

The Capitalization of Liberal Islamic Radicalism for Political Power and Economic Resources

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ABSTRACT

Against the existing literature that has largely disparaged radicalism for its potential to destabilize the state politics, this paper argues that liberal radicalism, another variant of radicalism, has had instead the potential to unite Muslims of different Islamic schools, and to form a shared collective action among them, for strengthening their identity against domination of other believers. Drawn upon a quantitative survey among college Muslim students, and backed up by in-depth interviews with college lecturers conducted in the city of Ambon, the paper reveals that in such a city that is predominantly inhabited by Christians as in Ambon, the liberal radicalism is devised by Muslims to survive against Christian hegemony, without which their existence would vanish. Rather than portraying radicalism as enemy, this paper goes on to examine the dynamics of liberal radicalism as a social movement that has gradually liberated and, therefore, transformed ordinary Muslims into a member of the high class society, i.e. they are no longer marginalized in politics, underdeveloped in economy, or low in educational attainment. While radicalism is initially drawn upon religious texts in supporting its action, it is largely manipulated as a strategic move by the Ambonese Muslims for winning accesses to political power and economic resources. Therefore, radicalism is not in itself a goal, but a medium in which its final destination is materialized through achieved domination in politics and economy.

Keywords: *Islamic radicalism, conflict resolution, ethnic and religious conflict, social mobilization, political power, economic resources and sociology*

1. INTRODUCTION

Fareed Zakaria first used the term illiberal democracies in his article published in 1997 at the Foreign Affairs journal.[1] This term was referred to the adoption of democracy not for the purpose of civil liberties, as practiced in the West, but as a strategy to perpetuate fascist, racist and even separatist power. It appears that the procedure taken was in accordance with democracy protocols, but that procedural democracy was carried out for the purpose of perpetuating centralized power by a handful of people, without allowing critical opposition to function, in order to control the government. In this case, illiberal democracy is in itself another form of pseudo-autocracies.

Not much different from what was done by GOLKAR party in Indonesia of the Suharto era, the Mubarak regime in Egypt also practiced the same democratic model. It appears that on the front stage, democracy runs naturally. But at the back stage, democracy is only used as a tool to gain legitimacy from the people by all means possible, such as by buying votes to support the incumbent government, while silencing the opposition who was trying to criticize the government on the grounds that the people are still behind the legitimate government. It seems that Indonesia is now re-experiencing a symptom of

illiberal democracy if we see that many members of the DPR (the legislative body) are not elected by a fair play, but by fixing votes that give them a seat in the legislation office. Representative democracy, which is so expensive, has an impact on the malfunctioning of democracy, not in the interests of the people, but of capital owners who are nothing but a handful of elites. This is the significance of illiberal democracy where there is a liberty vacuum.

Then, what is liberal radicalism? Is there liberal radicalism? I use this term to refer to the condition in which radicalism is the only available choice for Muslims to hold on to, due to the fact that it gives more advantages compared to any other available Islamic political variants. This is a kind of rational choice theory consideration in which they see the benefits outweigh the cost. What are the benefits?

First, at the level of common people, the elite indoctrinates them with radicalism in order to strengthen the identity of Muslims facing the threat of non-Muslims namely Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM, *Moluccas Protestant Church*) in Ambon. Muslims were mobilized to the utmost that the truest Islam was radical Islam because this variant of Islam was the only way to face the challenge posted by Protestants who would slaughter them. A handful of elites

like Ja'far Umar Thalib¹ and colleagues who propagated radicalism among ordinary people were exalted by the common people as heroes because they have provided an understanding of Islam that clearly gave them benefits namely being secured and safe from Protestant threats.

Second, the benefits in the form of security and safety spread out by a handful of elites are then capitalized as bargaining power to gain access to power and economic resources. That is, radicalism which was originally intended to protect Muslim identity, was gradually manipulated to win access to political deals and economic resources.

