Intellectual Discourse

Special Issue on

The Intersection of Theory, Identity, and Security in PCVE (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism)

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Transliteration Table: Consonants

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	?
ث	th		ع	'
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	Ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	?		ء	'
ض	ḍ		ي	y

Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
◌َ	a		◌ًا،◌ًى	an
◌ُ	u		◌ُو	un
◌ِ	i		◌ِي	in
◌َا،◌َٰ،◌َى	ā		◌َوْ ◌	aw
◌ُو	ū		◌َيْ ◌	ay
◌ِي	ī		◌ُوّ ◌	uww, ū (in final position)
			◌ِيّ ◌	iyy, ī (in final position)

Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: http://rotas.iium.edu.my

Guest Editor's Note

Danial Mohd Yusof

In a keynote session of Hedayah (an international centre of excellence for Countering Violent Extremism or CVE), UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and Australian government jointly organised ICVE Research Conference 2019 - transitions in CVE and CT (Counter Terrorism) since September 11 on risk perception, risks tolerance and policy formation was highlighted. The narrative of PCVE and CT shifted from "Never Again" to the sharing of risk between state and civil society to harness community and learning to apply policy with a focus on developing resilience. The evolution of this narrative was in part due to certain drivers i.e. (1) Impatience and securitisation as an immediate response to the tragedy shifting in time with the development of the scope of knowledge of PCVE and the sharing of risks between state and society; (2) Going beyond the costs and counter-productiveness of securitisation e.g. for the USA, USD1 Trillion in expenditure from 2001-2019; (3) Concerns over civil liberties in relation to criticisms over the Guantanamo Bay detention camp and human rights violations of the Abu Ghraib prison; (4) The rise and fall of physical IS (Islamic State) and the ideological latency of religious extremism; and now (5) The radicalisation of identity politics i.e. ethnic and racial mobilisation of VE (Violent Extremism); and even the nexus of religious and racial or ethnic based VE such as FRE (Far Right Extremism).

The shift towards resilience looks at PCVE in the context of a global prevention architecture, focusing on mitigation and recovery. In effect three trends pertaining to risk and resiliency are expected to be facilitated and incorporated: (1) Social cohesion i.e. community and nation building; (2) A "Whole of Society" approach that clearly distinguishes between prevention and CVE with prevention strategies that emphasise on advocacy to community as opposed to CVE's intervention of targeted segmentation of those at risk or having certain vulnerabilities; and (3) A case management approach because while the

drivers and enablers may be identifiable, the trigger for VE or Terrorism can be highly idiosyncratic (Khalil, L. 2019).

The recommendations for resilience as an approach to PCVE is an attempt at bridging both society and the security apparatus, which includes among others: (1) Strengthening and incentivising locally led PCVE efforts by investing in trust building between communities and security agencies; and working with existing state and society organisations; (2) Enhancing contribution of CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) to PCVE; (3) Strengthening and incentivising cooperation and collaboration among national and subnational authorities and stakeholders relevant to PCVE, and capacity building among multidisciplinary stakeholders; and (4) Improving evidence base for monitoring and evaluating PCVE efforts (Rosand et al 2018, pp 41-49). The resilience narrative is pervasive and is the mainstay approach among PCVE practitioners, researchers and organisations from the UN and EU level down to the international community of nation states in creating the global PCVE architecture of the future. This special issue of Intellectual Discourse journal is an attempt at capturing the expanding scope of PCVE as a sub-sector of security studies in the past five years that thematically intersect on issues of theory, identity and security. It was also conceived in light of MyPCVE (Malaysian Plan of Action in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism) that was launched at the end of September last year after a long period of advocacy and research (MOHA 2024). We have compiled 13 papers with a selection of international authors from Australia, USA, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Algeria, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Indonesia and also Malaysia.

The first paper by Zouhir Gabsi evaluates the concept of *Al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ* (Allegiance and Disassociation) in Islam and how it may be a source of Islamophobic narratives. The concept dictates the essence of the Muslims' relationship with the 'Other' in socio-political terms and essentially upholds the spirit of Islam as defined in both the Qurʾānic and Prophetic traditions. Nevertheless its discourse is also tainted with controversies and misunderstandings due to the interpretations of Muslim 'jihadists' and Islamophobes where jihadists interpret it as a justification for attacking non-Muslims, and Islamophobes exploit its portrayal of Islam as a violent religion. In the second paper, Mark Woodward and Rohani Mohamed explore the similar psychological and sociological features of Muslim Violent Extremism (MVE) and Far-Right Extremism

(FRE) despite their profound ideological differences. The authors rely on anthropological, linguistic, psychological and psychoanalytic theory to explain the ways in which, despite irreconcilable semantics, they share a common syntactic structure. Their study is based on ethnographic research in Indonesia, Nigeria and the United Kingdom and the analysis of extremist texts.

Meanwhile, Mohamed Fouz Mohamed Zacky tackles the securitisation of Islam in Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday Attacks in the third paper. The core argument of the paper is that the securitisation of Islam in Sri Lanka is an outcome of an effective cooperation between political and state elites and ultra-nationalist majoritarian forces in the country that also capitalised on the multi-layered discursive ecosystem, such as Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, the dominant security studies paradigm, the ex-Muslim phenomenon, and unintended consequences of Islamic revivalism. Shifting to the Sahel area in the fourth paper, Ramzi Bendebka explains complexity in the threat of terrorism and an elusive resilience in the region are due to regimes and transnational interests and changing allegiances within and beyond the Sahel that are engaged in the terror, and the ramifications of an ongoing politics of surrogate violence perpetrated in their pursuit of wealth and power.

Returning to the issue of identity in the fifth paper - Islamophobia in Bosnia and Herzegovina, specifically, Anja Zalta discusses the construction of the "Other" in the specific socio-cultural and historical context in combination with the Eurocentric compression of racism that can be recognised in Orientalist discourses in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This stems from the most exposed „expulsion of the Turk" to the fear of neo-Ottomanism, that is still prominent, demanding deeper analysis of the causes and consequences of religio-political antagonisms and their remedies, while asking questions about the wave of FRE and identity politics in Europe at present. The State is the focus of Eva Achjani Zulfa, Sapto Priyanto, and Mohd Mizan Aslam in the sixth paper. Writing a structural functionalist approach to the roles of the Indonesian Armed Forces and Police in counter-terrorism, the authors articulate their concerns on how the Indonesian National Police (Polri) and the TNI, by taking different approaches to counter-terrorism, and are regulated by separate legal frameworks, may produce overlapping authorities between these entities that hinder the nation's success at CT. An official

oversight is deemed required for Indonesian CT by the authors. In the seventh paper, Muthanna Saari theorises multiculturalism's role in preventing radicalisation by deploying Jürgen Habermas's concept of the politics of recognition. Referring to United Kingdom and France as examples, he explores the ways in which multiculturalism can sustainably address the challenges of integration and assimilation within multicultural societies.

In the eighth paper, Indonesia's Minister of Education, Abdul Mu'ti and Alpha Amirrachman reflect on how the diversity of local wisdom when incorporated into the Muhammadiyah curriculum can facilitate civic education and nation building. Da'wah without alienating has meant that their schools and universities are considered preferred educational institutions fostering the combination of awareness of others, knowledge and skills by certain segments of Christian communities in the eastern parts of the country. In the ninth paper - Terrorism Industry: Digital Data Coloniality in Southeast Asia - Mohammed Ilyas warns of how digital data colonialism merges the extractive practices of historical colonialism with the computational capabilities of modern technologies, allowing for the quantification and commodification of online activities. The latter utilises the data in the name of national security and the global fight against extremism and terrorism, a practice that impacts both Western and non-Western populations, especially on the securitisation of Islam. In the tenth paper, Raja Muhammad Khairul Akhtar and Danial Mohd Yusof looks into the changing policy landscape of Malaysia's PCVE and CT sector, exploring possible implications of the MyPCVE plan of action in terms of current practices and future directions.

Hairol Anuar, Norazmi, Shamrahayu, Rafidah and Mohd Mahadee write on Malaysian patriotism in relation to the principles of *Rukun Negara* in Islam as a form of resilience in the eleventh paper of the special issue. The authors emphasise on the complementary elements of the *Rukun Negara* and Islam and how it cultivates patriotism and nation building in relation to the preservation of religion, Malaysia's constitutional monarchy, rule of law, and national unity. In the twelfth paper, Ungaran@Rashid writes on the peaceful coexistence and resilience between Muslims and Christians in *Desa* or village of *Kertajaya* and how this may be facilitated through Quranic and Biblical perspectives. Additionally, the peaceful life in the village is also

influenced by Sundanese culture, adding an interesting dynamic to the relationship between primordial identities of culture and faith. In the thirteenth and final paper of the special issue, Nur Adillah Omar and Danial Mohd Yusof discuss pathways of individual radicalisation of Muslim VE detainees and ex-detainees in Malaysia from 2013-2020. Using varied theories that collectively contribute to the construction of the multi-context theories of pathways of individual radicalisation in Malaysia helps to distinguish and identify unique drivers and enablers of the cases. Such profiling may aid interventions; and specific deradicalisation and rehabilitative strategies and initiatives. It is also hoped that advanced profiling may effectively mitigate radicalisation risks and enhance Malaysia's security and resilience.

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Al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ (Allegiance and Disassociation) in Islam: A Source of Islamophobic Narratives?

Zouhir Gabsi

Abstract: *Al-Walā' wal-Barā'* (Allegiance and Disassociation) elucidates the essence of the Muslims' relationship with the 'Other' in socio-political terms. However, this concept has been marred with controversies and misunderstandings, largely due to the interpretations of Muslim 'jihadists' and Islamophobes. While jihadists interpret al-Walā' wal-Barā' as a justification for attacking non-Muslims, Islamophobes exploit this narrow interpretation to portray Islam as a violent religion. In its true essence, al-Walā' wal-Barā' upholds the spirit of Islam as defined in both the Qurʾānic and Prophetic traditions. This study, rooted in an Islamic perspective, aims to dispel these misunderstandings. It first delves into the concept of al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ, its interpretation, and the semantic distortions it has undergone from its origin to the present day. Second, it argues how a misinterpretation of this concept can fuel both Islamophobia and militancy. The article further posits that while the rules or codes of exclusion may persist, their implementation must align, at least to some extent, with the core principles of human rights and international relations.

Keywords: abrogation, *Al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ,* Ibn Taymiyyah, Islamophobia, Takfir

Abstrak: *Al-Walā' wal-Barā'* (Kesetiaan dan Penolakan) menjelaskan intipati hubungan Muslim dengan yang 'Lain' dari segi sosio-politik. Walau bagaimanapun, konsep itu telah dicemari dengan kontroversi dan salah faham yang berpunca daripada 'jihadi' Muslim dan Islamophobe. Walaupun jihad mentafsirkan *al-Walā' wal-Barā'* sebagai asas untuk menyerang orang bukan

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*Senior Lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, Australia. Email: zouhir.gabsi@deakin.edu.au

Islam, Islamofobia mengeksploitasi takrifan sempit jihad ini untuk menonjolkan Islam sebagai agama yang ganas. Pada dasarnya, *al-Walā' wal-Barā'* mengukuhkan semangat Islam yang sebenar yang ditakrifkan dalam kedua-dua tradisi Al-Quran dan Sunnah. Walaupun kajian semasa berkonsepkan daripada perspektif Islam, matlamatnya adalah dua kali ganda. Pertama, ia mengkaji konsep *al-Walā'* dan *al-Barā'*; tafsirannya, dan bagaimana ia berbelit-belit secara semantik dari asalnya hingga ke hari ini. Kedua, ia berhujah bagaimana salah faham konsep ini boleh mencetuskan kedua-dua Islamofobia dan pemahaman militan. Artikel ini seterusnya berhujah bahawa peraturan atau kod pengecualian akan terus wujud, tetapi bentuk pelaksanaan perlu selaras sekurang-kurangnya dengan prinsip asas hak asasi manusia dan hubungan antarabangsa.

Kata kunci: pemansuhan, *Al-Walā' wal-Barā',* Ibn Taymiyyah, Islamofobia, Takfir

Introduction

The myths and misinterpretations of Islam's various tenets and philosophy, such as *ʿibādah* (worship), *muʿāmalāt* (transactions, relationship with the other), jihad[1], Sharia law, and the application of reason, are some of the themes that drive Islamophobic narratives. Debunking these myths has been the focus of numerous studies by early and contemporary Muslims and non-Muslim scholars, such as al-Ghazālī's colossal work *Iḥyā' ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (Revival of Religious Sciences), al-Boutī's work on jihad, Nasr's and Esposito's various works on Islam.[2] However, in the following pages, an unremittingly dominant Islamophobic[3] discourse continues to surface, relating mainly to misinterpretations of the notion of *al-Walā' wal-Barā'* (allegiance and disassociation); the subject of this paper.

