



AN ASSIMILATION-BASED MODEL FOR PREVENTING RELIGIOUS RADICALISM

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Abstract : *Religious radicalism is a serious problem faced by many countries in the world, including Indonesia. Various efforts have been made by authorities to prevent the emergence of religious radicalism. One model of the efforts for preventing religious radicalism is the assimilation-based model. The purpose of this study is to examine some factors triggering religious radicalism, and the application of the assimilation-based model for the prevention of religious radicalism in Lombok society. This research uses qualitative approach. The data are collected through observation, interview and documentation methods. These data are then analyzed by following Miles and Huberman's suggestion, consisting of data reduction, presentation and verification. This research finds out that, firstly, the main factor causing religious radicalism is due to lack of education among people; a situation which makes these people easily compromise radical doctrines without further critical thoughts. Secondly, the application of religious radicalism prevention model has to be accompanied by government's policies and civil's participation in social, cultural, and economic empowerment. In addition, it is important to conduct religious activities that create good atmosphere for all parties in conflict. This research concludes that religious radicalism can be prevented by social assimilation.*

Abstrak : *Radikalisme keagamaan menjadi persoalan serius yang dihadapi seluruh negara di dunia, termasuk Indonesia. Oleh karena itu, berbagai upaya dilakukan untuk mengantisipasi munculnya radikalisme keagamaan tersebut. Salah satunya adalah pencegahan radikalisme*

keagamaan berbasis pembauran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui faktor pemicu radikalisme keagamaan dan implementasi model pencegahan radikalisme keagamaan berbasis pembauran pada masyarakat Lombok. Penelitian lapangan ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Sumber data diperoleh dengan menggunakan tehnik observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Teknis analisis data menggunakan model Miles and Huberman, yang terdiri dari: reduksi data, penyajian data dan verifikasi. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ditemukan bahwa: Pertama, faktor pemicu radikalisme keagamaan adalah minimnya pendidikan yang menyebabkan seseorang mudah didoktrin tanpa mampu mencerna informasi terlebih dahulu. Kedua, implementasi model pencegahan radikalisme keagamaan harus disertai dengan kebijakan pemerintah dan partisipasi dari civil society untuk pemberdayaan sosial, budaya dan ekonomi masyarakat. Di samping itu perlu dilaksanakan kegiatan keagamaan yang bisa mengkondisikan pihak-pihak yang berkonflik untuk bisa melakukan pembauran. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa radikalisme keagamaan bisa dicegah dengan melakukan pembauran masyarakat.

Keywords : *Prevention, Religious Radicalism, Assimilation, Lombok*

A. Introduction

Today, religious radicalism becomes a crucial issue that is faced by all nations, including Indonesia. In the context of Islam in Indonesia, its emergence is marked by the rise of religious groups which bring ideas, ideologies and movements that are not only different, but also in contradiction with the Indonesian model of Islamic understanding, i.e. one that has been acculturated with local traditions and culture. In general, religious radicalism can be identified by the following attitudes. The first is intolerance, or a lack of respect for others' opinions and beliefs. The second is fanaticism, or a state of feeling that his/her own opinion is always right and that of the others 'is wrong. The third is exclusivity, or the act of distinguishing themselves from their Muslims brother in general. The fourth is revolutionary, that is, a tendency to use violent ways to achieve a goal.¹

The rise of religious radicalism in many regions in Indonesia has triggered horizontal conflicts. What happened in Lombok is no exception.

¹ Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme BNPT, *Strategi Menghadapi Paham Radikalisme, Terorisme – ISIS* (Jakarta: Belmawa, 2016), p. 1.

According to a local police's report, at least four conflicts that occurred in Lombok in 2006 to 2009 were an outcome of religious radicalism. Several social conflicts also occurred in the city of Mataram and in East Lombok.² These conflicts indicate that radicalism is counter productive to the face of peaceful and tolerant Islam of Indonesia, one that integrates well with local culture and coexists harmoniously with other faiths.³ In addition, radicalism is also at odds with the diverse nature of Indonesian societies, either in term of religion, language, culture, or customs. Whereas as for ages, Islam in Indonesia has been characterized by having peaceful and tolerant faces.⁴

Researches on radicalism in Indonesia have been carried out by many scholars. Among them is *Religious Radicalism, Global Terrorism and Islamic Challenges in Contemporary Indonesia* by Choirul Mahfud, et al. In his study, Mahfud suggested that the rise of radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia is a result of various factors: social problems, political policies, and economic history, to name only a few.⁵ Similar findings were revealed by Akh. Muzakki in his research on Jama'ah Islamiyah (JI). Muzakki stated, the emerging radicalism of Islam was triggered by a combination of factors, ranging from a political repression by the regime of power, to socio-economic deprivation, globalization, and to an intervention of the foreign