Third, now are Muslims enjoying radicalism's efforts as they successfully occupy seats in government, local parliament, and other relevant state agencies. Are they still radical then? Radical Islam at this point is perpetuated to maintain the seats they have taken from fellow Protestants and maintain to occupy them so that they will not escape to non-Muslims, mainly Protestants and Catholics. This is what I call in this paper by "liberal radicalism," i.e. Islamic radicalism carried out not for the purpose of actually upholding Islamic law (sharia), let alone an Islamic state, or *khilafah*, which has been feared by the Jokowi government (an acronym popularly used to mention a current president of Indonesia) but is being promoted for the purpose of political deals whose goal is to gain access to political power and economic resources. This strategy, capitalizing Islamic radicalism for winning a scarce resource in politics and economics, is the only plausible rational way to liberate them from underdevelopment they used to experience in the past, namely, politically marginalized and economically underdeveloped.

2. CONCEPT AND METHODOLOGY

We define Islamic radicalism, (in Indonesia it is not only at the level of ideas but also of action), based on five indicators, i.e. Islamic sharia, the ideal state, Islamic jihad, willingness of jihad, and involvement in jihad.[2] The first three indicators are radical in ideas while the last two are radical in actions. Muslims in Indonesia are called radicals in ideas because (1) they interpret and willing to implement Islamic sharia law radically such as the implementation of the law of hudūd², qishās³ and rajam⁴ as

¹ Ja'far Umar Thalib, died on August 25, 2019, was the most respected and feared figure in Ambon. He was the Chairperson of the Ahlus Sunnah Waljamaah Communication Forum who often wore white turban and popularly called as the Commander of the Laskar Jihad. For some Muslims in Indonesia, Ja'far was considered a leader who consistently defended the interests of Muslims in the bloody conflict in Maluku that took place since January 1999. The New York Times called him Indonesia's Osama bin Laden because of his radical attitude for being hostile to all interests America not only Indonesia but also other parts of the world.

² An Islamic word means borders, boundaries, or limits. It refers to punishments that under Islamic law are mandated and fixed by God.

³ An Islamic term means retaliation in kind, for example "eye for an eye", or retributive justice. In traditional Islamic law, the doctrine of

practiced in Saudi Arabia, (2) the ideal state concept that they want to establish is in the form of an Islamic state namely *khilāfah*,⁵ and (3) Islamic jihad is interpreted as fighting against all forms of challenge and threat by non-Muslim. Furthermore, in the form of actions, Muslims in Indonesia are called radical because (1) they are willing to wage jihad that they understand radically and (2) they have even been involved in jihad which combats all forms of non-Muslim.

These five indicators are manifested in the form of questionnaires and distributed to Muslim students in Ambon, from the IAIN Ambon and Pattimura University, and those in Ternate, from the IAIN Ternate and Khairun University. Of the 400 students who returned the questionnaire, 315 students had completely filled out all the questions. This is their details: 162 students from Ambon (62 IAIN Ambon students and 98 Pattimura University students) and 155 students from Ternate (81 IAIN Ternate students and 74 students of Khairun University).

3. FINDINGS

3.1. The Enforcement of Islamic Sharia Law

Table 1: The Enactment of Islamic Law

Islamic Sharia Law		
<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Liberal	37	11.7
Moderate	219	69.5
Fundamental	59	18.7
Total	315	100

The impact of being serious in worship is expected opinion among respondents regarding Islamic sharia enforcement. The majority, 70% or 219 people, is moderate, who believes that the enforcement of Islamic law is not in the sense of upholding Islamic sharia as in the Arab world, but is characterized by Indonesian specificity.

These characteristics can be seen that the majority of them disagree when Islamic sharia is implemented, such as whipping, stoning and *qishosh*, or rules relating to *hijab* that must be legalized by the government. Only 19% or 59

qishās provides for a punishment analogous to the crime. It refers to offences that involve bodily injury or loss of life.

⁴ The term is commonly used to refer to the Hudud punishment wherein an organized group throws stones at a convicted individual until that person dies. It is the prescribed punishment in cases of adultery committed by a married man or married woman.

⁵ *Khilāfah* is deemed by certain strands of Islam to be a leader destined to unite the Muslim "ummah" or community.

people who wish to uphold Islamic sharia fundamentally by imitating the practice in the Arab world. On the other hand, 12% or 37 students actually wish to uphold Islamic sharia liberally, in the sense that what has happened in Indonesia with all the laws, even the ideological basis of the state and constitution, is already the embodiment of, or inspired by Islamic sharia itself.