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[1] The terms relating to jihad, a significant pillar in Islam, should not be confused with 'jihadism' or 'jihadists', nor with any other terms that seek to tarnish jihad's significance with unwarranted violence, aggression, and oppression.

[2] See al-Bouti (1993); Esposito (2002, 2011), Nasr (2002), and Gabsi (2024).

[3] The term 'Islamophobia' is contested, as argued by Gabsi (2024). While it is defined as an 'irrational' fear of Islam, Islamophobia may be premeditated and intentional.

The Islamic creed *al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ* (Allegiance and Disassociation) is a complex and significant element of a Muslim's ʿ*aqīda,* 'faith'. It is bound by codes of behaviour and prescribed restrictions. Linguistically, the term *al-Walāʾ* is construed as a Muslim's 'closeness' and allegiance to Muslims who espouse and follow Islam literally. In contrast, the concept of al-Barāʿ deals with a Muslim's attitude towards non-Muslims, a form of rejection of being involved with them, especially when these non-Muslims exhibit enmity towards Islam or Muslims. Putting the two polarized concepts together, the concept of *al-Walāʾwal-Barāʾ* formulates rules of behaviour from the individual to the international relation sphere. Al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ can operate and manifest itself in various ways within the fluid boundaries of social, cultural, economic, and political constraints, where even the concept itself may not be consciously applied by Muslims when defining their relationship with the 'Other'. For instance, in multicultural and multi-faith societies, Muslims would be discouraged from socializing with non-Muslims for fear of being influenced and led astray from the path of Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provided clear guidance on this social constraint when he stated, "Do not accompany except a believer and do not serve your food except to one with *taqwa* [piety and fear of Allah]" (al-Tirmidhī, 1996, p. 201). This guidance, rooted in the teachings of Islam, sets the tone for the concept of al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ and its application in social interactions. Politically, the recent call for *at-taṭbīʿ* (normalisation) of the relationship between the Arab states and the State of Israel has been contentious as it created a schism in most of the Muslim world because of its implication to Israel's occupation of Palestine. However, the concept of al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ did not exclude Muslims from being open-minded to study other religions and cultures, as crystalized in various and earlier studies, such as by al-Birūni's (973-1048) work on the Indian culture in the tenth century or by al-Shahrastani's (1086-1153) *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* (The Book of the Sects and Creeds). Therefore, the interest in knowing the 'Other' to establish a good relationship is in line with the spirit of Islam, consolidated by the Qurʾānic (49: 13) verse:

> "O humankind! Indeed, We have created all of you from a
> single male and female. Moreover, We have made you people
> and tribes, so that you may come to know one another. And,

> indeed, the noblest of you, in the sight of God, is the most
> God-fearing of you. Indeed, God is all-knowing, all-aware."

To fully understand the concept of *al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ*, one needs to locate it within all religions' central themes, namely sharing the world with others, the idea of justice, and, more importantly, how these concepts can be politicized. The first point of 'sharing' the world with others engenders many principles, such as respecting and protecting others. It also includes respect for the elders. The second point discusses the concept of justice, where "the world is affected by us and our efforts and we have expectations in return" (Solomon, 1996, p. 810).

The third point is more complex and dangerous because the politicisation of justice could have serious repercussions if misunderstood or misinterpreted. It is enshrined in what Galtung refers to as 'cultural power' that branches out into 'choosiness with rights and duties', 'myths of past glories', and traumas suffered by the colonized (Galtung, 1995, p. 2-18). For instance, Zionism has argued that the occupation of Palestine is justified by the Biblical concept of the 'Chosen People'. Before outlining the significant misconceptions and misinterpretations about the creed of *al-Walā and al-Barāʾ*, some of the tenets of this significant belief are considered.

A review of the literature on this subject reveals that most works were written in Arabic, which limits a westerner's understanding of this critical concept. One of the best works available on the subject, based on the *Ahl-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿa's* interpretation, is al-Sināni's *The Concise Truth about the Creed of al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ in The Book (Qurʾan) and Sunnah*. Al-Sināni explains that the concept of al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʿ could be precarious if subjected to flaws in reasoning (al-Sināni, 2005). He opines that some impetuous Muslim youth, for instance, may consider all other Muslims as enemies without discrimination. Hence, al-Sināni opposes any *takfīri* (accusation of disbelief in God) attitudes towards Muslims and non-Muslims alike. He also insists that *al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ* have an affective dimension, profoundly connecting with matters of the heart.

When endeavouring to make sense of the concept of *al-Walāʾwal-Barāʾ*, numerous interconnecting areas need to be understood and settled first. One of these areas is the significance of hadith and the Prophet's *seerah* (Prophet Muhammad's conduct) in relation to the teachings of

the Qurʾān when dealing with the 'other'—the non-Muslim. The second area is the importance of language and how inadequate translations, especially of the Qurʾān, can lead to fallacious conclusions. Finally, different interpretations of the Qurʾān can play a double role, even though Islam encourages Muslims to differ on jurisprudence matters, which has brought forth the four different schools (Mālikī, Ḥanafī, Shāfiʿi, Ḥanbalī). On the one hand, some Qurʾānic interpretations are based on the Prophet's tradition that Islam is not a confounded religion and encourage Muslims to choose the easiest path to God. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was reported to have said, "Make things easy and do not make them difficult, cheer the people up by conveying glad tidings to them and do not repulse (them)"(al-Nawawi 1992, p. 637). On the other hand, not having one canonical interpretation can lead, as mentioned earlier, to interpretations contradictory to Islamʾs foundations. Therefore, it is the role of Muslim scholars to question the underpinnings of these claims on the bases of the Qurʾānic sciences such as ʾ*Asbāb an-Nuzūl* (the socio-political and historical reason behind the revelation) and *al-Naskh* (Abrogation).

Al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ in the Qurʾān

Numerous verses deal with the concept of *al-Walāʾ* and *al-Barāʾ*, which is usually interpreted and supported by either the Hadith or by various Muslim scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah. The Qurʾānic interpretation of al-Walā and al-Barāʿ strongly links it with Muslims with ʾ*īmān* (faith). This is mirrored in several verses, such as in the following excerpt, "Let not the believers take the disbelievers as allies instead of the believers" (Qurʾān 3: 28).

Al-Walā towards non-Muslims comes in different forms. Sheikh Abdullah Ben Abd al-ʿAzīz Al-ʿAnqarī explained how someone shows allegiance to non-Muslims (cited in al-Sināni, 2005, p. 7). He indicates that al-Walāʾ to infidels means non-allegiance to Muslims, since "approval of the infidels in their disbelief, and showing approval, and helping them against Muslims, will support their actions and demonstrate obedience and pander to their disbelief" (cited in al-Sināni, 2005, p. 8). The implication is that al-Walāʾ to non-Muslims is a betrayal of one's brothers. However, the Qurʾān (60: 8) clearly states that it is permissible to do good to non-Muslims, as stated in the following verse, "God does not forbid you from honourable relationships with those who have not

fought you over religion, nor expelled you from your dwellings—that you relate kindly and equitably with them."

The Qur'ān specifies the two groups that should not be taken as *ʾawliyā* (allies), namely 'the Jews' and 'the Christians', as stated in the Qur'ān, "O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you—then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people" (Qur'an, 5: 51). Al-Walāʿ wal-Barāʿ also includes family members, fathers, children or brothers, or anyone from the tribe or community, if they are unbelievers. As stated in the Qur'ān, "O you who have believed, do not take your fathers or your brothers as allies if they have preferred disbelief over belief. And whoever does so among you—then it is those who are the wrongdoers" Qur'ān (99: 23).

Al-Sināni extends the circle of exclusion to atheists. He states that one should not use the concept of freedom of expression to shelter these people or exempt them from applying the rules of al-Walā wal-Barāʿ.

Constraints of Al-Walā Wal-Barā

Regarding Muslims' behaviour towards non-practising Muslims, al-Sināni (2005) argues that one should support them on the condition that they are shown the right path through the Islamic practice of *maʿrūf* (favour, kindness, courtesy). Al-Sināni (2005) also laid down some constraints about al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ, in order not to confuse it with the takfiri doctrine. Misunderstanding the precept may inadvertently lead to aggressive behaviours towards non-Muslims.

In effect, there are nine constraints. The first constraint deals with accepting or rejecting the Islamic faith, especially among dhimmi people or those seeking refuge, as summarized in the statement, 'no compulsion in Islam', as supported by the Qur'ānic verse (2: 256). The second constraint is that Islam permits Muslims to have treaties with non-believers if they are beneficial for the Umma of Islam. Then, al-Sināni (2005) warns against Muslim hardliner's literal interpretation of *al-Walā wal-Barāʿ*, where allegiance to non-Muslims–even for the benefit of Muslims–is opposed unconditionally. Muslims are prohibited from assisting another Muslim party if the latter has a treaty with non-Muslims, as stated in the Qur'ān (8: 72):

> "Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated with the Prophet and striven with their wealth and their persons in the path of God, and also those who gave them shelter an help—it is these who are allies of one another. As for those who have believed but did not emigrate, you have no obligation for their protection at all, until they emigrate. But if they seek your help against persecution in religion, then help is incumbent upon you, except against a people wherein there is a covenant between them and yourselves. And God is all-seeing of all that you do."

The fourth constraint indicates that allegiance towards the people of Islam only occurs if they agree to follow the path of Allah and the Prophet (peace be upon him). The fifth constraint permits Muslims to seek a non-believer's protection, mirrored in the Qur'ānic verse (3: 28). This is confirmed by accounts of when the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) sent some of his followers to Negus, the king of Abyssinia, seeking his protection. The Prophet Muhammad knew that the Christian king was a man of God; hence, it became obligatory for Muslims to seek the help of unbelievers if it were the only viable option.

The sixth constraint makes it incumbent on every Muslim to safeguard the life of non-Muslims and pray that they follow the right path. The non-Muslims are treated by either preserving their lives or giving them money to win them over and be protected.

The seventh constraint dictates that Muslims may protect non-Muslims, which does not contradict the principles of al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʿ, as stated in the Qurʾān (9: 6):

> "Now, if anyone of the idolaters seeks your refuse, then grant him refuge, until he hears the words of God in the Quran. Then convey him to his place of security. That is because assuredly they are a people who do not know the essence of faith."

The eighth constraint clarifies that non-Muslims, even those who had been enemies, should be treated fairly and equitably. The Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Ibn Bāz, states that if Muslims are not at war with non-Muslims, Muslims must treat them the Islamic way, with honesty, no treason, no lying, and with fairness (al-Sināni, 2005, p. 35).

The ninth constraint permits a Muslim to have a relationship with a non-believer who is part of the family. A Muslim man can marry a person of the Book (Christian, for example). It is also permissible for Muslims to show affection towards non-Muslims. The often-quoted anecdotal evidence alludes to an event when the Prophet Muhammad cried at his mother's grave, knowing she died as a non-Muslim. Al-Sināni adds that many Muslims misinterpret the creed of al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ with excessive negativity and generalization and that Muslims should not treat non-Muslims inhumanly (al-Sināni, 2005, p. 35).

However, spying on a fellow Muslim to aid the enemy is considered a severe treacherous act in Islam. However, this does *not* justify the killing of the spy. Al-Nawawī mentions that a Muslim aiding the enemy does not make him or her automatically a non-believer. The Qur'ān (33: 57) supports this, "Indeed, those who malign God and His Messenger, God shall curse them in this world and in the Hereafter." Imam al-Shāfiʿi asserts that, "a Muslim should not be killed if proven that he is still a Muslim, only if he kills or commits adultery while married, or if he relinquishes his faith and he is proven to be a non-believer" (al-Sināni, 2005, p. 51).