²The attack and destruction of the Ihya 'As Sunnah Islamic Boarding School facilities, putative adherents of the *Salafi* movement, located in the Repok Gapuk area of middle Sekotong village, Sekotong District, West Lombok. The conflict was triggered by differences in religious and customary understandings between the community and the *Salafi* group. The same case happened in Gelogor and Sesela Villages where thousands of Sesela people raided Ubay Bin Ka'ab Islamic Boarding School Foundation which the leader is Fathul Aziz in Kebon Lauk. The raid was triggered by the difference in comprehension and traditions about *talkin* during the burial of the dead (the corpse) and *qunut* during the Shubuh prayer. Tabloid Perspektif Issue 1 to March 31, 2009. See the Lombok Post Newspaper, November 26, 2005 and June 17, 2006. And finally, the attack on the *Salafi* group in Mesanggok Village, Gerung District. Perspective Tabloid Issue 1 to March 31, 2009.

³Ahmad Asrori, "Radikalisme di Indonesia: Antara Historisitas dan Antropisitas," *KALAM*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (February 23, 2017): p. 254.

⁴Ngainun Naim, "Radical Islam and The Deradicalization Strategy: Reconstruction of Abdurrahman Wahid's Thoughts," *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (December 8, 2017): p. 482.

⁵Choirul Mahfud et al., "Religious Radicalism, Global Terrorism and Islamic Challenges in Contemporary Indonesia," *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2018): p. 8–18.

political and ideological interests.⁶ Other studies by, Martin van Bruinessen,⁷ M. Muzaki Mubarak and Abdul A'la, focus on examining the genealogy of religious radicalism in Indonesia. They argue, that the roots of radicalism of Islam in Indonesia could be traced down to a number of religious movements, such as the Masjumi, Darul Islam, Jama'ah Islamiyah, the Padri movement.⁸

Scholars have also pointed out the significance of media technology for the dissemination of radical ideologies in Indonesia. Merlyna Lim, for example, argued, that the Internet has become a potential medium for the spread of primordial identity among radical groups.⁹ Nurdin also revealed a similar finding, stating that the Internet was employed as a new tool by the radical groups for spreading terror and radical ideas in societies.¹⁰

In response to the rise of religious radicalism, some scholars have begun to think and do some researches on how to prevent it. One of them is A. Syafi'i. He states, that in order to prevent religious radicalism, it is imperative to build a happy family (*keluarga sakinah*) in which the family's children are educated to be socially and morally good people.¹¹ Meanwhile, Mulyono and Mulyoto argue that radicalism can be prevented by improving one's welfare state of being, that is by creating job opportunities, providing business capital and life-skill training, and reducing social,

⁶Akh. Muzakki, "The Roots, Strategies, and Popular Perception of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Volume 08, No. 1 (2014): p. 1-22.

⁷Martin Van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *South East Asia Research*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2002): p. 117-154. M. Muzaki Mubarak and Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "The Rise of Radicalism and Terrorism in Indonesia and Malaysia," *RISEA: Review of Islam in South East Asia*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (2018). Abd A'la, *The Genealogy of Muslim Radicalism in Indonesia: A Study of The Roots and Characteristics of The Padri Movement*, *JOURNAL OF INDONESIAN ISLAM*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (Desember 1, 2008): p. 267-299

⁸Abd A'la, "The Genealogy of Muslim Radicalism In Indonesia: A Study of the Roots and Characteristics of the Padri Movement," *JOURNAL OF INDONESIAN ISLAM*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (December 1, 2008): p. 267-299.

⁹Merlyna Lim, *Islamic Radicalism and Anti-Americanism in Indonesia: The Role of the Internet* (Washington: East-West Center, 2005).

¹⁰Nurdin Nurdin, "Radicalism on World Wide Web and Propaganda Strategy," *al-Ulum*, Vol. 16, no. 2 (December 2016): p. 265-288.

¹¹A. Syafi' AS., "Radikalisme Agama (Analisis Kritis Dan Upaya Pencegahannya Melalui Basis Keluarga Sakinah)," *Sumbula* Vol. 2, no. 1 (June 2017): p. 373-374.

economic and political inequalities.¹² In addition to it, Nasaruddin Umar argues that the prevention of radicalism can be done through the re-reading of religious texts and interpreting them with a ‘middle-path’ moderate approach, emphasizing the view point that Islam is a grace to all God’s creations in the world (*rahmatan lil alamin*), a tolerant, and respectful religion toward the essential rights of other human beings.¹³ This can be achieved, argued Junaidi Abdillah, by deconstructing the interpretation of the verses of the Qur’an on Jihad and ‘religious war’.¹⁴

While a cultural approach is offered by Kusmanto,¹⁵ Ahmad Jazuli offered a strategy that prevents radicalism through both *hard approach* and *soft approach*. That is by combining action and prevention, and proposing a simultaneous enforcement of a proactive legal approach, without disregarding the legal principle.¹⁶ Efforts to prevent religious radicalism can also be done by using community-owned wisdom values. As Welhendri Azwar argues, that *Tarekat* (Sufi religious practices) and local culture can be used as a medium to defense against religious radicalism.¹⁷ Muhammad Ikhsanul Amin, et al., called for the significance of education in Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) in resisting any form of religious radicalism.