Even so, it turns out that those who think moderately about the enforcement of Islamic sharia, when further parsed to determine whether their moderate views inclined towards liberal or in reverse towards fundamental, the majority of 56% or 177 people stated fundamental, while the remaining 44% or 138 people stated liberal. This figure is quite alarming, for Islamic radical movement can indeed become a prominent challenge for unity of the Indonesian state and country.

3.2. Ideal State Concept

Table 2: The Ideal State Concept

State Concept		
<i>Ideal</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Secular	48	15.2
Nation State of NKRI	212	67.3
Islamist	55	17.5
Total	315	100

Another aspect of upholding Islamic sharia is the ideal form of the state. Theoretically, it can be mapped that those who are fundamental in upholding Islamic sharia are inclined to desire or idolize the form of an Islamist state of *khilāfah*. Conversely, those who are moderate in upholding Islamic sharia are inclined to accommodate the form of the nation state of NKRI [The Unitary State of Republic of Indonesia]. Likewise, those who are liberal in upholding Islamic sharia are inclined to accept the form of a secular state in which Islamic sharia is more practiced in private spheres of the adherents, without any interference from the government, such as the formation of laws or special rules for their implementation.

Still consistent with previous findings related to moderate Islam or commonly referred to as the *Wali Sanga* (nine saints) model of Islam which has recently been dubbed as *Islam Nusantara* [the Archipelago Islam], the majority of respondents namely 67% or 212 students idolized the NKRI which guarantees the rights and obligations of religious adherents to be the ideal state form. The remaining 55 people or 18% idolized the Islamist state in the form of *khilāfah* legally and formally, namely a state based on Islamic sharia whose structure is assumed to be practiced during the era of the Prophet, the companions and the Islamic empire thereafter included the Umayyads and Abasyiah as a form of formal Islamic state. Whereas 15% or 48 students are more inclined to choose a secular state where religious life for citizens does not need to be formally intervened by the state in the form of making

regulations or laws that apply because all the implementation of religious life is in the private sphere.

When asked questions related to replacing the ideology of Pancasila (the current country's five pillars of state ideology) with Islamist ideology originated in the Qur'an and the Hadith, the majority, which are 59 % or 186 people, stated their disagreement, while 41% or 129 were agree. To ensure the consistency of this finding, respondents were also asked whether the government based on the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution was a *ṭāgūt* (Islamic terminology denoting a focus of worship other than Allah) government and therefore disbelieved: the majority, 67% or 210 people disagreed, while 33% or 105 people agreed. By implication, even though those who disagree are still greater than those who agree with a ratio of 2:1, the ratio of the two is almost balanced and can be interpreted that in every 3 people there is 1 person who states that the Indonesian government is *ṭāgūt*. This is of course an alarming signal when we do not take this figure as precaution, the percentage or ratio of those who agree to replace Pancasila with Islamist idea would overtake that of those who agree a government based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.

Those who stated that respecting the Indonesian flag is an illicit behaviour reached 94 people or 30%. This confirms previous findings where 33% agreed that the Indonesian government was a *ṭāgūt*. While those who agreed to remain respectful to the Indonesian flag reached 70% or 221 people.

The consequence of idolizing an Islamist state is the establishment of Islamic sharia as the basis of law enforcement in Indonesia. In this case, the number of those who agree with it is overwhelming, which is 54% or 171 people. While those who do not agree with it are 46% or 144 people. Of course, this figure is astonishing, because those who agree up on the implementation of Islamic sharia as the basis of law enforcement in Indonesia are the majority.

What about the desire to replace this democratic system of government with a system of *khilāfah* based on the establishment of Islamic sharia? Those who argue fundamentally that the *khilāfah* must be upheld to replace the Indonesian democratic system are 40% or 125 people. While those who disagree reach 60% or 190 people. Again, the ratio of those who agree and disagree is 6 to 4, which means that in every 10 students 4 agree with the *khilāfah* system. Caution is noteworthy because as time goes by it is not impossible that those who previously disagreed will shift to agree to the *khilāfah* system –that is the time they are going into majority.