Misinterpretation of al-Walāʾ and al-Barāʿ

With all these constraints, it is clear that the concept of *al-Walā and al-Barāʿ* is a multi-layered phenomenon. Misinterpretation of *al-Walā wal-Barāʿ* could fuel Islamophobia and encourage acts of terrorism. Muslims whose little understanding of Islam may make them susceptible to treating non-Muslims as enemies indiscriminately, leading to violence and acts of terrorism. Islamophobes may propagate false information about *al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ* to inflame anti-Islamic narrative to serve ideological purposes. For instance, Bukay's (2013) article *Islam's Hatred of the Non-Muslim* is an example of how misunderstanding of the concept can be advocated. Bukay perceives the notion of *al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ* as a carte blanche for Muslims to hate non-Muslims. To bolster his claim that Islam advocates violence towards non-Muslims, Bukay handpicked almost all Qur'ānic injunctions that cover elements of *a priori* violent beliefs. These verses were decontextualized as significant elements of Qur'ānic science, such as ʾasbāb al-nuzūl, an-Naskh, and the Arabic language itself, such as the power of rhetoric were ignored; these are

needed to understand the complexity of a Muslim's relationship with the other.

Bukay's flawed reasoning is semantically defined. In fact, the translation of *al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ* was understood by Bukay's literal translation as 'love and hate for the sake of Allah'. According to Bukay, this creed is interpreted as a license to hate anyone who does not adhere to Islamic teachings, including Muslims. A more informed, realistic, and educated analysis of the concept of *al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ* would define it as 'loyalty and disownment' or 'allegiance and disassociation'; the latter is adopted in this article.

Continuing with Bukay's analysis, one finds that he relied heavily on numerous injunctions from the Qur'ān, quotations from Muslim jurists, including exegetes such as Ibn Taymiyyah, and jihadist websites. Bukay argues that these various sources encourage violence and hatred towards non-Muslims. Bukay's arguments unequivocally contradict the Qur'ānic verses, which allow friendship with non-Muslims and the obligation to protect them. For instance, the Qur'ānic verse (9:6): "If one among the pagans seeks your protection, grant it to him so that he may hear the word of Allah, and then escort him to where he can be secure"; also, in (5: 82), "And you shall assuredly find that the nearest of all them in genuine love to those who believe are those who say: We are, indeed, Christians". This amity between Muslims and non-Muslims is reflected in the institution of marriage, where Muslim men may marry Christian and Jewish women because Islam considers the concept of *al-fiṭra* (human nature), such as love and its vicissitudes when establishing rules for Muslims to observe.

As mentioned earlier, context plays a crucial role in understanding the Qur'ān, or indeed any text. The verses deemed to attack non-believers were usually decontextualized, without ʾasbāb an-nuzūl, and without understanding the concept of an-Naskh. For instance, verse (9: 28) considers the unbelievers as *najas* 'unclean' because it relates to the rules concerning the performance of Ḥajj 'pilgrimage'. Before the revelation of this verse, Hajj was permissible to everyone, including non-Muslims.

Furthermore, Bukay (2013, p.11) criticizes the Sheikh of Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), quoting him as having said that:

> "Whoever loves for the sake of Allah, and hates for the sake
> of Allah, and whoever seals a friendship for His sake, or
> declares an enmity for His sake, will receive the protection
> of Allah. No one may taste true faith except by this even if
> his prayers and fasts are many."

This pronouncement masks a historical fact about the Tartar and Mogul invasions. Regarding the Mogul's invasion and their killing spree, al-Athīr (1149–1210) reports that the Moguls committed some barbaric acts and unspeakable violence, such as opening a pregnant woman's womb to kill the foetus. It was reported that Ibn Taymiyyah fought the Moguls and issued *fatāwī* (jurisprudence rulings) against them, saving the Muslim world and the West (al-Athīr, 2007).

Bukay's term 'hate', as universally acknowledged, denotes a natural and irrational feeling. According to al-Shaʿrāwi, in his commentary on the Qurʾān, the concept of 'feeling' in Islam comprises three stages: ʾidrāk (perception), *wijdān* (inner feeling), and *nuzūʿ* (action). While the first two types cannot be controlled, the third stage can be controlled and subject to Sharia law. In Islam, having feelings or evil thoughts are not considered punishable sins by God. Only an individual's *actions* are considered in Islam (YouTube, 2016).

Another example taken out of context refers to verse (2: 65) where God describes the Jews as 'monkeys', as in "And well ye knew those amongst you who transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath: We said to them: 'Be ye apes, despised and rejected." According to al-Sha'rāwi, the verse does not include all Jews, and the curse resulted from disobeying God's command not to labour (go fishing) on Saturdays. However, the Jews tried to trick God by using traps to catch the fish on the day before the Sabbath (al-Shaʿrāwi, 1991).

A final example deals with verse (8:12): "I shall cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. So strike at the necks of the disbelievers, and strike from them every fingertip!" This verse is understood to be a straight case of a 'call for war'. The verse targets no individuals or groups but explains why these wars are fought. However, Bukay chose not to include the succeeding verse (8:13), stating, "This is because they wilfully rebelled against God and His Messengers."

However, Bukay is not alone in exaggerating the threat of Islam and the relationship of Muslims with the other. The recent 'trend' in

demonising Islam as Muslims is falsely anticipated to take over Europe through what Egyptian-born British author Gisèle Littman, known by her pseudonym Bat Ye'or, projected Europe as 'Eurabia' in her book, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, as Justin Vaisse argues, "Eurabian follies" or the "plain wrong genre" fuels fear that Europe will become unrecognisable in two decades and that "political subservience to a Muslim agenda was turning Europe into an appendage of the Arab world" (Vaïsse, 2010, para. 3). Bat Ye'or's work and many others help spread the Zionist ideology that aims to besmirch Western thinking of Islam.

What is more concerning is that the exaggerated threat of Islam in Europe has been linked to the manipulated notion of *dhimmitude*, where Bat Ye'or (2005, p. 194) defines it as a culture that "stems from a denial of the difference and identity of the 'other'". The concept of *dhimmitude* was used as a system when Muslims conquered lands and forced non-Muslims to pay *al-jizya* (poll tax) for their protection and participation in the socioeconomic life of the countries. However, Bat Ye'or, especially in her book *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilisations Collide,* refutes any suggestions that dhimmi non-Muslims were either protected or had any human rights under Islamic rule. As critically explained by Ahmad (2004, p. 152) in his review, her work "has little to offer a serious scholarship of Islam …and that it has much to offer propagandists who seek rhetorical ammunition to increase, rather than decrease, the hatred and strife in the world." Ahmad's diatribe hinges on many instances from Bat Ye'or work, where she cuts short contextless quotations from the Qurʾān, and gives false and misleading definitions of words such as jihad and *fedeyeen* where the latter is defined by Hans Wehr's dictionary as "someone who sacrifices his life, especially for his country", but Bat Yeo'r twisted the definition to mean "literally a fighter against Christians for the triumph of Islam" (cited in Ahmad, 2004, p. 151).

Sources of Misinterpretation

An-Naskh or 'Abrogation'

One of the reasons for misunderstanding the concept of *al-Walāʿ wal-Barāʿ* emanates from overlooking the concept of *an-Naskh* (abrogation). According to Khan, there is no clear and satisfying definition of the term an-Naskh (Khan, 2012). In fact, it is a confusing concept, despite the

numerous efforts to define it by several works in the Arabic language (Abū ʿUbayd, 1990).

The best definition of an-Naskh was probably provided by Ibn al-Jawzī where he points to the concept's two literal meanings, first, to mean "removal and lifting up" (cited in Khan, 2012, p. 2). For example, the sun removes (carries naskh) the shadow because the shadow recedes with the light of the sunrise. The second literal meaning refers to the act of copying a document in another place. A Qurʾānic example of this import is found in the verse (45:29): "This is our preserved Book of Record! It speaks about all of you with all truth. Indeed, We have registered all that you have ever done in life."

However, the fundamental understanding and application of an-Naskh in Islamic jurisprudence refers to removing an initially obligatory command with or without a replacement alternative. It is formulated as the last resort when various attempts are not easily reconciled while bearing in mind that abrogation is dismissed if the chronological order of the two verses cannot be determined (Halimi, 2017, p. 4). Since abrogation does not occur haphazardly, it needs to satisfy the following five conditions, according to Ibn al-Jawzī: First, no contradiction to be tolerated between the abrogated and the abrogating verses (cited in Khan, 2012, p. 2). Second, the abrogated ruling needs to precede its abrogating ruling, as its identification can be determined either through a divine statement or through historical information. Third, the abrogated ruling is a constituent of Islamic law. Fourth, the abrogating ruling should also be an approved part of Islamic law. Fifth, the reasoning behind an abrogating ruling should be as convincing as the abrogated ruling. However, "in case of the tenuous strength of the abrogating in comparison to the abrogated one the abrogation will not occur" (Khan, 2012, p. 2).

The Qurʾanic verses that argue for abrogation are many and include the following verses (2:106), (2:269), (3:7), (4:160), (5:48), (13:39), (16:101), (17: 86), and (22:53). For instance, verse (2:106) reads, "Whatever decree or verse We abrogate, or cause to be forgotten, We bring in its place one better for the welfare of humanity or one similar to it. Do you not know that God is, indeed, powerful over all thing?"

Abrogation Dilemma

When the Qurʾān was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) over twenty-three years, the Quraysh attempted character assassination by accusing the Prophet of forgery, using statements in the Qurʾān like this one (16:101): "And when We substitute one revelation for another—and Allāh knows best what He reveals in stages—they say: You are but a forger! Nay, but most of them do not understand it." These periodic revelations made the Quraysh believe the Qurʾān was Prophet Muhammad's manufacture; they thought that it would have been revealed all at once had it been God's word.

The Quraysh's questioning of the veracity of the Qurʾān, because it was revealed by piecemeal development, is not that different from the question of abrogation in the Qurʾān, where some Muslim scholars, such as Abū Muslim al-Iṣfahānī (868-934), an exegete and prominent figure during the ʿAbbāsid ruling, refute all arguments against the very existence of abrogation (Halimi, 2017).

One of the problems of understanding abrogation in the Qurʾān emanates from Muslim scholars who fail "to refine the principles of abrogation to give them universal shape. Different scholars developed their own interpretations of abrogation in the Qurʾan, which is why they could not agree unanimously as to which verses are abrogated" (Halimi, 2017, 12). One of the problems, as stated earlier, alludes to al-Zurqani's reckoning that the existence of abrogation in the Qurʾan occurs because certain verses in the Qurʾān can never be practised. It simply means that al-Zurqānī and others from the community of Muslim scholars made their judgments that some verses of the Qurʾān were practically invalid forever.

According to Shāh Waliullāh Dehlawi (1703-1762), a Muslim scholar and reformer, the number of abrogated verses has decreased from twenty-one to only five. This narrowing down of the abrogated verses is based on the interpretation of the verses concerned. According to Dehlawi, the only abrogated verses in the Qurʾān are (2:180), (2:240), (8:65), (33:52), and (58:12). However, some scholars declare that these five verses are non-abrogated (Khan, 2012).

Therefore, no verse of the Qurʾān stands abrogated. In this case, the stance of al-Zurqānī regarding the existence of abrogated verses in

the Qur'an is unsustainable (Khan, 2012).Early Muslim scholars have different attitudes towards abrogation. This disagreement centres on the following scholars, namely Ibn al-Jawzī and al-Suyūṭī, who confirm that Muslim scholars agree about the existence of abrogation, while al-Naḥḥās thinks that it was rejected. Al-Suyūṭī claims that Muslims have a consensus on the abrogation of the Qur'ān. However, this consensus only occurs when all the scholars agree and without any exception. In his book, *ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān*, al-Zarkashī thwarts the idea of abrogation in the Qur'ān (Khan, 2012).

Al-Zarkashī (1344-1392), a Muslim scholar and an expert in Shafiʾi legal jurisprudence, seems to have supported the idea of the Qur'ān being protected from all kinds of contradictions. To substantiate his understanding, he quoted verse (15:9): "Indeed it is We alone who have sent down the Quran instead as a revealed Reminder to humanity of the way of God. And, indeed, We alone shall forever preserve it." However, there is no consensus on abrogation in the Qur'ān among Muslim scholars; scholars are divided into two groups, one supporting it and the other negating it. In addition, the claim of consensus contradicts the reality in history today, and, according to Abu Bakr al-Rāzī (865) or Rhazes, a Muslim philosopher and alchemist, "that a consensus of Muslim scholars is not a sufficient basis to cancel the practical validity of Qur'anic rulings" (Khan, 2012, p. 13).