None of the views of the scholars above focuses on the significance of the assimilation-based approach for the prevention of religious radicalism. Therefore, this study is aimed to explore the model of religious radicalism prevention that is based on assimilation, especially in Lombok.

¹²Galih Puji Mulyono and Galih Puji Mulyoto, “Radikalisme Agama Di Indonesia (Ditinjau Dari Sudut Pandang Sosiologi Kewarganegaraan),” *Citizenship Jurnal Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (2017): p. 73.

¹³Nasaruddin Umar, *Deradikalisasi Pemahaman Al-Qur’an Dan Hadis* (Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo, 2014), 353.

¹⁴Junaidi Abdillah, “Radikalisme Agama: Dekonstruksi Tafsir Ayat-Ayat ‘Kekerasan’ dalam Al-Qur’an,” *KALAM*, Vol. 8, no. 2 (Desember 2014): p. 281–300.

¹⁵Thohir Yuli Kusmanto, Moh Fauzi, and M. Mukhsin Jamil, “Dialektika Radikalisme Dan Anti Radikalisme Di Pesantren,” *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, Vol. 23, no. 1 (2015): p. 47.

¹⁶Ahmad Jazuli, “Strategi Pencegahan Radikalisme dalam Rangka Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Terorisme (Prevention Strategy of Radicalism in Order to Wipe Out The Terrorism Crime),” *Jurnal Ilmiah Kebijakan Hukum*, Vol. 10, no. 2 (2017): p. 197.

¹⁷Welhendri Azwar, “The Resistance of Local Wisdom Towards Radicalism: The Study of the Tarekat Community of West Sumatra, Indonesia,” *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* Vol. 26, no. 1 (2018).

The process of assimilation is a sign of the same development, even if sometimes they are emotional in their goal of achieving unity or at least achieving integration in the organization, thoughts and actions. The purpose of this study is to determine the factors that trigger religious radicalism and the application of the assimilation-based model for preventing radicalism-religious in Lombok society.

This research uses a qualitative approach, and a field research design (field research).¹⁸ The data is collected through observation techniques, interview, and documentation. The data obtained are analyzed by the Miles and Huberman model of technical data analysis, which consists of data reduction (data reduction), presentation of data (data display) and verification (conclusion drawing).¹⁹

B. Religious Radicalism

The word 'radicalism' originates from the English word 'radical', which means 'to its roots'.²⁰ Terminologically, the word radicalism is not found in Islamic Arabic references. This term is a Western product, and is often associated with fundamentalism in Islam. In the western tradition, this term is often confused with Islamic extremism, radical Islam, integrity, revivalism, Islamism, all of which are used to show the rise of Islamic militancy and fanaticism, at their extreme senses.²¹

A person who changed his or her situation in an extreme way is often called radical. So radicalism can be understood as an attitude or position that longs for a change in society by totally destroying the status quo, and replacing it with a completely different new one.²²

Muhibuddin stated that radicalism in practice has an extreme character (non-moderation,) and can threaten the existing stability and

¹⁸Hadari Nawawi, *Metode Penelitian Bidang Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 1995), p. 72.

¹⁹Beni Ahmad Saebani, *Metode Penelitian* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2008), p. 108.

²⁰John M. Echols and Hasan Shadily, *Kamus Inggris Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1975), p. 463.

²¹Anzar Abdullah, "Gerakan Radikalisme dalam Islam: Perspektif Historis," *ADDIN* Vol. 10, no. 1 (February 1, 2016): p. 3.

²²M. Amin Rais, *Cakrawala Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 1992), p. 132.

established structures of a society. It can also be understood as a concept that opposes, and and wants to be at the outside of the *mainstream* understanding.²³

The causes of radical Islam are various. The first relates to religion, namely, the need to purify Islamic teachings and establish an Islamic leadership (*khalifah*) on earth. Such need, encouraged partly by a spirit of Islamizing the global world, emerged as a reaction to finding solutions to various problems in society which are seen by the radical groups as a result of the diminishing role of religion in society.

The second is the socio-political factor. It is clear that Muslims do not benefit from global civilization. Social deviation and economic inequalities, detrimental to the welfare state of a Muslim community, have encouraged radical believers to come to religious teachings for supporting their sentiments, anxiety, and outrage.²⁴

The third is the educational factor. Lack of education in many Muslim society has caused a suspension of information and knowledge. This situation is exacerbated by a tendency among those less educated people to naively accept religious information from public figures who are not trained professionally in conventional Islamic institutions.