Even when explicitly asked about the government system that is recognized by Islam, the majority, which is 54%, states that the *khilāfah* is a system that is recognized by Islam. The rest, 46% or 145 people disagree with the statement.

3.3. Islamic Jihad

Table 3: Islamic Jihad

State Concept		
<i>Ideal</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Liberal	60	19
Moderate	201	63.8
Conservative	54	17.1
Total	315	100

What do students think about Islamic jihad. Do they interpret jihad in a conservative, moderate or even liberal domain?

Still related to the ideal form of state is the students' view of the concept of jihad. Is jihad interpreted in a conservative manner such as (1) fighting anyone who adheres to a religion other than Islam because they are enemies of Islam, (2) America is an enemy that must be fought against as well as China whose economic investment is growing in Indonesia through which it has the opportunity to infiltrate communism, and (3) Law enforcement officer in Indonesia, in this case the police, must be fought against due to the fact that they serve for the *ṭāgūt* government.

Of 315 respondents, 17% or 54 students interpret Islamic jihad conservatively. The other 19% interpret jihad in the liberal sense, such as jihad in the sense of fighting against human lust, seeking knowledge and in more lenient sense is all efforts designated to improving life in all aspects. According to them, this kind of liberal jihad is more important than jihad in the sense of physical war against non-Muslims. Meanwhile the majority of respondents 64% stated jihad in a moderate sense; balanced from a conservative pole that defines jihad to fight all of non-Muslims to the liberal pole which defines jihad in the sense of non-physical resistance to curb the lusts that exist in every human being.

Even though the majority of students interpreted jihad in the moderate sense, they actually agreed to the FPI [Font Pembela Islam, *Islamic Defender* Font] model of jihad who known to forcibly shut down the warung when it opened on the Romadhan day, seize beer and all disobedience that occurred in bars or cafes and the like. The majority recorded that 65% or 205 students agreed to the jihad carried out by FPI, while only 35% or 110 people disagreed. Even when they were asked the question: "China with all its businesses in Indonesia considered *ṭāgūt*," the majority 57% or 180 people agreed, and the remaining 43% or 135 people did not agree. This finding is in line with the opinion of those who agree with the FPI model of jihad that the existing FPI phenomenon is in fact a group that hates China and all its businesses in Indonesia.

Even worse is the fact that students endorse suicide bombings by terrorists. According to them, those terrorists are martyrs because they die due to Islamic jihad to uphold the truth of Islam –they are considered fighting against the

enemies of Islam. 42% or 131 students agreed with the suicide bombing while 59% or 184 people did not agree. Even according to them all adherents of religion outside Islam is a infidel and, therefore, must be fought. Those who agree with this opinion are indeed not the majority, but their numbers are striking –it reaches 35% or 110 students. Whereas, the majority 65% or 205 students did not agree. Their number is balanced between those who agree and disagree with the statement "Jihad is a war against the enemies of Islam, therefore the act of bombing by certain Islamic groups is including jihad." Of 315 students, 50% (157) agreed and another 50% (158) disagree. They also endorsed attacks on law enforcement officers, in this case the police, on the grounds that the police are a tool of the *ṭāgūt* government so it must be fought. 41% or 129 students agreed and 60% or 186 students disagreed with the attack. However, they in majority 54% (171) agree that the real jihad is a war against non-Muslims. While the other 46% (144) disagree. What if the majority of those who had a moderate opinion related to Islamic jihad were ascertained where their tendency was. Do they tend to support liberal or conservative?

The moderate attitude is sometime ambiguous. Therefore it needs to be further elaborated regarding where their tendency goes for. It is found that the majority of students, 53% or 166 people, have an opinion about jihad below the mean of 20.53, which indicates having liberal views. While the remaining nearly 47% or 149 people is above the mean of 20.53, which indicates upholding conservative interpretation of jihad. By definition, those who earlier had a moderate view of jihad, turns out to be more inclined toward a liberal view even though their difference in percentage is slim. This is good knowledge for activists of moderate Islam that their effort to spread moderate Islam is successfully able to shift those who are moderate to liberal in the sense that they uphold Islam of the Indonesia culture more than that of the Arab.