Abrogation and the Verse of the Sword

The most debated contention that has a profound ramification to al-Walāʾ and al-Barāʾ refers to a Qur'ānic verse (9:5), called 'verse of the sword', where on first reading, and without hinging on the Qur'ānic science of ʾasbāb an-Nuzūl (the socio-political context in which the verse was revealed), and the science of an-Naskh, it was perceived by non-Muslims, especially Islamophobes as an unwavering proof that Islam advocates violence towards non-believers. The verse of the sword, even though the word sword was never mentioned in the entire Qur'ān (9: 5), states that:

> "Then when the sacred months elapse, you may then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, or seize them, or besiege them, or lie in wait for the in every place of ambush. But if they repent and establish the Prayer and give that Zakāt-

> Charity, then let them go their way. Indeed, God is all-forgiving, mercy-giving."

As stated earlier, misinterpretations of this verse, considered one of the many forms of Muslims' attitudes toward non-Muslims, are also found among Muslim scholars and jihadists who have disagreed about the meaning of that verse based on an-Naskh and ʾasbāb an-Nuzūl. Early scholars, such as al- Naḥḥās (949), believe that the verse of the sword has abrogated 113 verses that preach "dialogue, freedom of belief, forgiveness, peace and even patience!" (Auda, 2004, p.196).

However, such an interpretation not only contradicts verses that foster peaceful co-existence between Muslims and non-Muslims, but it is illogical to consider that the whole Qurʾān with its 114 chapters that start with "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful", happens to encourage hostilities toward non-Muslims (Halimi, 2017, p. 12).

Before delving deeper into some of the arguments of *al-Naskh*, one needs to explain the reason behind the revelation of this verse. The verse of the sword indicates that based on the treaty between Muslims and the polytheists and idol worshippers, it is to leave the Muslim lands and if they refuse, then Muslims are instructed to fight them within Islam's ethical parameters. However, the Qurʾān (9: 6) has instructed Muslims to give the polytheists protection upon leaving Muslim lands as indicated in the following verse:

> "Now, if anyone of the idolaters seeks your refuge, then grant him refuge, until he hears the words of God in the Quran. Then convey him to his place of security. That is became assuredly they are a people who do not know the essence of faith."

However, the interpretation of the verse of the sword as abrogating all verses advocating mercy and peace toward non-Muslims was adopted by various scholars and jihadists as a false pretext to kill non-Muslims without reason. They hinge on what is referred to as "liberal abrogation" adopted by Abdul-Salam Faraj (1954-1982) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) to a certain extent. Abdul Salam Faraj, the leader of the Egyptian group *Jamāʿah al-Jihād*, emphatically believes, in his book *al-Jihād al-Farīḍah al- Ghāibah* (*Jihad: The Absent Duty*), that the verse of the sword has "abrogated every treaty, every contract, and term made

between the Prophet and any of the *Mushrikīn* [disbelievers]" (Faraj, 1981,16-17). He opined that the revelation of Qurʾānic Chapter 9 (*al-Tawba*), also called *Al-Barāʾa,* is considered the chronological decider, after which no treaty with non-Muslims should be advocated or considered (Faraj, 1981).

Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966)[4], a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, considered the context in which the sword verse was revealed; however, he still maintained that the rulings to fight non-Muslims are still possible (Halimi, 2017). He argued against having an unconditional peace treaty with non-Muslims, and only peace can be advocated if Muslims are less powerful (Halimi, 2017). Yet, Qutb did not believe it had abrogated hundreds of other verses. In contrast to these earlier claims, contemporary Muslim scholars such as al-Qardhāwī (1926-2022)[5], Zakaria Bashier (1940)[6], and Abu Suleiman Al-Zuhayli[7] believe that jihadists' interpretations contradict Islam's advocating for peace, as there are many instances in the Qurʾān (8: 61) that advocate peace, such as in: "Yet if they incline to peace, then incline to it also—but rely upon God alone." Zakariah Bashier believes that the verse of the sword needs to be understood in its historical context (Bashier, 2006). They also argue that the Qurʾān should be understood entirely, not solely on one verse. Additionally, if one verse could abrogate many others, then one questions the Qurʾān's sanctity and would "diminish the universal message of the Qurʾān on peace, dialogue, forgiveness, patience, and freedom of belief" (Halimi, 2017, p. 8).

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[4] Sayyid Qutb was executed in 1966 for allegedly conspiring to assassinate Gamal Abdel Nasser. Qutb was considered an influential Muslim scholar in the early sixties in Egypt. He wrote numerous books on Islam, such as *fi ḍhilāl al-Qurʾān* (In the shades of the Quran), which he wrote in his prison cell. He was known for his *jāhiliyyah* doctrine (state of ignorance), in which he indicates that anyone who does not adhere to Islamic law, including non-practicing Muslims, is part of the jāhliyyah system. Qutb stands as a prominent Muslim figure; even as Western narratives persist in linking him to fundamentalism and animosity toward the West.

[5] Al-Qaradhāwī (2009).

[6] Dr Zakaria Bashier, an Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies at King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah

[7] Al-Zuhayli is a Syrian professor and Islamic scholar specializing in Islamic law and legal philosophy. See Al-Zuhayli (1998).

Summary

There is a general disagreement among Muslim scholars about abrogation in the Qurʾān. This is primarily due to the lack of understanding of the context by which the Qurʾān formulates its rules. In understanding the Qurʾān, it must be read *in full*, and it states in many parts of the Qurʾān that it is a guide to human beings. And the verses at the beginning of the al-Baqarah remove doubts about the authenticity and practicality of the Qurʾān (2: 2), as God states, "This is the Book of God. There is no doubt therein. It is a guidance for the God-fearing"; hence, it consolidates earlier interpretations of abrogation in the Qurʾān and treats it not 'as a permanent suspension of the Qurʾānic commands" (Khan 2016, p. 12).

Those scholars–the proponents of abrogation–hinge on the Qurʾānic verses and base their judgments equally on earlier interpretations of the Qurʾān. However, not considering factors such as context may increase misunderstanding of the abrogated verses. As Khan states, "In most cases, the Qurʾanic verses used as arguments in favour of abrogation theory are misquoted. They are read either outside the context or are advanced only in part. When reading those verses in full and also in context, a totally different message emerges" (Bashier 2016, p. 18). Hence, as stated earlier, the Qurʾān must be read comprehensively, including the abrogated verse and its preceding and succeeding verses. As "reading the Qurʾān half-heartedly is a kind of manipulation and not treated as an interpretation" Bashier (2016, p. 18). Knowledge of all aspects of the Qurʾān includes text, context, rhetoric, and *al-ʾiʿjāz* (the inimitability of Qurʾānic style) (Bashier, 2016, p. 18).

The Magnificent Complex Nature of the Language of the Qurʾān

The Qurʾān was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in a language that is often referred to as Classical Arabic or Qurʾānic Arabic. The 114 chapters of the Qurʾān are arranged in decreasing order, from the longest (mainly revealed in the Medina period) to the shortest (mainly revealed in the Meccan period), not in chronological order, which can lead to misunderstandings as verses may be taken out of context (Bashier, 2016, p. 18).

Even though the Qurʾān was translated into numerous languages, Sale's (1877) translation remains unequivocally one of the best works to date. The Qurʾānic analysis demands that the reader be equipped with

knowledge of the text and context to acquire a clear understanding of the message.

One of the linguistic aspects of Arabic is rhetoric, which is "the flesh and blood of the Arabic language (Abdel-Raof, 2006, p. 2). Rhetoric is defined as:

> "A linguistic discipline that aims to sharpen up and upgrade the linguistic competence of writing and speaking. It provides us, as language users, with the appropriate and effective stylistic mechanisms required for eloquently forceful discourse. Thus, Arabic rhetoric makes language meet the communicative needs of the language user" (Abdel-Raof, 2006, p. 5).

In addition, rhetoric considers the symbiotic relationship between discourse features such as speech acts and context— working together to achieve a communicative objective. Rhetoric is profoundly related to stylistics, "a bridge between literature and linguistics" (Abdel-Raof, 2006, p. 1). According to Abdel-Raof (2006, p. 1), "Arabic rhetoric is concerned with the truth or falsehood of a given speech act in relation to the external world. Thus, as an approach to communication, Arabic rhetoric is a bridge between logic and language."

Rhetoric in Arabic is comprised of three elements: *ʿilm al-maʿāni* (word order, i.e., semantic syntax), *ʿilm al-bayān* (figures of speech), and *ʿilm al-badīʿ* (embellishments), which are the three constituent disciplines of the Arabic rhetoric (Abdel-Raof, 2006, p. 2). However, what is fundamentally significant about the importance of knowledge of rhetoric is that it serves as:

> "A prerequisite of exegesis without which an exegete cannot be a qualified practitioner. The rhetorical account of allegorical and non-allegorical expressions, especially those related to God's epithets in Qur'anic discourse, has been the major criteria in the theological distinction between some schools of thought such as the Muʿtazilites who reject the assignment of human attributes or elements to Allah and the Ashʿaries who take God's epithets literally and assign them to Allah" (Abdel-Raof, 2006, p. 2).

Moreover, "Arabic Rhetoric provides comprehensive answers to these questions and elucidates the profound relationship between text

and context, on the one hand, and between the communicator and the addressee, on the other" (Abdel-Raof, 2006, p. 4). The work of al-Jāḥiẓ, who introduced the linguistic notion of "the text within context', i.e. how a speech act unfolds in its context, is particularly enlightening. This understanding of context has sparked a new level of linguistic analysis, known in linguistics as sentential pragmatic analyses. Arabic rhetorical studies have strived to establish a thesis that there is no aesthetic value and no effective discourse without the harmony between the lexical item and its signification, i.e. between the form and content, between the body and the soul (Abdel-Raof, 2006, p. 4).

Therefore, this précis about some of the features of the Arabic language in the Qur'ān can direct one's thinking to two contentious arguments. First, translating the Qur'ān into other languages can potentially diminish its eloquence and power. Second, a lack of knowledge of all aspects of Arabic grammar and rhetoric can lead the reader to misinterpret the Qur'ān and consequently formulate fallacies, which could lead to Islamophobia. Hence, the first point of Qur'ān translation is our immediate concern.

Lost in Translation: The Dilemma of Qur'ānic Translation

As mentioned earlier, there exist reliable translations of the Qur'ān. One includes earlier translations such as George Sale's *The Koran*, and, more recently, the translations of Abdel Haleem (2001) and Hammad (2009). The Muslim scholars' stance towards the translatability of the Qur'ān is marred with disagreement. Those who oppose the translation of the Qur'ān argue that the Qur'ān was revealed to Prophet Muhammad in Arabic and, therefore, translations are considered ill-equipped to rival the Arabic language's eloquence and beauty. For instance, Suleiman mentions that, "the Qur'ān is Arabic and its secret lies in the Arabic language and Allah made sure it was revealed in Arabic" (ʿAref, 2005, p. 5). The Qur'ān is not translatable "because of the choice of beautiful words that not a single word of the Quran can be replaced with a synonym or an analogy without diminishing the beauty of its diction or the specific nature of its meaning" (cited in Kermani, 2018, p. 114).

These scholars hinge their arguments on the Qur'ānic verse in which Allah challenges any reader, particularly about the unrivalled eloquence of the Meccan poets, to devise a similar verse. Furthermore, the scholars who advocate against the translation of the Qur'ān base their arguments

on the difficulties and subtleties of the Arabic language and the link between form and meaning in the Qur'ānic text. The meaning of the Qur'ān is the outcome of the intimacy between parts of speech and the well-defined word order in phrasal and sentential constructions by creating a delicate balance between lyrical beauty and clarity of message. Changes to word order may cause a change of meaning in the translation process and potential translation errors. Kermani contends that the Qur'ānic vivid and acoustic nature is 'untranslatable', as the sonorous nature of the text 'produces meanings and emotions by acoustic means, by rhythmic sequences and by the assonance, consonance, euphony, paronomasia, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and phonetic parallelism of its acoustic figures" (Kermani, 2018, p. 118).

Indeed, 'Aref pinpoints errors in the Qur'ān from both English and French translations ('Aref, 2005). Some of the errors include the following noteworthy examples. For instance, 'repetition' as an accepted and valid rhetorical style in Arabic can be regarded as tautology in other languages. In Dawood's commentary on the repetitious verse in the chapter Al-Rahmān, he likened it to a style taken from the repetition of the Old Testament and ignores that repetition is part of rhetoric in Arabic ('Aref, 2005). A significant translation error appears in Dawood›s interpretation of the verse (7:158). Where Dawood writes, "Say to your people: I am sent forth to you all by Allah," he fundamentally misrepresents the text's meaning (ʿAref, 2005, p. 24). As ʿAref explains (2005, p. 23), this verse declares that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent as a messenger to all of humanity, establishing Islam's universal message. By inserting the phrase 'to your people', Dawood›s translation erroneously suggests that Muhammad›s prophetic mission was limited to *his* immediate community rather than the entire human race.