The fourth, the cultural factors. The West is considered by Muslims to deliberately carry out the process of marginalization. All sectors of Muslim life become retarded and oppressed. Western counties with their secularism, have been regarded as a pollutant to the cultures of the East and Islam: thus it is considered as a danger to the continuity of Islamic morality.

The fifth, the ideology of anti-westernization. Many Muslims consider the enmity between Westernization and sharia, thus are encouraged to destroy symbols of Westernization. Even though motivations behind such anti-Western movement can be justified through reasons of religious beliefs, but the violent way that is pursued by

²³Muhibuddin, "Nasionalisme Ulama Dalam Menangkal Paham Radikal Di Kalangan Santri Dayah Tradisional Di Aceh," in *The Interface between Islam and Globalization* (presented at the The 16th Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies, Lampung: IAIN Raden Intan, 2016), p. 294.

²⁴Azyumardi Azra, *Pergolakan Politik Islam Dari Fundamentalisme, Modernisme Hingga Post-Modernisme* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1996), p. 18.

radicalism only reversed the intended results: it shows their weak position among other societies in the world's cultures and civilizations.

Issues of humanity, or the need to fulfill material bases for everyday life and the struggle to achieve social justice, are fundamental factors causing the rise of Islamic radicalism in the public.

In general, the occurrence of various acts of violence (radicalism) is linked to the lack of political stability and social justice in society. These for example, refer to the current political situation that is still not "well-established", and to the many discriminating policies in economy and law.²⁵

However, Muslim scholar Yusuf Al-Qaradawi stated that religious radicalism in Muslim society had many to do with the kinds of understanding of the scriptural texts of Islam that are held by the Muslims. These include the following:

The first is the incomplete understanding of religious knowledge, usually acquired through doctrinal methods of learning. *The second* relates to the literal understanding of religious texts, one that emphasizes superficial understanding of Islamic teachings, doctrines and rituals. *The third* is the understanding of religion that is over occupied with trivial matters of religious teachings, such as moving the index finger for a *tasyahhud* during the prayer, growing the beard, and raising the pants above the ankle, while at the same time forgetting the primary messages of the religion. *The fourth* is the common tendency to lavishly forbid every acts and things in society, which only adds another burden to the religious believers. *The fifth*, is the lack of proper historical and sociological insights among Muslim scholars so that their *fatwas* are often in conflict with the people's welfare, common sense and spirit of the times. *The sixth*, radicalism is often a reaction to another form of radicalism, such as the radical secularists who reject religion. *The seventh*, radicalism is often a form of resistance against social and political injustice in society.²⁶

In short, the emergence of religious radicalism is caused by the differences in interpreting the holy book, in orientation, of the politics of power, and in ideology and theology. All of these have enabled the radical groups of Islam to grow and thrive. To impose the same understanding of

²⁵ Idrus Ruslan, "Islam dan Radikalisme: Upaya Antisipasi dan Penanggulangannya," *KALAM*, Vol. 9, no. 2 (Desember 2015): p. 223.

²⁶Yusuf al-Qardhawi, *Islam Radikal; Analisis Terhadap Radikalisme Dalam Berislam* (Solo: Intermedia, 2004), p. 23.

religious teaching is to eliminate the religion it self because as such will trigger a conflict. Each believer will have no respect to the truth of other religions and as such is contradictory to humanistic values.²⁷

Radicalism in the context of nation-state affairs, can be seen as a potential threat, since it may cause to dis assimilation of the nation. Such threat has become a world's phenomenon, especially in countries that were born, or gained their independence after the world war II.

Indonesia is one of the countries that has a high potential to a threat of national dis assimilation. This potential was triggered by many factors, they are, the rise of regional separate movements, the increase of politics of power and interest, the rise of primordial-ism, the decrease of the spirit of unity and assimilation, the rising use of violent coercion toward minority groups, the lost of pride of the indigenous culture, the lost of respect toward symbols of state, and the rise of social, economic and political disparity among various regions of the country.

Radical Islam has two different meanings, as a discourse and an action. Radical Islam as a discourse means an idea of establishing an Islamic state, or *khalifah*, without using violence. While as an action, radical Islam is linked to an act of violence in the name of religion. Referring to the latter meaning, radical Islamic movements chose to use violence as a means to realize their goals in establishing the Islamic state in Indonesia.

Syamsul Arifin stated that, in order to stop radicalism, it is not enough to focus on a single factor, let say, the security discourse. But it also needs to design a universal approach in which all stakeholders come and work together.²⁸

An effort to prevent radicalism should be focused on radical thoughts that are honed by both the individual and groups, ones that bring forward radical activities that lead to violence, war and terror, which are very dangerous for humanity.²⁹

There are some efforts that we can do to stop radicalism. They are as follows. *The first*, counter radicalism. It is an effort of radicalism

²⁷Emna Laisa, "Islam dan Radikalisme," *Islamuna: Jurnal Studi Islam*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): p. 2.