3.4. Willingness to Islamic Jihad

Table 4: Willingness to Islamic Jihad

Islamic Jihad		
<i>Willingness</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Not willing	46	14.6
Doubtful	215	68.3
Willing	54	17.1
Total	315	100

We learn from the previous table about the views of students regarding their opinions on Islamic jihad. Table 4 is the presentation of students' willingness to join jihad. Majority, 68% or 215, of the students, answered doubtfully to the invitation to jihad. But what is astonishing is that, compared to those who are not willing to join jihad, which nearly 15% or 46 student, those who are willing to call for

jihad are greater than 17% or 54 students. When those who are in doubt further clarified, the results are remarkably surprising that the majority, 51% or 162 students, were willing to wage jihad, while the remaining 49% or 153 people were unwilling. This is a shocking finding because it turns out that students are willing to wage jihad in the sense that they are willing to: (1) reject religious activities other than Islam in their homes, (2) refuse to build houses of worship other than Islam, (3) reject the presence of religion deemed heretical, (4) carry out the action of assembling houses of worship and public facilities owned by other religious sects, (5) carrying out the action of closing entertainment venues such as cafes, night clubs and massage parlors, (6) forcibly closing night entertainment venues that are open at night in the fasting month of Ramadhan, (7) forced closure of restaurants open during the day of the month of Ramadan, and (8) joining Islamic organizations fighting for: (a) Islamic sharia, (b) Islamic state and (c) replacement of Pancasila ideology with Islamist ideology.

We learn quite striking figure. Those who were clearly willing to join jihad are only 17% (54 people). When those in doubt of joining jihad were further clarified, their number arises to 51% (162 people); an increase of 34% (108 people) of 315 students in total. Whereas those who were clearly unwilling to join jihad increase from 15% (46 people) to 49% (153 people), an increase of 34% (107 people). This is quite alarming because those who are willing to call for jihad gain majority.

The higher the number of those willing to wage jihad, the lower the level of intolerance. The case is in reverse. By definition, willingness to join jihad is in reverse to tolerance. Therefore, the step to prevent students from jihad is how to increase their attitude of tolerance by exposing them to campus activities that foster tolerance.

When they were given a statement "take action against religious activities of other religions other than Islam in your residence," the majority of them, which is 61%, were unwilling and 39% others were willing. Even though they are a minority, the number turns out to be 41%, and that is not a small percentage. Almost the same figure occurred when they were asked whether they refused the construction of worship building other than Islam in their residence, the majority, or 58%, were not willing, while the remaining 42% were willing. If the two previous statements are about other religions than Islam, what about such religious sects that are considered heretical as Ahmadiyah? The majority, 72%, are willing to strive for rejecting this heresy, while the other 28% are not willing. 60% of them are also willing to do damage to religious places of worship that are considered heretical. This indicates that the level of tolerance, if any, of Islamic students towards non-Muslims, remains higher compared to fellow Muslims who are considered to be carrying heretical sects that are different from those they believe to be true. It means that, to the Ahmadiyah, even though they are equally Muslim, they are considered to be deviant sects in Islam. Islamic students are not respectful to them compared to other believers.

As for the entertainment spots that have been attracting both local and foreign tourists to come, 80% of them (251 people) are willing to forcefully close cafes, night clubs and massage parlors. In fact the number increased to 82% (259 people) when that entertaining venues open at Ramadhan night. Their number fell slightly by 77% (241 people) who were willing to forcibly close food stalls, opened during the day of Ramadhan. In essence, they are inclined to be willing to forcibly close cafes, night clubs, massage parlors, and nightlife venues in the month of Ramadhan, as well as food stalls that open during the days of Ramadhan.

Regarding the willingness to join radical Islamic organizations, 90% (282 people) of them are willing to join organizations that strive for the enforcement of Islamic sharia, 77% (242 people) are willing to join Islamic organizations that advocate for the establishment of an Islamic state, and even 59% (184 people) is willing to join an organization that supports the replacement of Pancasila with an Islamic ideology.