Other general and noticeable errors relate to grammar. It includes making the definite indefinite, the passive form of the verb into active or active into passive, singular vs. plural, nouns into verbs, or verbs into nouns. All of these–without a doubt– may distort the intended meaning of the Qur'ān (ʿAref, 2005). The author's dismay about most of the translated works of the Qurʾān is vehemently expressed when stating, "I do not find among all these translations a single one that I trust, rely upon, and feel reassured" (ʿAref, 2005, p. 9). Furthermore, 'Aref made a scathing attack on Dawood's translation because Dawood wrongly

assumed that the Prophet was influenced by the earlier scriptures of Christianity and Judaism.

Remarkably, in an interview with Professor Muhammed Abdel Haleem, a professor of Islamic studies at SOAS in London, about his recent translation of the Qurʾān, he outlines three problematic areas: *literalism* and *semantics* (ABC Radio National 2011, para. 15). Literalism constitutes a significant problem for most translators. In some translations, the word order was retained in English, resulting in ambiguous or worse, unintended meanings and messages. The second problem lies in semantics, which is when the translator keeps translating the same word while disregarding context. Abdel Haleem gives an instance of translating the word 'spring' where some translators provide matching translation regardless of where it is found in the Qurʾān for consistency. Abdel Haleem gave another example regarding the word ʾawliyāʾ cited in the Qurʾānic verse (5:51), "you who believe do not take the Jews and Christians as ʾawliyāʿ", where most translators have interpreted ʿawliyāʿ to mean 'friends'. In Abdel Haleem's view, the literal meaning of ʿawliyāʿ to mean 'friends' is unacceptable because contextually it means "to ally yourself", which is 'a very strange thing to say" (ABC Radio National, 2011, para. 15). The context dealt with hypocrites who posed a threat during the propagation of Islam.

One of the other significant elements in the Qurʾān is when it deals with the question of gender. According to Abdel Haleem, "reading the Qurʾān, the Qurʾān translation, it is easy to get the impression that it is mostly about men, when in fact it is not so" (ABC Radio National 2011, para. 21). He explains that the use of the generic Arabic relative pronoun *man* to mean 'who' or whoever' when starting a sentence in Arabic, "everything after that has to be singular masculine, simply because this is the way the Arab language works" (ABC Radio National 2011, para. 15). Hence, Abdel Haleem chose 'whomever' as an alternative translation to include men and women dictated by Qurʾānic contexts.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have outlined some of the fundamentals of the Islamic creed *Al-Walāʿ wal-Barāʾ*. This significant creed dictates through detailed constraints how a Muslim defines his/her/their relationship with other fellow Muslims and non-Muslims. As discussed in this paper, misunderstanding this concept may be pernicious, as Muslims could

interpret it as a carte blanche to attack any non-Muslim, or it can be used as a pretext to fuel the Islamophobic narrative.

In line with the Prophetic tradition of spreading peace among Muslims and non-Muslims, *Al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ* serves as an essential compass for Muslims navigating the complexities of the 21st century and beyond. At the same time, this principle takes on renewed significance for Muslim communities and Islamophobia monitoring observatories to track anti-Muslim sentiments, especially within media and academic spheres where some actors manipulate Al-Walāʾ wal-Barāʾ to tarnish Islam's reputation and perpetuate their ideological agendas.

It is also essential to adopt a human rights-based approach, as humans' propensities to love, hate, accept, or reject form part of the human psychological and metaphysical condition on both the individual and collective levels. The rules or codes of exclusion will continue to exist, but the form of execution has to concord at least minimally with the fundamental tenets of human rights. What should be perceived as unaccommodating is the dissemination of violent ideologies based on ignorance or belligerence. The dialectical interpretations of events and discourses will continue, as often demonstrated in history. However, the division of the polarised 'us' versus 'them' will continue to occupy a central position on humanity's continuum of consciousness. Humans display various behavioural trajectories, and if these behaviours are defined by context without ethnocentrism or provincialism, there could be a good chance for humans to work together in seeking what binds them rather than what separates them.

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Theorising Violent Extremisms: Anthropological and Psychoanalytic Perspectives

Mark Woodward[*]
Rohani Mohamed[**]

Abstract: Muslim Violent Extremism (MVE) and Far-Right Extremism (FRE) are two sides of the same coin. Despite profound ideological differences they share sociological and psychological features. This article relies on anthropological, linguistic, psychological and psychoanalytic theory to explain the ways in which, despite irreconcilable semantics, they share a common syntactic structure. It is based on ethnographic research in Indonesia, Nigeria and the United Kingdom and the analysis of extremist texts. Muslim VE and FRE movements are what Wallace (1956) described as revitalisation movements bent on destroying the existing social order and replacing it with a utopia based on the vision of a charismatic leader. Both exhibit characteristics described by Freud (1922), including narcissistic leaders who Nietzsche (1883) described as the *ubermench* (superman). Together they form what Levi Strauss (1955) described as a transformation group.

Keywords: Muslim Violent Extremists (MVE), Far-Right Extremism (FRE), revitalisation movement, anthropology, psychoanalysis.

Abstrak: Ekstremis Ganas Muslim dan Ekstremis Paling Kanan adalah dua masalah yang agak serupa. Walaupun terdapat perbezaan ideologi mendalam, mereka mempunyai ciri-ciri sosiologi dan psikologi yang sama. Artikel ini berdasarkan teori anthropologi, linguistik, psikologi dan psikoanalysis untuk menerangkan walaupun kedua-dua gerakan ini tidak mempunyai semantik

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[*] Professor, Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict, Arizona State University. Email: MARK.WOODWARD@asu.edu.
[**]CEO and Founder, Alertist, Singapore. Email: miss.hani.mohamed@gmail.com

yang selaras, mereka berkongsi struktur sintaksis yang sama. Ia berdasarkan penyelidikan etnografi di Indonesia, Nigeria dan United Kingdom dan analisis teks ekstremis. Ekstremis Ganas Muslim dan Ekstremis Paling Kanan diterangkan Wallace (1956) sebagai gerakan revitalisasi yang bertujuan untuk memusnahkan sistem sosial yang ada dan membina utopia berdasarkan visi pemimpin berkarisma. Kedua-duanya mempamerkan ciri-ciri digambarkan Freud (1922) termasuk pemimpin narsisistik yang digambarkan Nietzche (1883) sebagai *ubermench* (superman). Mereka membentuk sesuatu yang Levi Strauss (1955) gambarkan sebagai kelompok transformasi. Hakikat bahawa seseeorang boleh mengalihkan kesetiaan di antara dua jenis ektremisme dan bagaimana kedua-dua gerakan Ekstremis Ganas Muslim dan Ekstremis Paling Kanan menggunakan pandemik COVID-19 dengan cara yang sama mendukung tafsiran ini.

Kata kunci: Ekstremis Ganas Muslim, Ekstremis Paling Kanan, gerakan revitalisasi, anthropologi, psikoanalisis.

Introduction

Muslim Violent Extremist (MVE) and Far-Right Extremist (FRE) movements are often described as "two sides of the same coin" (Ebner 2017). This paper argues that despite mutually exclusive semantic features, both share salient syntactic structures. It develops a theoretical framework for understanding relationships between them and the visceral hatred each has for the other (Berger 2017) that moves beyond exiting models by rooting the analysis of extremism in social science and psychoanalytic theory.

Theoretical Perspectives

Studies of VE movements are empirically rich but under theorised. There is also a dearth of theoretical analyses of relationships between Muslim and Far-Right extremisms (Borum 2011). Our framework is trans-disciplinary and comparative. It builds on the linguistic distinction between syntax and semantics, Freud's (1922, 1930) analysis of groups and leadership, Durkheim's (1897) notion of alienation, Weber's (1922) concept of charisma, Levi Strauss's (1969a) structural analysis of mythology and studies of nativistic and revitalisation movements (Linton and Hallowell 1943, Wallace 1956) augmented by insights from studies of the anthropology (Tambiah 1998) and psychology (Bernard, Ottenberg, & Redl 1965) of violence. The central theses of

this paper are: First, that FRE and MVE are Revitalisation Movements. The second is that Levi Strauss's concept of transformation groups is the key to understanding relationships between them and the seemingly anomalous fact that some FREs have become Muslims and conversely that some Muslim extremists have become Christians.

Syntax and Semantics

Semantics and Syntax are two of the fundamental aspects of language (Chomsky 1998). Semantics is concerned with meaning and representation. Syntax referrers to the algebraic structure of sentences. The distinction is, however, used heuristically across the social sciences to distinguish between culturally specific meaning systems and structural principles that obtain across cultures (Williams 2015). Both types of analysis are essential for understanding extremism and the forms it takes in cultural and religious contexts.

The Semantics of Extremism

The semantics of Far-Right and Muslim extremism make incompatible truth claims. They are, however, locked in a co-dependent relationship responding to and feeding on each other. Both are semantic systems that reference larger meaningful orders that they interpret in ways that make violence virtuous. At a deeper level, they share logical principles establishing them as what Lévi-Strauss (1955) describes as a transformation group.

Muslim Violent Extremism

Most, but by no means all, MVE ideologies are rooted in the Wahhabi variant of Salafism (Woodward et al 2013). Salafism is a revivalist current in Sunni Islam rooted in the teachings of the 14th century Hanbalite jurist *ibn Taymiyyah to which* Wahhabism adds those of the 18th century Arabian jurist Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab. Salafis seek to establish what they believe to be the Islam of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions as social/political realities. Salafism requires literal readings of the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, an anthropomorphic interpretation of the core Islamic doctrine of *tawhid* (the unity Allah) and stricter enforcement of criminal provisions of *Shari'ah* than is customary in other Muslim societies (Cook 2001). Salafis condemn Sufism (Islamic mysticism) and popular Muslim piety as *bidah* (religious innovation) and/or *shirk* (polytheism) (Umar & Woodward 2019).

The assertion that Salafism, and Islam more generally, are inherently violent is a common theme in Far-Right polemics (Spencer 2018). It is, of course, not correct. Salafis differ substantially concerning strategies for obtaining their goals. Quietist flees from what they consider to be a hopelessly defiled world. More extreme Salafis struggle against it. Still others seek to transform it. Saudi state Wahhabism teaches that governments that "maintain the prayers" must be obeyed (De Long-Bas 2004). Domesticated Salafis, including the Indonesian Muhammadiyah movement, the Nigerian Izala and Salafi oriented mosques in northeast London, reject violence in favour teaching and preaching (Woodward et al 2010). Others Salafis live in pious isolation. In Indonesia, some have settled in remote rural areas. In urban areas in Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria and the United Kingdom there are Salafis who live in social isolation avoiding nonessential interaction with people outside their communities. There is a related distinction between movements including ISIS and Boko Haram that seek to establish a Caliphate through violent means (Hellmich 2008) and others like Hizbut Tahrir seeking this goal through non-violent means (Iqbal 2016).

Takfir, declaring professed Muslims to be *kafir* (unbelievers), is one of the defining characteristics of Wahhabism. It is an extreme form of religious chauvinism that excludes other Sunnis, Shia, Ahmadiyah and others from the Muslim *ummah* (community). There is a critical distinction between ordinary *kafir* and *kafir harbi*. Ordinary *kafir* have heard, but reject, the Islamic message. Technically speaking the term cannot be used for Christians and Jews who are people of the book (*'Ahl al-Kitāb*) who have received revelation (Vajda 2102). Salafis often claim that contemporary Christians and Jews are *kafir* because they have departed from the teachings originally revealed to them just as other self-professed Muslims are *kafir* because they have departed from the original teachings of Islam. *Kafir harbi* are enemies of Islam against whom violence is permissible (Malik 2017). Salafi-Jihadis justify violence by declaring all of their opponents to be *kafir harbi*.

Historically, Wahhabism has been associated with violent conquest and purification by force (Algar 2002; Habib 1978). Contemporary Salafi-Jihadism emerged from interaction of elements of the Muslim Brotherhood inspired by Sayyid Qutub who advocated armed struggle against "apostate" regimes and the Saudi *al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya* (Islamic awakening) movement according to which the Saudi state has departed

from the true Salafi path (Lecroix 2011). This variant of Wahhabism is the religious foundation for violent extremist groups including Al Qaeda, ISIS the West African Boko Haram and the Southeast Asian Jemaah Islamiyah (Maher 2016; Solahudin 2011; Woodward & Umar 2019). Some Saudi clerics openly acknowledge this relationship. Sheikh Adel al-Kalbani, former Grand Imam of Masjid al-Haram, stated that: "We follow the same thought [as ISIS] but apply it in a refined way. They draw their ideas from what is written in our own books, from our own principles. We do not criticise the thought on which it (ISIS) is based" (Middle East Eye 2016).

