignore religion aspects should not be committed. In fact, modernity is a historical phase in human life that can affect rather positively or negatively.

In the Middle Ages, violence was a quite common practice between Jewish, Christians, and Muslims. There are so many offenders and victims on each sides that it became a ecumenical thing performed in those era. In this case, Jewish had suffered the biggest effects of religious violence all this time. It even showed much larger record than those of Christians and Muslims. When Justinian of Eastern Roman (529-599) imposed his Corpus Juris Civilus (Imperial Instruction), a lot of Jewish had been treated unfairly as the rules that merge the state institution and church importance did not acknowledge Non-Christians as their citizens (Keter 1974).

The radicalism label for Islamic movements that opposes western influences is purposefully made as a political commodity. Palestinian Civilian Movement, Iranian Islamic Revolution, Algerian FIS Party, Anti-USA actions from Mu'ammr Qadafi or Saddam Hussein, Islamic movements in Mindanao Selatan, Sudan Muslims Movements, Indonesian Muslims solidarity to their brothers and sisters in middle-east countries are examples of phenomena that are used by western media to manipulate Islamic radicalism labelling. Western sides perceive that any Islamic movement is suspicious. It was highlighted by the WTC's bombing incident in New York that was planned by Islamic fundamentalists and radicals (Al-Qaeda and Taliban). The incident had changed people's perspective of Islam. Many people have been perceiving Islam in a negative way since then. This situation continues to have its impact in people's suspicion toward Islam in all over the world.

Violence practices by radical groups that display Islamic symbols have been used by Non-Muslims to manipulate world's perspective toward Islam. It comes to the point where Islam is seen very negatively and even secluded by the majority of public in liberal countries. This rush of generalization has clouded their judgement without knowing Islam objectively. Nevertheless, radicalism in Islam cannot be justified regardless of how other people view and treat Islam, for it is against every moral values, doctrines, and messages in every religion (Bakri 2004).

Understanding Towards Violence Doctrines

Before revealing the understanding, it is only right to recognize the true concept of Jihad (holy war) in Islam. It is crucial as radicalism is often associated to Jihad in the name of Allah. As one of the religion's beliefs, Jihad is meant as a religious defence form to respond to changing times' challenges. The most important thing to notice here is that Jihad is not a product of individual authority or certain organizations' exclamation. It is the product of various individuals and authorities that exclaim and apply the holy book's values in special contexts both historically and politically.

THE FACTORS OF RADICALISM MOVEMENTS EMERGENCE

Radical movements are not phenomena that happen out of nowhere. They have background stories that prompt them to build their power over the years. The movements factors are as follows (Bakri 2004):

Socio-political Factor

The "religious" violence indications are actually more appropriate to be seen as socio-political violence. It can be viewed historically that conflicts caused by radical and violent elements that oppose other groups are originated from socio-political issues. In this case, Muslims do not see history sides with their people's concerns, and so does other global cultures. This triggers struggling efforts and opposing movements to the reigning force. By asserting religious values and symbol, the radicals have tried to approach other people from religious perspective and gain their enforcements in order to get their "righteous" purpose. This demeanour is surely not always a form of religion manipulation as some of them are inspired by religious misinterpretation in seeing historical phenomena. Since the negative impacts of deviance and social imbalance were inflicting harms to Muslims, the radicals decided to execute their movements to support this religious sentiment and emotional purposes.

Religious Sentiment Factor

It is a little bit obvious that religious sentiment is one of the main factors that triggers radical movements. Solidarities among those with the same religion also has a big portion in causing these indications. People tend to defend their peers to a certain extent when knowing that they are being mistreated by the authoritative force. To be precise, this emotion is called as the religious sentiment, and not sourcing from the religion itself (the absolute and holy revelation), in spite of these radicals always identify themselves with religious importance to defend it by performing Jihad and being a martyr. The religious sentiment here can be described as an interpretative reality understanding, thus making it a subjective matter.