3.5. Involvement in Jihadist Activities

Table 5: Involvement in Jihadist Activities

Islamic Jihad		
Willingness	Frequency	Percentage
Not Involved	157	49.8
Involved	158	50.2
Total	315	100

If the information presented before is merely on students' willingness to join the jihad invitation, which means they had not yet been truly involved in, in the table 5, I will explore information on whether they have been directly involved in the jihad activities. This involvement in jihad activities is measured by a number of indicators such as (1) rejection against an implementation of worship of other religions conducted in their residence, (2) refusal to build houses of worship of other religions, (3) destruction of places of worship of religious groups deemed heretical, (4) rejection against lecturers of different religions, (5) opposition to religious activities carried out by other religious sects considered deviant, (6) destruction of homes or facilities belonging to members of religious sects deemed deviant, (7) rejection against the presence of certain religious groups because they are deviant, (8) destruction and or sealing off of the entertainment venues (cafes, bars, discos and gambling venues), and (9) forced closure of restaurants open during the day of Ramadhan. Their numbers are balanced between those who had been or never been involved in jihadist activities. Noted, of 315 students, 50% or 158 people have been involved in jihad, and another 50% (157 people) have never been involved. Of course this fact is overwhelming that young people with an age range between 18-24 years had been directly involved in jihad activities. Jihad is no longer at the level

of opinion, but has entered into the realm of action, which in turn will face to face with law enforcement officials who have the task of maintaining peace, order and public security. Involvement in jihad activities in this context will contribute to rising social unrests at student residence in specific and community in general.

When they were asked about the destruction of places of worship of other religious groups, 33% or 104 students had done it. 40% or 126 people have opposed the worship activities of other religions. 31% or 96 people have been involved in damaging houses or facilities belonging to other religions. 48% had been involved in damaging entertainment venues such as cafes, bars, discos and gambling establishments. Even the most tragic is that 44% or 140 students have forcibly closed food stalls that are open during the daytime of Ramadhan.

The conclusion from the realm of Islamic radicalism among these students is, that, at the level of concepts or views, students tend not to be not as high radical as at the realm of action. They have a moderate view in upholding Islamic sharia, where Islam as practiced in Indonesia has been sufficient for the principles of implementing Islamic sharia. They also hold that the ideal state form is a religious national state, as we have in the form of the NKRI. In addition, they tend to have moderate opinions regarding Islamic jihad. But these moderate views or opinions turn out to be only at the level of discourse. At the level of reality they tended to be willing to make an invitation to Islamic jihad and even majority had been involved in Islamic jihad.

4. CAPITALIZATION OF ISLAMIC RADICALISM

The tendency to generalize the findings of Islamic radicalism as an action based on, or motivated by Islam, that endangers the adherents of other religions due to its intolerance teaching [3] and even threatens the integrity of the existence of a nation [4], has been well refuted by Tripodi and Marcusa [5]. Tripodi exploits that acts of radicalism, not necessarily in the name of religion, often collaborates with authoritarian rulers. Meanwhile Marcusa specifically reviews Islamic radicalism in Tunisia where radicalism has found a local context used for political mobilization in the two cities of Sidi Bouzid and Metlaoui. In the end, radicalism that seemed fierce and dangerous was carried out as an attempt to renegotiate political deals. This fact is as reviewed by Karell and Freedman[6] that Islamic radicalism cannot be generalized into a global entity. Instead, radicalism is bound by the local context in which it is mobilized, which is called dialectic dogma and social relations. For Karell and Freedman there are two types of radical rhetoric, namely, *first*, subversion rhetoric, which history has recorded it as a universal phenomenon in dealing with external enemies that are so strong and dominant. The *second* is the rhetoric of reversion, which concentrates on everyday social life by living godly lives.