While details vary considerably and are often bitterly contested, Salafi-Jihadi ideologies are based on shared existential postulates (Hasan 2007; Hellmich 2008; Mc Auley 2005; Wiktorowicz 2006):

• Islam is threatened by kafir harbi invaders including Crusaders and Zionists.
• Apostate rulers of Muslim countries and their supporters are equally threatening.
• Violent jihad is a personal obligation for all Muslims.
• Non-combatants are legitimate targets because they directly or indirectly support the invaders.

Far-Right Extremism (FRE)

European, North American and Australian FRE pose terrorist threats that are as great as Salafi-Wahhabi extremism (Jones 2018). FRE is more complex than Muslim Violent Extremism because it does not have a single religious reference point. It is a loose amalgamation of racist, white supremacist, neo-Nazi, anti-immigrant and ethno-nationalist groups and ideologies (Muddle 2019). FRE ideologies are populist, xenophobic and authoritarian (Harrison & Bruter 2011). The exception is the Christian Identity movement whose religious reference point is idiosyncratic Biblical exegesis according to which the only true Christians are those of Northern European descent and that others, including non-white Christians, are sub-human "mud people" (Barkun 1994). There are also significant differences between European and American FRE ideologies. Many American variants, including the Klu Klux Klan, are overtly racist and anti-Catholic (Chalmers 1987). European variants including the English Defense League, the French

National Rally and the Serbian Nationalist party are ethno-nationalism and virulently anti-Muslim. Islamophobia is more prevalent in Europe than in the United States because of the larger percentage of Muslim immigrants. In the United States, anti-immigrant sentiments focus primarily on Latin Americans, who, because they are Christians cannot be targeted on the basis of religion alone except by Protestant Christian extremists including the Klu Klux Klan who consider Roman Catholics to be apostates.

Far-Right Extremists are divided about Jews. Neo-Nazis in Europe and the United States are virulently anti-Semitic, some to the extent that they reject Christianity because of its Judaic origins (Lee 2015). Others are Christian Zionists. This is an apocalyptic version of Christianity according to which Jesus will return only when a Greater Israel is established and Biblical Jewish rituals are conducted in a restored temple in Jerusalem. Christian Zionists strongly support Israel but strongly oppose Judaism as a religion. For them, the reestablishment of "Biblical Israel" is not an end unto itself, but only a necessary condition for the second coming of Christ (Adrovandi 2104).

Great Replacement theory is an overarching theme uniting divergent Far-Right ideologies and movements (Cosentino 2020, Hutchinson 2019). It posits that Euro-American "white civilization" is at risk of being overwhelmed by invasions, floods, tsunami, storms, etc. of immigrants variously described as rapists, drug dealers and vermin (Polakow-Suransky & Wildman 2019; Schwartzburg 2019). Replacement Theory originated in France in the 1970s and has recently been popularised in works by the French white nationalist Renaud Camus (2018) whose works circulate widely on social media. It inspired the 2019 Far-Right terrorist attacks in Christchurch New Zealand and El Paso Texas in the United States. The New Zealand terrorist discussed it extensively in his manifesto. The El Paso terrorist acknowledged his debt to his New Zealand compatriot in his own manifesto (Crusisus 2019).

European and American versions of Great Replacement theory differ primarily with respect to the immigrant populations they fear and detest. In the United States Latin Americans are the targets of choice. European Replacement theories combine anti-immigrant sentiments with the idea that there is an eternal war between Christianity and Islam that continues the struggle between the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires,

the Crusades and later conflicts between the Hapsburgs and Ottomans in Southeastern Europe. The New Zealand terrorist was, for example, particularly concerned with driving Turkish "invaders" from Europe and destroying mosques in European Turkey. Variants of this ideology were spread throughout Europe by Christian volunteers who fought on the Serbian side in the Balkan wars of the 1990s in much the same way that Salafi-Jihadism was spread in Muslim countries by veterans of the Afghanistan wars (Bangstasd 2014; McCants 2015). In the United States, anti-immigrant sentiment is often combined with racism and calls for "race war" targeting African Americans. These sentiments are combined in the racist apocalyptic novel *The Turner Diaries* that has been described as the "White Nationalist Bible". It is for FRE what Sayyid Qutub's *Milestones* is for Muslim VE.

Far-Right Extremist ideologies are based on shared existential postulates:

- White civilisation is threatened by invaders.
- Political elites are equally threatening because they support invaders.
- Violent resistance is necessary.
- Non-combatants are legitimate targets because they support the invaders.

Structural Patterns in Violent Extremist Ideologies

FRE and Muslim VE ideologies share logical structures and processual logics mandating violence. The two sets of existential postulates collapse onto a pair of binary oppositions: in group/outsiders and purity/danger characteristic of what Levi Struss (1955, p. 431) describes as the language of mythology. The purity/danger opposition is central to Douglas's (1966) analysis of boundary maintenance symbolism. The interaction of these distinctions yields a four-celled classification system:

Own Group Pure is self-referential. It is where social groups locate themselves. For Muslim VE, it is "pure" Islam. For FRE it is European White Civilisation. Own Group Danger are those who support invaders and religious others including "heretics" and "apostates". FRE and Muslim VE often place their country's political elites in this category. Pure Others are those who remain in their own countries or are contained

within internal boundaries. For globally focused Muslim VE and FRE there are no pure others. Dangerous "Others" are invaders or domestic enemy others who threaten the pure own group.

Own Group Purity	**Own Group Danger**
Pure Others	**Dangerous Others**

In Douglas's terms, they are "dirt" and are referred to by a wide variety of hate speech terms with dehumanising and demonising connotations. "Dirt" must be kept form impinging on the boundaries of pure space and expunged, contained or destroyed when it does. The likelihood of inter-group conflict and terrorist attacks grows when the Other is seen as an existential threat to own group survival.

The processual logic leading from classification to violence is as follows.

1. The Other is inherently evil.
2. The Other cannot or will not change.
3. This evil poses an existential threat.
4. Therefore, it must be contained, expelled or destroyed.
5. Destruction/expulsion/containment of dangerous others is virtuous.

A structurally similar model leads from classification to quietism.

1. The Other in inherently evil.
2. The Other cannot or will not change.

3.   This evil poses an existential threat.

4.   Therefore, we must flee from evil.

5.   Pious isolation is virtuous.

Conflicts stemming this logic are what Juergensmeyer (2003) calls "cosmic war." They are zero-sum games in which compromise is impossible. Azar (1990) observes that ideologies and propaganda that include hate speech leading people to attribute the "worst possible motives" to others. This logic produces a climate of fear in which people who would not engage in physical violence condone it and participate in hate speech, conventional and social media rumour mongering, vandalism of culturally and religiously important sites and other forms of symbolic violence. When dangerous others cannot be destroyed or expelled, they must be contained, becoming what Simmel (1921) describes as "strangers," groups who are defined as elements of society but not of the dominant culture. Containing others with in bounded spaces can be formal or informal ghettoization. The Bantustan (homelands) of apartheid era South Africa and Indian Reservations in the United States are examples of physical containment. The boundaries can also be social and ritual as in the case with Hindu *Dalit* (untouchables) in India and was during Jim Crow times in the American South when black Americans were socially as well as physically segregated and in Israel where Palestinian Muslims have been pushed into smaller and smaller territories. In every case containment produces a social system defined on the basis of intractable hostility with sporadic outbreaks of low-level violence.

The Syntax of Violent Extremism

Insights from Freud's (1921) *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* concerning the psycho-dynamics of group formation and leadership are valuable for understanding extremist groups, why otherwise reasonable people are attracted to them and believe firmly in the irrational claims they make about outsiders. Adorno's (1951) Freudian analysis of fascist propaganda provides additional insight into the formation and maintenance of extremist movements. One need not subscribe to Freud's general theory concerning the primacy of sexuality and early childhood experiences as drivers for the development of personality and culture to appreciate the importance of these insights and apply them in contexts he did not anticipate. Wallace's (1956)

analysis of revitalisation movements is a case in point. It is based on ethnographic research conducted in small scale societies in colonial conditions. He observed they are also applicable to the analysis of some radical and revolutionary movements in more complex societies (Wallace 1990). He also acknowledges the influence of Freud (1921) and Weber (1922) in his discussion of leadership in these movements.

The Psycho-social Construction of Extremist Identities

Adorno (1951) showed that Freud's analysis of leadership and group formation is useful in the analysis of fascism and other modes of authoritarianism. It is equally useful for understanding contemporary Islamist and Far-Right Extremism. In his analysis of what was at the time called group psychology, Freud stressed the importance *libido* or the "pleasure principle," narcissism and the contrast between beloved in-group and despised out-group. His analyses anticipated later developments in cultural anthropology and the psychology of violence. Many of its shortcomings derive from his limited knowledge of cultures other than those of Western Europe. It is, none the less insightful, especially when augmented with findings from more recent research.

The questions Freud raised about leadership and social solidarity remain fundamental issues in the social sciences. Freud addressed them from the perspective of interacting egos. He was particularly concerned with what he termed sociologically "unnatural" groups not defined on the basis of ethnicity, kinship or class. He includes religions and armies in this category to which we add social movements, political parties and extremist groups.

Groups

Freud (1922) sought to determine the psychological basis for hierarchical and horizontal social solidarity. He defined a group as:

> "A number of individuals who have substituted one and the same object for their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego" (Freud 1922, p. 80).

He considered identification, a process that blurs the boundary between self and other, to be the basic source of group solidarity. It is a narcissistic process of "devouring" that makes the beloved object part of oneself. It

transforms *libido* into hierarchical leader/follower bonds and establishes egalitarian bonds between followers.

> "In many forms of love choice, the object serves as a substitute for some unattainable ego ideal of our own. We love it on account of the type of perfection which we have striven to reach for own our ego and which we should now like to produce in a roundabout way as a means of satisfying our narcissism" (Freud 1922, p. 74).

These narcissistic tendencies also contribute to group solidarity.

> "... intolerance vanishes, temporarily or permanently as the result of the formation of a group, or in a group. So long as group formation is present or so far as it extends individuals behave as though they were uniform, tolerate other people's peculiarities, put themselves on an equal level with them and have no feeling of aversion towards them. Such a limitation of narcissism can, according to our theoretical views, only be produced by one factor, a libidinal tie with other people" (Freud 1922, p. 56).

Here, Freud anticipated what Turner (1969) calls "communitas" and what Swann and his colleagues (2012) refer to as "identity fusion". Communitas is a mode of social solidarity Turner (1969, pp. 360-361) described as being marked by the abrogation of role differentiation. Freud (1922, p. 56) described this condition as "the brotherhood of the horde," writing that: "No one must put himself forward, everyone must be the same and have the same." Freud overestimated the extent of communitas in social groups. Turner shows that while it is a universal component of rites of passage, it is rarely successfully institutionalized. Extremist leaders use appeals to this concept to build cohesion. For example, the Indonesian Islamist movement, Negara Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic State) requires recruits to relinquish ties with relatives and friends unwilling to join the group. In-group relations are defined by hatred of outsiders and devotion to leaders in ways that Freud suggests. There is a sense of unity and equality transcending differences other than those defining the group. Grimland, Apter and Kerkhof (2006) describe similar tendencies among Palestinian youth training for martyrdom operations.

Identification is what Swann (2012) refers to as identity fusion, a psychological process through which personal and collective identities

are merged. They define it as "a visceral sense of "oneness" with a social group that motivates personally costly, pro-group behaviors." It enhances collective solidarity and motivates pro-group action. Our ethnographic studies in Indonesia and the United Kingdom point to similar conclusions. In both cases young people with extremist orientations abandon normal complex personal and social identities and define themselves exclusive as Muslim. In the UK, there is a sharp contrast between young people who define themselves as British Muslims, ethno-British (Bengali, Punjabi, Arab etc.) and others who reject ethnic identities and think of themselves as "just Muslim". Just Muslim is often synonymous with Salafi. Wilson (2002) notes similar tendencies in the American neo-Nazi terrorist group The Base.