²⁸ Syamsul Arifin, *Studi Islam Kontemporer Arus Radikalisasi Dan Multikulturalisme di Indonesia* (Malang: Intrans Publishing, 2015), p. 32.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 84.

prevention that is directed to all elements in society. This can be done by making a campaign in society about building an awareness and understanding that radicalism do not relates with religious teachings, thus it has to be eliminated from society³⁰

The essence of counter-radicalism is to spread peaceful values to all people in society regardless of ethnic group, ideology or other boundaries. The implementation of this strategy is carried out through both formal and informal educations. Counter radicalism is directed to the general public, through cooperation with religious leaders, educational figures, community leaders, youth leaders, traditional leaders, and other stakeholders.

Counter-radicalism effort may take in the form of a *dakwah* movement, one that is aimed to increase the immunity of society in handling the waves of globalization. Methods of counter-radicalism can be done in there ways: counter-narrative, counter-propaganda, and counter-ideology. The counter-narrative method is carried out by assigning religious leaders to publish on line their writings and speeches on the relevance and significance of the values of Pancasila. The counter-propaganda method is carried out by developing a positive propaganda on localizing Islam and its message for building peace in community. The counter-ideology is meant to build and spread the Pancasila ideology.³¹

The second is de-radicalization. It is en effort to change attitudes that are considered hard into the ones that are soft, such being tolerant, moderate, liberal, and leaning toward pluralism.³² The de-radicalization has a wide meaning; example of it ranges from faith, legal-handling, to socializing efforts of changing the radical to the non-radical. Therefore, de-radicalisation can be understood as an attempt to neutralize radicalism

³⁰Agus SB, *Pengantar Dalam Ikhwanul Kiram Masyhuri ISIS Jihad Atau Petualangan* (Jakarta: Penerbit Republik, 2014), p. xv.

³¹ <http://www.voa-islam.com/read/politik-indonesia/2016/12/19/47968/bnpt-terapkan-dua-strategi-hadapi-radikalisme/#sthash.F48FJl6A.dpbs>. Last accessed, 25 October 2018.

³²M. Marwan and Jimy P., *Kamus Hukum* (Surabaya: Reality Publisher, 2009), p. 519.

among those who are involved in terrorism and its sympathizers, so that they will completely leave violent and terror actions.³³

De-radicalization is a problem solving strategy for eradicating radicalism and terrorism, which puts emphasis on recovery processes (repairing or healing). Perpetrators of the terror attacks have often been indoctrinated with ideologies of radicalism. Because of such indoctrination, they suffered a pathological behaviour, i.e. 'radicalism'. Deradicalization is an attempt to cure, or reduce the level of radicalism.³⁴

Recently, the concept of de-radicalisation has an extension of meaning. This concept is not merely understood as a process of moderation of the beliefs and behavior of those who involved in radical organizations, but also as an attempt of early detection of radicalism signs in society. It identifies early stages of what potentially leads toward radicalism, existent in various levels of societies.³⁵

Having said that, it can be inferred that de-radicalisation starts from the concept of that radicalism is a deviant at behaviour. Those who are affected by it, through the process of de-radicalization, can be cured. This means, de-radicalization requires an interdisciplinary approach and it involves all parties to take part.

In this way, de-radicalization is not only assigned to those involved in terror attacks, but also to all people, and through various public spaces, media channels, and educational institutions.

C. Assimilation as the Model of Prevention of Religious Radicalism.

According to the national standard of Indonesian dictionary, assimilation means: (1) a process, method, and act of intermingling; (2) an

³³ Ismail Hasani and Bonar Tigor Naispospos, *Radikalisme Agama Di Jabodetabek Dan Jawa Barat: Implikasinya Terhadap Jaminan Kebebasan Beragama/Berkeyakinan* (Jakarta: Pustaka Masyarakat Setara, 2010), p. 169.

³⁴ SB, *Pengantar Dalam Ikhwanul Kiram...*, p. xv-xvi.

³⁵ Ismail Hasani and Bonar Tigor Naispospos, *Dari Radikalisme Menuju Terorisme: Studi Relasi Dan Transformasi Organisasi Islam Radikal Di Jawa Tengah Dan D.I. Yogyakarta* (Jakarta: Pustaka Masyarakat Setara, 2012), p. 191.

elimination of exclusive characters of ethnic groups in community in order to achieve national unity.³⁶

In the process of assimilation, people identify themselves according to the interests and goals of their groups. If two groups of people assimilate, the boundaries between the groups will diminish and their culture will adapt into each other. Shortly, it can be said that the assimilation process is characterized by the development of the same attitudes even though sometimes it is emotional in its purpose to achieve unity or at least achieve assimilation in the organization, thoughts and actions.