Cultural Factor

Cultural reasons also serve to the reasons of radical movements emergence. Culturally, it is a natural cause for Musa Asy'ari revealed that there would always be dissociation attempts from the undesirable cultural trap. The cultural factors discussed in this passage have something to do with the anti-secularism practice. Western culture is considered as the origin of secularism, as well as the opponent that needs to be defeated and erased from any other cultural forms in this world. The

complication from historical facts of the overpowering of Western domination to Islamic countries do not help the situation as it gives more encouragement to the radicals. The Western civilization is a dominant expression coming from the universality of human beings. The secular Western countries are always thought off as the oppressor of Islam and Eastern cultures. It is therefore perceived by the radicals as a threatening subject to the existence of Islamic moralities.

Anti-Westernism ideological Factor

Westernism is an inappropriate subject for Muslims that is considered as being harmful and diverting in Islamic values implementations. It gives the inspiration to create efforts in diminishing Western ideas to maintain the Islamic values and practice. Although the Anti-Western motivation and movements cannot be fully blamed from wanting to be faithful in religious ways, but performing violence in its practice has shown the radicals' inability to compete with Western culture in global civilization and changes of modernity.

Government Political Factors

The incapacitation of government systems in Islamic countries to reform these forms of people's frustration and anger is due to dominations in term of ideology, military, and even economy from advanced countries. In this situation, the government elites from Islamic countries have not been able to discover the source of these violent movements. It eventually leads to failures in handling the social problems of their people. In addition, the influence of mass media (from the Non-Muslim side) always results in Muslims' corruption image that pushes the movements further to react violently to this treatment. The propaganda using media power is almost unstoppable and is really effective in turning people to certain sides. Clearly, the extremists' violence outbursts are those of reactions to this media manipulation by the controlling side. Offering proper solutions to these socio-historical problems is definitely not an easy task, especially if it is maintained by the religious sentiment factor. Nonetheless, there are some useful notes in perceiving these phenomena of socio-historical issues and the developing of radical movements that can be made as alternatives to solve the problem. The radical movements conducted by some Muslims' extremists actually reflect the combination of internal and external factor. Therefore, the findings of these two factors are extremely important.

1. Internal Factor

It comes from the religious sentiment based on the religion teachings interpretations. If the radical movements are inspired by the misconception of religious values, then it is necessary to reconstruct the most basic learning of religion doctrines. For example, the symbolic-normative learning process can be gradually changed into a more ethical, substantial, and universal way of understanding. It is a quite difficult plan to execute though, as what is being talked here is changing the basics, which need a lot of efforts and complex strategies from those willing to fix this problem. Influencing and restructuring people's perspectives and ways of thinking are not as easy as they seemingly to be, even more when their principals in life had been based and supported by strong misinterpretation of religious values from childhood.

2. External Factor

The reversion of Muslims' political rights that are restrained by Western sides, such as the discontinuation of offending media manipulation, the restitution of Muslims' territorial areas, and the economic, cultural, and military monopoly ceasing are the main conditions needed to keep the radical movements at bay. Moreover, the government policies of Islamic countries are also crucial points that have contributions to help decreasing the level of radical movements. It gives the evidence of Muslims' lack of trust toward the authoritative power and legacy, as well as their incompetence in international diplomacy.

The strict response and reaction from government in facing this radicalism does not only fail to give the proper solution, but also keep these movements go on as a form of resistance to the government's restrain. The more the authorities fail to understand their society's problems while suspicion and violence are made involved in suppressing radicalism, the more radicalism continues to grow its power and influence among the society. Violence is not the right solution to fight radicalism, persuasive measures and solidarity from the Islamic countries' governments are much more needed to face this problem together, as well as their generosity to prove their point of evoking a positive image to show that peace and strong relationships are better than radicalism, thus preventing further movements to happen.

SOLUTIONS TO VIOLENCE

Violence is never a wise choice to response to world's polarization caused by modernity's effects. In fact, Islam has many devices to create peace among people and differences. However, the corrupted exploration of honourable values and ideas in Islam have defied the Islamic principles themselves. Here, the believers' mission is to offer the best solution in facing this developing violence to reinstate that violence is not the way of Islam.