Leadership

Freud stressed identification with leaders as the critical component of group formation. Swann emphasises core group values. These are complimentary perspectives. Both are operative in extremist groups. Wahhabi-Salafi extremists stress loyalty to both *jihadist* ideologies and leaders such as Osama bin Laden, ISIS Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and Abu Bakr Ba'asyir of the Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah. The Nigerian Boko Haram alternates between loyalty to leaders and ideologies. Oaths of allegiance bind followers directly to local leaders and symbolically to more distant ones. Far-Right extremists are more inclined to locate solidarity in values and ideologies such as the "Great Replacement" theory rather than in devotion to charismatic leaders. Adolf Hitler. Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik and others are admired, but are not seen as leaders requiring obedience (Berntzen & Sandberg 2014). This ideological focus may be the consequence of the Far-Right focus on country specific ethno-nationalism that hinders the emergence of trans-national charismatic leaders.

Extremist movements are rooted in charismatic leadership and/or ideologies with similar appeals. Weber's (1921) analysis of charisma is based on the assumption that leaders present themselves as being endowed with supernatural or religious powers. Freud's analysis is cast in more general terms that allows for consideration of relationships between secular and religious cases. He also draws on Nietzsche's (1883) concept of the secular *Ubermench* or Superman, the ultimate narcissist who demands love, but gives none in return. Similarly, Wallace, who

builds on Freud's analysis of leadership, does not distinguish between religious and secular leaders arguing that both have visions of new social formations that resonate with broadly based anxiety, alienation and discontent. Religious and secular extremist leaders share features with Freud's "loving" and "authoritarian" primal fathers.

> "The individual gives up his one ego ideal and substitutes it for the group ideal as embodied in the leader".

> "Here at the beginning of the history of mankind was the Superman who Nietzsche only expected from the future. Even today the members of the group stand in need of the illusion that they are equally loved by their leader but the leader himself need love no one else, he may be of a masterly nature, absolutely narcissistic, but self-confident and independent" (1922, pp. 102-103).

The individual narcissism of followers is merged with the overpowering narcissism of the leader resulting in a powerful form of collective narcissism. Adorno (1951, p. 127) notes that this union is achieved most thoroughly when leaders and followers share symbolically salient characteristics. The ideal extremist leader is the "great little man" who rises from but is above the common people. Muslim and Far-Right extremist leaders both fit this pattern. None, including bin Laden, al-Baghdadi and Breivik were intellectual giants and were unknown prior to their emergence as terrorists. The New Zealand terrorist stated this point explicitly in his manifesto *From Where Great Leaders Arise*.

> "The men and women needed by a society in crisis are created by a greater societal group thought, they arise from their environment, from their folk, springing forth from the people as if they were waiting for the moment. They are not so much born as made to be what is needed of them by the greater group thought occurring around them. These leaders will be paragon examples of your people, virtuous, incorruptible, speaking truth to power and a truth that resonates with your very soul. When you see them; when you hear them; you will know them as they are you and yours." (2019, p.23)

This declaration reverses the causal arrow in Freud's equation. Here the collective ego/identity/consciousness of the extremist group is projected onto a leader who has yet to emerge. The statement "resonates with your soul" and the terrorist's concluding statement are, however, clear

examples of the leader/follower relationship Freud described. Reversing the directionality of the transformative process does not alter the nature of the emergent identity relationship.

Freud stressed the importance of an actual leader, but allowed for the possibility that a symbolic mandatory can take her/his place. Expanding on this idea, it is reasonable to suggest that a political party, movement or ideology may be the focus of identification. In the case of contemporary extremisms, this accounts for what are commonly known as "lone wolves," those Reicher, Haslam and Bavel (2019a) term "engaged followers" who perpetrate acts of violence as "leaderless resistance" independent of external command and control systems. What they (2019b) refer to as "toxic identity leadership," examples of which include Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and Anders Breivik, become the focus of identity fusion even though they lack control of or direct contact with their followers. Mediated leader/follower relations have facilitated the growth of extremist movements since Adolf Hitler and his propaganda minister Josef Goebbels used radio to broadcast hate speech in the 1930s (Somerville 2012). Social media serves a similar purpose for contemporary extremists.

The Indonesian Muslim VE leader Abu Bakr Ba'asyir and his followers are examples. Many of Ba'asyir's followers adore him, refer to him lovingly as "Ustad Abu", and say that they would obey his every command even though he chastises them for not being "Islamic enough". He combines images of Freud's loving father and threatening authority figure in a single public persona. He swore an oath of allegiance to al-Baghdadi and ISIS in 2014, but his loyalty was more symbolic than operational. For his followers, the ISIS Calif was a distant, symbolic leader. Their identification with him was transitive. They embraced al-Baghdadi because Ba'asyir did.

Religious and Ethnic Conflict

Freud suggests that collective narcissism is the root of intergroup conflict. Religions are exceptional cases because doctrines of universal love, conflict with narcissistic hostility. However, he also observed that:

> "…a religion, even if it calls itself a religion of love, must be hard and unloving to those who do not belong to it. Fundamentally indeed, every religion in this way is a religion of love for all those whom it embraces while cruelty

and intolerance towards those who do not belong to it are natural tendencies" (1922, p. 50)

"In the undisguised antipathies and aversions which people feel towards strangers with whom they have to do, we may recognize the expression of self-love – of narcissism. This self-love works for the self-assertion of the individual and behaves as though the occurrence of any divergence from his own particular line of development involved a criticism of them and a demand for their alteration" (Freud 1922, p. 55).

Adorno (1951, p. 55) expands on this argument, asserting that recognition of difference and boundaries can lead to rage and violence against the other and persistent refusal to engage in critical self-reflection. In terms of the model described above those classified as dangerous become victims of violence while criticism of the pure own group; its ideology and leaders are impossible.

Freud's unstated conclusion was that inter-group conflict is inevitable. He was overly pessimistic because he did not recognize the existence or significance of identity and group hierarchies that offer the potential for finding common ground. Far-Right and Muslim extremisms are rooted in religion and ethnicity. Both are critical components of hierarchically structured personal and collective identities and can be used as the basis for group formation in the ways that Freud described. Contemporary research has shown that ethnic and religious boundaries are not as rigid as he thought. Ethnic and religious categories are reference systems for organising difference. They are malleable, with symbolic boundaries reflecting shifting power relations (Lehman 1967, Barth 1969). Categorical systems generally take the form of nested hierarchies with ever more inclusive categories at higher nodes. These hierarchies as well as definitions of their constituent elements are situational, being subject to restructuring in variant interactional, social and political contexts (Keyes 1981). These lexical categories do not necessarily correspond with the distribution of cultural and religious traits, beliefs and practices. Rather, there are socially constructed *assumptions* that individuals and communities to whom these labels apply share common characteristics. They range in scale and inclusiveness from personal to global. For example, the term Muslim can refer to an individual, a local community or, in its most inclusive sense, to a global community. The same is true of ethnicity. The term Turk, for example, can be used at

multiple levels of inclusivity including subnational groups, the Turkish nation state to a global community with a shared history and speaking related, but mutually unintelligible, languages (Azerbaijani, Uzbek, Kazakh, Turkmen, Kyrgyz and Uyghur) (Mosser & Weithmann 2008). The category Malay is flexible in similar ways in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (Nagata 1974).

The level of inclusivity drawn on for personal or collective identity may either contract or expand, especially at critical historical junctures where there is a pressing need for reformulating social and political structures. Leaders can play vitally important roles in these processes by encouraging and admonishing their followers to expand or contract in-group boundaries. This expands or contracts the pure own group category. Shifts in relationships between the Indonesian Muslim organisations Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in the late 20th and early 21st century are examples. NU and Muhammadiyah are Indonesia's largest and most influential Muslim organisations. NU is a traditionalist, Sufi oriented movement. Muhammadiyah is a modernist organisation based partly on Salafi teachings. For much of the 20th century they were bitter rivals often exchanging *takfir* – each accusing the other of being outside the Muslim community and in the dangerous other category (Hasbullah 2014). Hostility and mutual recrimination decreased at the end of the 20th century for three reasons:

1. Revered leaders of both groups, particularly former NU chairman and Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid/ Gus Dur (1940-2009) and former Muhammadiyah chairman Syafi'i Maarif (1935-2022) were deeply committed to democracy, human rights, religious pluralism, Indonesian nationalism and inclusive understandings of Islam.
2. Both leaders strongly opposed Wahhabism and other forms of Islamist extremism that were increasingly influential at the time.
3. They redefined relations between the two organizations as "competition in goodness".

The extent of this transformation is apparent in *fatwa* from both organisations, intergroup conversations and ritual practice at neighbourhood levels. Muhammadiyah and NU *fatwa* stress the need for religious tolerance (Ali 2020). In a focus group discussion concerning religious pluralism Rohani Mohamed facilitated in 2018 Maarif and

Wahid's daughter Alissa, the founder of the Gusdurian movement that promotes her father's religious and social agendas, greeted each other as old friends. Both spoke about the dangers of extremism and the "Arabisation" of Indonesian Islam and of the need for interfaith cooperation as well as that between their respective organizations. They acknowledged points of difference and delivered related messages in rhetorical styles characteristic of the two organizations. Allissa Wahid drew on the NU narrative tradition referencing accounts of the pious behaviour of Javanese Sufi saints, the Wali Songo (Nine Saints) as models for social action. Syafi'i Maarif drew on Muhammadiyah tradition, quoting the *Qur'an* and *hadith* to support his positions. At the neighbourhood level there is an increasing number of mosques at which Muhammadiyah and NU Muslims pray together. This would have been unimaginable a generation ago. Salafi extremists are unwilling to join either of these groups for communal prayer. These are examples of the ways in which Muhammadiyah and NU have come to define each other as a common "pure own group" and Salafi extremists as "dangerous others". The type of oppositional relationship Freud described has given way to intergroup cooperation rooted in a higher order religious identity fostered by leaders committed to ameliorating conflict.

Revitalisation and Nativistic Movements

Revitalisation and nativistic movements are sub-cases of the groups Freud described. They emerge at critical junctures when social institutions become unsustainable for economic or political reasons. They seek to reinvigorate socio-cultural systems or in the extreme cases to destroy society as currently formulated and establish utopias based on what are claimed to be native, newly revealed or "pure" religious principles. They are often rooted in visions or dreams of charismatic leaders. Research concerning these movements has been conducted primarily by anthropologists focused on cultural/religious responses to colonialism in small-scale indigenous societies. There are numerous examples, the most well-known are the American Indian Ghost Dance movement of the 1890s (Osterreich 1991) and Melanesian Cargo Cults (Lindstrom 1993). Similar movements emerged in more complex Muslim and Buddhist societies in Southeast Asia. Rebellions in colonial Java predicting the imminent arrival of a Just King (*Ratu Adil*) (Van der Kroef 1959) and the Burmese Saya San rebellion the leader of which proclaimed himself to the King of Burma (Maitrii 2011) are examples.

Studies by the anthropologists Ralph Linton and Alfred Hallowell (1943) and Anthony Wallace (1956) are the most significant attempts to theorize these movements in comparative ways. As Linton and Hallowell noted, the study of these movements is of more than "purely academic interest." Wallace noted that this analytic framework can be profitably employed in the analysis of social movements and revolutions in post-colonial states. He mentioned the Iranian Revolution of 1979 as an example of a state level revitalisation movement (Wallace 1990). The models they developed can illuminate features of Far-Right and Islamist extremist movements and locate their analysis within a broader social science context. This can help to alleviate the problem of "terrorism studies" becoming what Youngman (2020) terms an "echo-chamber" ill-informed by larger theoretical insights and concerns.

Linton and Hallowell described nativistic movements as: "conscious, organized attempt(s) on the part of societies members to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture." They developed a classification system based on binary distinctions between magical (religious)/ rational and revivalist/perpetuative movements. The interaction of these variables produces a four-cell classification system:

Revivalist Magical/Religious	**Revivalist Rational**
Perpetuative Magical/Religious	**Perpetuative Rational**

They note that these distinctions are not absolute and indicate that they should be understood as continuous rather than discrete variables. Many nativistic movements include both magical/religious and rational elements. They also note that magical/religious movements are most

likely to develop in stressful conditions. In most cases certain elements of culture are selected for emphasis and accorded great symbolic value. These become what "key symbols" (Ortner 1973) central to identity formation and boundary definition. They must be strenuously defended, by force if necessary. It is, therefore, necessary to include an additional violent/not violent variable to the model.

Salafi extremist movements are revivalist magical/religious. Far-Right extremist movements are more difficult to characterize. Great Replacement Theory movements tend towards rationality but can be perpetuative or revivalist depending on how they plan to respond to "invaders". Those who would only establish restrictive, racist and/or Islamophobic immigration policies are perpetuative. The New Zealand and Texas terrorists are revivalists because they seek to eliminate invaders. Those who call for massive deportations are non-violent revivalist rationalists.