The assimilation process can be achieved under the following conditions. First, there are different groups of people with different culture. Second, these individuals of different groups are willing to interact with each other directly and intensively, long enough for them to know, adapt, and exchange each other's cultures.³⁷

Assimilation does not happen naturally, but it only occurs under certain conditions. Some of the conditions that can lead into an assimilation process include the existence of cultural difference between several groups.

There are also some factors that may slow down the assimilation process. These factors, according to Soerjono Soekanto³⁸, are as follows: a) The lack of knowledge and understanding about cultures of other groups in society b) an excessive fear toward the new culture. c) a feeling of superiority towards other ethnic groups in society.

As for the supporting factors for the process of cultural assimilation, they include the following: (a) act of tolerance. (b) symbiosis mutualism, (c) sympathy, or a reciprocal understanding, respect and treatment to each others, and (d) marriage.

Examples of assimilation that occur in cultural society are as follows: *The first*, cultural assimilation. It is the process of adopting values, beliefs, dogmas, ideologies, languages and systems of symbols of an

³⁶Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1995), p. 99.

³⁷Elly M. Setiadi, *Ilmu Sosial Dan Budaya Dasar* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2011), p. 56.

³⁸Soerjono Soekanto, *Lahirnya Konsep Asimilasi* (Jakarta: Yayasan Tunas Bangsa, 2004), p. 87.

established ethnic groups in order to create a continuity of values, beliefs, dogma, ideology, language and symbol systems of anew ethnic group. *The second*, structural assimilation. It is the process of cultural penetration of one ethnic group into the other, by way of assimilation in to the deep social structure of society, such as as family and close friends. *The third*, marriage assimilation or often called physical assimilation. It is the process of assimilation that occurs by way of inter-ethnic marriage.³⁹

Milton M. Gordon (1968)⁴⁰ stated, that the occurrence of assimilation consists of various stages. These stages are as follows. (a). Cultural, or behavioral assimilation, that is, a change of cultural patterns as a process of adaptation to the majority group. b). Structural assimilation, or the influx of minority groups into groups, associations, and institutions in every premiere level of the majority group. c) Marital assimilation, that is, a large-scale marriage between members of different groups. d) Identification assimilation, or a development of an exclusive sentiment of nationalism that is based on the majority group. e) Attitude receptional assimilation, the absence of prejudice (prejudice) among members of the majority group. f) Behavior receptional assimilation, or the absence of discrimination by the majority group. g) Civic assimilation, or the absence of conflicts of values and power with the majority group.

Gordon's theory of cultural assimilation, which in many ways is often called acculturation, is a subject of heated debate. Acculturation is a sub-process of assimilation, and it indicates a change of cultural characteristics of the minority groups with that of the indigenous people. Gordon's seven-stages theory of assimilation, while still relevant in assimilation studies, is difficult to apply as a whole. This is because every society has different social and economic conditions, which inextricably affect the condition and process of assimilation.

This gap should be solved, although it does not mean that rights of ever individual or group in society are eliminated. It means that difference in ethnicity, religion, race and groups that exists in society or among religious communities in the general contexts, or difference in religious understanding and practices among groups of Muslims for example: all of

³⁹Burhanuddin, dkk., *Steorotype Etnik, Asimilasi, Integrasi Sosial* (Jakarta: Pustaka Grafika Kita, 1998), p. 98.

⁴⁰Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Free Press, 1968), p. 21.

these should not become a trigger for division, dis assimilation, conflict or even religious radicalism.

So the terms assimilation does contain the connotation of "eliminating the characteristics of an ethnicity". Assimilation can mean associating himself with the wider community and "marrying" himself to the wider community.

An important note in interpreting this definition is that there is an understanding that *First*, the process of assimilation must be reasonable, natural, full of awareness, full of responsibility and without coercion that grows from the internal community itself. *Second*, assimilation is not absolute meaning "biological" assimilation but can also be in various life in social contexts, cultural and religious dimensions. In the assimilation that must be established in the nature tolerance and sincerity in creating harmonious relations between community religious groups.⁴¹

Thus, the desire of assimilation can be manifested in reasonable actions that oppose exclusivity, unity with various groups (*jama'ah*) of a society, although different understandings and practices of religious, so the potential acts of religious radicalism can be minimized or even eliminated.

D. Factors of Religious Radicalism in East Lombok

One of the cases of religious radicalism occurred in Kopang I, Cempaka, Suela Village, Suela District, East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province (NTB). The incident took place on 31 May 2016, when few members of the village, followers of the Salafi movement, built the Jami 'Ar-Rahman mosque where they would perform the daily prayers, including the *jum'at sermon*. The mosque was built on an endowed land (*tanah wakaf*), near *mushalla*, a smaller prayer house, that issued by the local community to perform their daily prayers.