That almost all of terrorists and bombers are identified as Islamic separatists is a fact. But can all of Muslims be customized with them by that mere thought? The answer is obviously No, the Islamic radical actions have certain complex conditions that are thoroughly different from other the Islamic values and beliefs. It means that they use religion as a shield to their inclusion in the political, ideological, and non-religious interests surrounding their actions. So, it is not *a sich* resulted from the narrow interpretation of religious understanding. According to Michael Foucault analysis, the radical Islamic groups movements has brought religion in its relation with power and knowledge. A Knowledge that is forcedly implemented by the radicals is that the laws of God must be applied in every people's lives whatever it takes, and that by ensuring them someone can reach the highest level of their religious state that is rewarded in heaven.

In political locus, the common discourse is unification of religion and state form, but the religion knowledge is so empowered by power devices that the process can convert the original purpose and infecting it with ideological elements. Negative effects caused by the violence in the name of religion have damaged Islam's honourable reflections. For this reason, the connection between religion and power must be separated. Berger (2003) offers two strategies to respond to modernity and this secularization that come in the forms of religious revolution and religious subcultures. The first form is executed by the capability of the believers to change society as a whole and present a model of modern religion, while the second is performed with the efforts to prevent outside influences that can inflict harms to religion values.

Solutions offered to encounter the phenomenon of religious radicalism are as follows: *Firstly*, showing Islam as a religion of universal values, teachings, thoughts, and doctrines which provides ways to create peace in this world. *Secondly*, inspiring efforts in raising rejections to violence and terrorism stance. This action should involve all groups within every religion that has the same idea to refuse violence and radicalism. Terrorism is a form of religious harassment and violence that uses religion and humanity as its shields. *Thirdly*, growing a moderate religious character and understanding the life dynamics openly, as well as learning to receive plural thoughts from "the others". Moderate diversity will obscure the fundamentalism and secularism polarization in dealing with modernity and change. Islam in the middle (*ummatah wasathan*) will shape the characteristics of democracy, open-mindedness, and rationality.

One of Islam's purpose as a religion is to meet the call of humanity and peace. It is all of Muslims' duty to give a positive image of Islam which originally has the purpose to accentuate humanism and anti-violent stances in its practices. Only history can prove the religion ability to live up to its purposes. Based on historical facts from all times of Roman Empire, the glory days of Islam, the Enlightenment, and the present time, a country can be freed from religious violence if *One*, the relevant community must be willing and able to build its own future without being

influenced by foreign intervention which is always looking for an advantage in acts of radicalism. Almost all of violent forms, whether they are religious violence or other kinds of violence are not capable to resolve the existing issues. If anything, they tend to complicate the problems further by performing such violent acts. On the other hand, conflicts are always resolved by ways of genuine peace, gentleness, and generosity to share and respect each other. *Two*, it is important to ensure that the government has a fair policy implemented to all components of society, an effective and uncorrupted bureaucracy, is efficient, and has a credible and authoritative leadership.

CONCLUSION

Radicalism can be inferred as a religious understanding which refers to the very basic foundation of the religion with a considerably high degree of fanaticism. Most of the time, this ideology follower generates violence to actualize their misconception of religious ideology and beliefs. The radicals usually demand changes and fundamental renewals on socio-religious system or a new set of values. Radicalism is not only an understanding or religious ideology in the form of discourse and thoughts, in certain limits this understanding can manifest into movements and actions. The learning process of violence disguised as religious practice becomes a strategic value in understanding the religious violence that are applicable globally, nationally, and locally whether it is in the past or the present as a kind of preparation to address the same thing with more rational thoughts based on historical facts.

The government's role is highly crucial in confronting this religious radicalism. This issue can eventually lead to violence as shown in Soeharto's governing era that applied the Trilogy if Development concept consisted of stability, economic growth, and the distribution of welfare of the people ensured by the dually functioned army force. Although the program was not executed by persuasion, but it guaranteed a sense of security even if its ideas were forced to Indonesian people. When the Soeharto regime ended, religious radicalism finally surfaced.

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