The tendency of Muslim students to radicalism as previously discussed is inseparable from the business of the local elites who deliberately persuaded students to adopt the values and action of Islamic radicalism for their benefit. They keep stating that Muslims are always under threat and therefore need hard and strong Islamic practices, in order to shield themselves from Christian and Catholic invasion. On the one hand, at the level of society in general, Muslims themselves, regardless of any Islamic school, feel they have benefited from the practice of radicalism, where their lives are safe and secure, though not necessarily comfortable. Safe in the sense that they are no longer in control or even under attacks by Christians and Catholics. Never had they experienced before that now they can go safely to market, school, work, school and other social daily activities. Once they are attacked, other Muslims will certainly be sympathetic to them by attacking back Christians and Catholics, even if they are not directly involved in the conflict. The counter-attacks from Muslim sympathizers usually exceed the initial attacks they receive. This is the reason why Christians and Catholics begin to worry, because Muslims who tend to be radical, have stronger defense and offence, than both their defenses and attacks. The need for security is extremely expensive, especially if we look at the history of Ambonese people who were hit by religious conflicts between Islam and Christianity in between 1999 to 2006. Those involving in the conflict saw firsthand how they were involved in killing or being killed.

On the other hand, especially at the elite level, the elites deliberately capitalize the benefits gained by Muslim community, i.e. being safe and secure, as bargaining power for political deals that has direct impact on gaining access to economic resources. In politics, they are no longer marginalized because the power of radicalism has led Muslim leaders to gain access to political power not only at the provincial but also at the major level. As recorded, the selected governors of Ambon for the last two period, are both Muslims. Not to mention the mayor at several regencies in Ambon. It is only in Ambon that the number of Muslims is below that of the Christians and Catholics. For Ternate, where Muslims are the majority, almost all lines of government power are controlled by Muslim figures.

One respondent said about the religious conflict in Ambon which is initially caused by economic inequality in general and unemployment in particular. According to him, the conflict between Muslims and Christians could be minimized if the initial cause of conflict, which is access to economic resources, was well responded. He said:

Remember, it is easier to see any fight than peace, that is the image of Maluku in general. Maluku is easily ignited because the character of the people is hard. But they are soft-hearted actually. Like an ocean, when it is calm, it is very beautiful and charming. But when it gets angry, it's like a thunderstorm. As coastal community, they are an inclusive society, tending to be open to newcomers. If you can touch it, the heart of the Maluku people is tender. They will get angry when they get bullied. The key to the problem is one: the rise of the price of cloves. In 2002 the

conflict was stopped, when Gus Dur succeeded in raising the price of cloves. Prices of cloves during the Suharto era were controlled by Probo Sutejo and the price was pretty low. Cloves trees were then cut down and they started to plant chocolate. To them, cloves are the same as gold in the Dutch era, but in the New Order era the price even fell far, even though in Europe it remains expensive. Suharto stepped down, came in reformed government, Gus Dur raised the price to 110-120 thousand per kilogram. Now, 15 years after the conflict, the price is stable at 70-80 thousand. With extraordinary inflation that we are experiencing right now, the price of cloves can be above 150 thousand, exceeding the price when Gus Dur became president. Conflicts could be resolved when the price of cloves was high. People would not come down to the city, but went back to mountainous areas to plant cloves. In Ambon, local people are struggling for economics. So they turn on cloves to be prosperous. Do we see that rich people fight each other? National politics for the Maluku people depends on the price of the clove of which they can send their children to school and reduce unemployment. That's the seeds of conflict which is in unemployment.[7]

5. CONCLUSION

It is true that Ambonese Muslims are somewhat radical not only in matters of religious worship but also of social life. Muslims cannot even eat together with Christians in one room for the reason that they do not share the same faith. But this kind of radicalism variant cannot be lumped into the existence of radicalism as initiated by transnational movements such as al-Qaida then and ISIS now. Ambonese Muslims' radicalism tends to be home grown which operates in accordance with the local context. One such context is the religious conflict, which initially was not of a religious matter but of political power and economic equality. Christians tend to be more powerful politically and economically compared to Muslims. In this context, Ambonese Muslims are inclined towards radicalism, not towards other Islamic models or practices, because they need hard and fierce "clothes" instead of soft and lenient "clothes" as offered by variants of the Islamic Archipelago. In this way, they were able to free their lives from political helplessness and economic poverty. To maintain what they have achieved in the political and economic fields, they will continue to maintain radicalism. Here is the significance of radicalism which turns out to be able to free them from a sense of insecurity and the adversity of politics and economics.

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