The intention to build the mosque is noble. But for many of the other members of the village as such is considered lack of social sensitiveness. This is because the mosque is built just 500 meters from the prayer house that was established by the local villagers long before the Salafi groups come into the village. If calculated, the number of people who

⁴¹ <https://birawatiniwayan.wordpress.com/2011/01/30/pembauran-etnik-dalam-rangka-mewujudkan-integritas-bangsa>.

want to build the new mosque is only 15 households 'Kepala Keluarga' (KK), out of 108 households of the village population.⁴²

These people, suspected of being *Salafi* adherents, built the mosque under the auspice of *As-Sunnah* Foundation, without informed consent from the local community. As a result, the local residents refused the establishment of the mosque, fearing that it would only trigger division and conflicts among members of the village. It is also suspected that the establishment of the mosque has no legal permission from the government. Despite the protest, they continued the establishment of the mosque, making the local people disappointed.

As an accumulation of their disappointment, hundreds of people of the Suela village destroyed the mosque. To sooth the situation, the village leader took the initiative to stop the process of building the mosque.⁴³ Yet, flare of the conflict has gone wild, thus triggering it to get bigger. Other member of the *Salafi* group from outside Suela Village come to support their fellow aspiration to establish the mosque.

M. Makki⁴⁴ argued that most of the socio-religious conflicts occurring in East Lombok were triggered by the construction of religious infrastructures, such as mosques. This is not only because mosque is an important place for ritual practices among Muslim, but it also reveals the symbolic existence of a Muslim group in society.

Yet, many people in Lombok, said Makki, are ignorant about the official procedure for building a mosque. They don't understand that if they want to build a mosque, they have to submit a permission letter to the Regent, or the local city's town hall. Their permission letter will be evaluated by the local Office of the Ministry of Religion of East Lombok Regency. It is required that the mosque that is planned to be built is located in an area consisting of at least 90 residents, and 60 of them approve the plan.

⁴²Amak Zulfikri (tokoh masyarakat setempat), "Interview," July 15, 2018.

⁴³ <http://www.lombokita.com/kabar/warga-suela-tolak-kelompok-assunnah-dirikan-masjid>.

⁴⁴M. Makki (Kasi Bimas Islam Kantor Kementerian Agama Lombok Timur), "Interview," October 16, 2018.

Syamsuddin,⁴⁵ a spokesperson of the local government, confirmed that in order to construct a mosque in a village, there should be a permission from the local government allowing a space of communication among members of the village. If different religious communities exist and they are prone to conflict, a permission to build a prayer house by any of these groups is a must: not doing it is considered transgressing the rules.

According to Syamsuddin, the application of this regulation in society is actually flexible. If the distance between the old and new mosques is far enough, the permission letter is not necessary. However, the situation in Suella vilage is different, since the newly built mosque is close to the old mosque, and the number of the new mosque's community is small.

Yet, Syamsuddin said, conflict like this has rarely been filed to the court. This is because, if it is brought to the court there will be parties who win and loss: a situation that will only deteriorate the problem between the conflicting communities.

Suela is a small village, located in a hilly area, and filled with community plantations. The villagers who participated in the *As-Sunnah* group are mostly young people who have low education level: they are either elementary, junior school, or high school graduates. They learned Islam from the '*pengajian*' taking place outside Suela.

Their lack of education makes them vulnerable to religious indoctrination without being able to understand the information they received. For one thing, they do not read Arabic texts, the language of the classical books of Islam which are the primary source of Islamic knowledge; let alone discuss about what is written in these books. They depended their learning on what is conveyed verbally by their religious leaders.

This condition, as theorized by Yusuf al-Qardhawi I mentioned above, is a hot bed for the spring of religious radicalism. Those who with incomplete understanding of religious teachings, they tend to translate religious texts literally, focusing on the superficial aspects of the religion.⁴⁶

To summarize, the lack of education plays a significant role to the emergence of religious radicalism since it restrict religious believers to have

⁴⁵Syamsuddin S.Sos. (Kepala Badan Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik Dalam Negeri (KABASKESBANGPOLDAGRI) Lombok Timur), "Interview," October 16, 2018.

⁴⁶al-Qardhawi, *Islam Radikal; Analisis Terhadap Radikalisme ...*, p. 23.

a critical thinking over who and what they have to listen to with regard to religious knowledge.

E. The Implementation of Assimilation-Based Prevention of Religious Radicalism

Radicalism, terrorism and other violent acts in the name of religion have existed throughout human history. They occurred not only in Muslim communities but also in other religious communities in the world. To overcome this problem, a comprehensive and systematic approach is needed, in the sense that it involves various institutions.

Syamsul Arifin, a professor of sociology of religion in Universitas Negeri Malang, stated that in order to stop the flow of radicalization movement, it is not enough to rely on the security approach alone, but we need to design a universal approach in which all stake holders work together to solve the radicalization problems.⁴⁷ Prevention of radicalism itself is aimed as an effort to lower the rate of radicalism, which are triggered by thoughts and movements oriented towards radical activities, such as those that lead to violence, war and terror dangerous for humanity.⁴⁸

As for preventing internal conflicts in a Muslim community, it is suggested to carry out the following steps. *First*, through a mediation process involving religious leaders. The mediation is done through the process of assimilation, that is by involving the conflicting parties in socio-religious events held in the society.

Second, the legal approach. If the conflict continues to happen, it is suggested that the community take a legal action. In this way, the government should intervene in the conflict, in order to control public security and order. If such approach is missed, it is feared that the mass will take over the lead, threatening the public order and security of the conflict place.

Head of the local office of the Ministry of Religion of East Lombok, M. Azharuddin, M.Hi said that, regarding the issue of religious conflict in East Lombok, government had always been quick to response. Usually, in order to avoid a more serious conflict to happen, the local

⁴⁷Arifin, *Studi Islam Kontemporer ...*, p. 32.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 84.

officials responsible to this problem, well-known to be called MUSPIDA (Conference of the Regional Leaders), initiated a mediation process, finding ways to reconcile both parties in conflict.⁴⁹

As for the case of Suela's conflict, both parties of the conflict agreed to sign a peace agreement thanks to the initiative taken by the government and the Suela leaders. The agreement consists of the following. *First*, members of *As-Sunah* group have to complete the process of construction permit with regard to the construction of the Ar-Rahman mosque. *Second*, members of the *As-Sunah* group have to stop the construction activities for a while, until situation in the village is fully under control. *Third*, members of *As-Sunnah* group is requested to intermingle in the village's social activities with the other local people. *Fourth*, members of *As-Sunnah* group are asked to behave and act cooperatively. *Fifth*, the folks of Suela village are requested not to attack members of *As-Sunnah* group. *Sixth*, the construction process of Ar-Rahman mosque has to be stopped until the due condition is conducive. *Seventh*, people from both groups not allowed to take aggressive action: if it happens again, the case will be proceeded into the court.⁵⁰

Considering this phenomenon, and other similar cases in the islands of Lombok, it is imperative that in order to prevent religious radicalism, the state's government has to take an assimilation approach: one that emphasizes a peaceful and tolerant, process, respects other's opinions, and celebrates cultural diversity, because as diversity is a mercy from God, a nature that God has designed for humanity.

Islamic teachings originated from the texts of the Qur'an and the hadith state that diversity of culture, religion, ethnicity and language is unique to human existence. Islam normalizes diversity and regards it as a natural fact (QS. Al-Rum [30])⁵¹ In fact, diversity shows the greatness of Allah.

⁴⁹M. Azharuddin, M.HI. (Kakankemenag Lombok Timur), "Interview," October 16, 2018.

⁵⁰Disampaikan oleh SEKDA Lombok Timur, H. Rohman Farly sebagaimana dikutip oleh <http://rri.co.id/gunungsitoli/Post/Berita>.

⁵¹ Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam, 2012), p.22.

The lesson than can be learned from the conflict happened in Suela village of Lombok is that the prevention of religious radicalism can be formulated and implemented as follows:

First, to prevention the rise of religious radicalism we can use the assimilation approach. The philosophy of this approach is to promote peaceful ways in the form of mediation between religious leaders and community leaders as the main actors involved in the conflict.

Second, the government should act as a facilitator for all steps and processes to stop religious conflicts, assuming the significant role the government has to play in preventing religious radicalism.

Third, it is necessary for the local government to initiate a public policy, lending an authority to religious leaders and state's officials to the enforcement of the law in the time of conflict.

Fourth, the efforts to prevent religious radicalism must be accompanied by government policies for social, cultural and economic empowerment of the community.

Fifth, it is necessary for government officials and local religious leaders to make religious programs and policies that generate a conducive condition so that members of the *As-Sunnah* group are capable and willing to integrate with cultures of the local people. Loyalty to government is a good start to attract members of the radical groups to integrate with the local people. As my interviews with the *As-Sunnah* leaders, members of their group were not allowed to make demonstrations to criticize the government.⁵²

F. Closing

This study concludes that the prevention of religious radicalism can be sought after the assimilation approach, as indicated above by the case of Suela village in Lombok. The lack of education and religious knowledge are dominant factors that triggered the emergence of religious radicalism among the people in Lombok. However, the assimilation processes initiated by the local government and leaders in the conflict

⁵²H. Lalu Syafi'i (Umur 64 tahun) tokoh agama dari kelompok Salafi di desa Bebidas), "Wawancara," October 12, 2018.

region has succeeded to reduce the intensity of the religious conflicts faced by the community.

Thus, the assimilation approach is proved effective as a model for preventing religious radicalism in Lombok, and as such is suggested to be implemented in other regions. However, the application of this approach in other regions needs to be applied with further exploration, especially on how to use local wisdom as a cultural strategy of the application of the assimilation approach. [.]

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