The revitalisation movements Wallace describes are special cases of magical/religious revivalist movements. He defines them as follows:

> "A deliberation, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture. Revitalisation is thus, from a cultural standpoint, a special kind of cultural change phenomena: the persons involved in the process of revitalisation must perceive their culture, or some major areas of it, as a system (whether accurately or not); they must feel that this cultural system is unsatisfactory; and they must innovate not merely discrete items but a new cultural system, " (Wallace, 1956, p. 265).

Most are violent to some degree because they seek to destroy society and culture as currently constituted. Wallace understood revitalisation movements as macro-level historical processes that are common to societies of all scales. He mentions New Guinea cargo cults and the development of world religions including Christianity and Islam, the French, and Russian and Iranian revolutions as examples.

Wallace was concerned not so much with developing a taxonomy of revitalisation movements, as with discovering generalizations about their processual logic. His model includes five "somewhat overlapping" stages.

1. Steady State – the existing socio-cultural system.
2. Period of Individual Stress – in which individuals and social institutions are increasingly incapable of meeting basic needs because of "climatic, floral and faunal change; military defeat; political subordination; extreme pressure toward acculturation resulting in internal cultural conflict; economic distress; epidemics and so on."
3. Period of Cultural Distortion – in which there are a variety of responses to prolonged stress. These can include cultural conservatism, limited cultural and social change and maladaptive behaviors including substance abuse, crime and violence.
4. Period of Revitalisation – in which charismatic leaders with visions of a new utopian society emerge. They are most commonly religious, but may be secular ideologs. Their visions may be of new social formations, as in the case of Communist revolutions, or the revival of "pure" forms of existing ones as in the case of religious fundamentalisms.
5. New Steady State – a new socio-cultural system.

Stages two and three are marked by increasing alienation, which Durkheim (1897) described as a condition in which society provides little moral guidance or authority. Alienation can be a subjective psychological state, an objective social condition, or a combination of the two (Geyer & Schweitzer 1976). Multiple objective social conditions including poverty, discrimination, political oppression or the perception thereof can lead to psychological states characterized by meaninglessness, despair and perceived powerlessness (Pierre et al. 2013). The decline or absence of traditional authority characteristic of new urban spaces fuelled by migration is often a contributing factor (Ague 1995).

These subjective psychological states, rather than objective social conditions, help to explain the appeal of charismatic leaders including violent extremists. Charismatic leaders, who Wallace refers to as prophets, have characteristics similar to those described by Freud. They are essential players in the revitalisation process because they offer a vision of the new, stage 5, socio-cultural order. The leader/follower relationship is also similar to that Freud described. Contemporary Far-Right and Muslim extremist movements are located in the intersection

of stages 3 and 4. They are at a point where members are engaged in a struggle against the established order (stage 1) and have visions of a new one (stage 5). Revitalisation can be accomplished in a variety of ways including armed rebellion, terrorism and state capture by democratic means. For a time, ISIS came close to realizing stage 5 in the territory it controlled. Ultimately, it suffered the same fate as Nazi Germany, which was a state level revitalisation movement (Griffin 2007).

Extremism and the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 virus was, and still is, and equal opportunity killer, striking people without regard to ethnicity, nationality, race or religion. Muslim and Far-right extremists seized on the fear it spread to advance their agendas (Basit 2020). They disseminated propaganda and advocated violent action to speed the onset of the period of stress characteristic of stage two in Wallace's (1956) model of revitalisation movements.

Far-Right extremists in United States blamed the Chinese government or Latin American and/or Chinese immigrants for the onset of the pandemic. In Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand Far-Right groups used the pandemic to promote "accelerationism" (Bhatt 2021), a tactic encouraging violence to hasten the collapse of the existing social order. Muslim extremists, including ISIS, claimed that pandemic was the result of a Zionist plot and/or "divine punishment" for arrogance and unbelief" (Pantucci 2021).

Conclusions – Extremisms as a Transformation Group

The models described in this section and the semantic approach to the analysis of violent extremism outlined earlier in this paper are complimentary. Each offers a measure of insight into the varieties of extremism and their social and psychological features. Relationships between the two forms of extremism can be understood as a transformation group in the sense of the term Levi Straus used it in his studies of kinship (1969b) and mythology (1969a). Levi Strauss was concerned with abstract algebraic relations that structure these and other cultural systems. He argues that these basic modes of thought and symbolic classification are rooted in the unconscious and that they make communication and social interaction possible. Descola describes his structuralist method as follows:

> "...it reveals and orders contrastive features so as to discover
> the necessary relations organizing certain sectors of social
> life, such as the set of culinary techniques or of the ways
> to exchange potential spouses between individuals and
> groups. In sum, it is a very efficient method to reach the
> objective which any anthropological analysis should aim at:
> the detection and ordering of regularities in statements and
> practices" (Descola, 2016, p.35)

Levi Strauss (1969a, p. 16) also described myths as machines for the
suppression of time. Far- Right and Islamic extremist ideologies and
narratives are myths offering timeless utopian and/or apocalyptic visions.
Both use images of the Crusades to erase time, depicting contemporary
conflicts as eternal struggles. Levi Strauss considered modern societies
or contemporary political phenomena. His methodological approach is,
however, useful for the analysis of contemporary extremist ideologies
and social movements if they are understood as mythologies and
associated systems of social action. Muslim and Far-Right extremisms
form a global transformation group. Stripped of Western and Islamic
semantics they are nearly identical.

These structural similarities help to explain the seemingly
anomalous phenomena of Far-Right politicians converting to Islam and
for Islamic extremists becoming Evangelical Christians. In Germany
and the Netherlands there have been cases of leaders of nativistic, anti-
Islamic, anti-immigrant political parties converting to Islam. In an
extreme case an American neo-Nazi embraced *jihad* and turned on his
former compatriots (Graham 2018). Similarly, the American Evangelical
Christian magazine *Sight* reported that an Indonesian Muslim terrorist
"Came to Christ" and now leads an underground apostate group (Bos
2020).

Given that Muslim VE and FRE are components of a mythic
transformation group these conversions are not as anomalous as
they appear. Both are revitalisation movements, with utopian myths
dedicated to struggle against dangerous impure others. Movement
from one such system to another does not entail a basic change in ways
of thinking. Rather it is a symbolic inversion, which, as Levi Strauss
(1969a) observes, is a common feature of mythological thought. In
such transitions the semantics of extremism changes while the syntax
remains constant. It is changing sides in a cosmic war, but it is the same
cosmic war.

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Unraveling the Nexus: Politics, National Security, and the Securitisation of Islam in the Aftermath of Easter Sunday Attacks

Mohamed Fouz Mohamed Zacky[*]

Abstract: A group of religious fanatics, inspired by the ISIS ideology, blew themselves up in high-rise hotels and Churches in several parts of Sri Lanka on 21st April 2019, killing 269 innocent civilians. This event, known as the Easter Sunday Attacks, led the Sri Lankan state to frame Islam, Islamic religious expressions and activities as a security threat. As a result, the government imposed several regulations and policies that restricted the religious space of the community on the pretext of safeguarding national security. Against this background, this study aims to dissect the entire process of how the state constructed Islam as a security threat after the Easter Sunday Attacks, exploring the primary actors, their actions, and the discursive context. To that end, the main argument of the study is that the securitisation of Islam in Sri Lanka is an outcome of an effective cooperation between political and state elites and ultra-nationalist majoritarian forces in the country. Furthermore, as the study highlights, the state has been successful in securitising Islam because it has capitalised on the multi-layered discursive ecosystem, such as Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, the dominant security studies paradigm, the ex-Muslim phenomenon, and unintended consequences of Islamic revivalism, to legitimise its claims. Finally, this qualitative study utilised both primary and secondary sources to gather data and the thematic content analysis method was employed for data analysis.

Keywords: national security, religious extremism, Sri Lankan Muslims, Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism, Gotabhaya Rajapakse

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[*]Assistant Professor**,** Department of Political Science, AHAS KIRKHS, IIUM, Malaysia. Email: zackyfouz@iium.edu.my.

Abstrak: Sekumpulan fanatik agama, yang diilhamkan oleh ideologi ISIS, meletupkan diri mereka di hotel bertingkat tinggi dan gereja di beberapa bahagian Sri Lanka pada 21 April 2019, membunuh 269 orang awam yang tidak bersalah. Peristiwa ini, yang dikenali sebagai Serangan Hari Easter, menyebabkan negara Sri Lanka merangka agama Islam, ekspresi dan aktiviti agama Islam sebagai ancaman keselamatan. Akibatnya, kerajaan mengenakan beberapa peraturan dan dasar yang menyekat ruang keagamaan masyarakat atas alasan menjaga keselamatan negara. Berdasarkan latar belakang ini, kajian ini bertujuan untuk membedah keseluruhan proses bagaimana sebuah negara membina Islam sebagai ancaman keselamatan selepas Serangan Hari Easter dengan meneroka aktor utama, tindakan mereka, dan konteks wacana. Untuk itu, hujah utama kajian ialah pensekuritian Islam di Sri Lanka adalah hasil kerjasama yang berkesan antara elit politik dan negara serta kuasa majoriti ultra-nasionalis di negara itu. Tambahan pula, Sri Lanka telah berjaya dalam legitimasi pensekuritian Islam kerana ia telah memanfaatkan ekosistem diskursif pelbagai lapisan, seperti nasionalisme Buddha Sinhala, paradigma kajian keselamatan yang dominan, fenomena bekas Muslim, dan kesan-kesan yang tidak disengajakan oleh kebangkitan Islam dalam masyarakat. Akhir sekali, kajian kualitatif ini menggunakan sumber primer dan sekunder untuk mengumpul data dan kaedah analisis kandungan tematik digunakan untuk analisis data.

Kata kunci: keselamatan negara, ekstremisme agama, Muslim Sri Lanka, nasionalisme Buddha Sinhala, Gotabhaya Rajapakse

Introduction

Islam has a long history in Sri Lanka, spanning over a thousand years. It has played a significant role in shaping the country's socio-cultural and civilisational ethos. Despite being a minority community, their contributions to pre-modern Sri Lanka have been well-documented (Dewaraja, 1994). However, the emergence of Sri Lanka as a nation-state led to the rise of inter-communal identity politics and communal polarisations. Unfortunately, this led to the political elites of each community villainising the other. Mainly, Sinhalese Buddhists claimed that they must define the emerging state and its institutional and cultural outlook and portrayed ethnic Tamils and Muslims as the 'new other', capable of challenging the national integrity of Sri Lanka. This exclusivist perspective resulted in the first ethnic riot against Muslims occurred in 1915, and since then, Sinhala Buddhist majoritarianism

has constantly intimidated Islam and Muslims for the last century, both implicitly and explicitly (Ali, 2015). In response, Sri Lankan Muslims increased their conservatism and religiously-inspired political thinking to protect their cultural and communal interests in the 1960s, 70s and 80s (Yusoff & Sarjoon & Hussin & Ahmad, 2017). After the end of the civil war between the Sri Lankan state and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the intensity of the anti-Muslim narratives of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism increased significantly. As ethnic Tamil separatism was suppressed through military means, Sinhala Buddhist majoritarian forces directed their focus towards Muslims, resulting in the rise of Islamophobic movements in post-war Sri Lanka. These movements became the primary actors who shaped government agendas and public narratives, leading to the targeting of civil and religious liberties of the Muslim community with total impunity. The subsequent governments' tacit support of these narratives further emboldened these movements to continue their discriminatory activities against the Muslim community (Saroor, 2021)

The demonisation of Muslims and Islam in Sri Lanka reached new heights after the tragic Easter Sunday attacks on April 21st, 2019. A group of terrorists, who were influenced by ISIS ideology, carried out simultaneous attacks on three high-rise hotels and churches, killing 269 people. These terror attacks gave more credibility to the claims of the majoritarian Buddhist ultra-nationalist groups who argued that Islam and Muslims pose a significant challenge to the country's stability. The attacks also increased public acceptance of their rhetoric. Consequently, Sri Lanka witnessed a new wave of riots, bullying, and marginalisation against Muslims in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks. Nevertheless, compared to the previous anti-Muslim sentiments, post-Easter Sunday developments are unique in an important way. It is that theEaster attack paved the way for the state and the government officials to directly partake in introducing regulations and policies that indirectly legitimise the Islamophobic sentiments of those non-state actors (Mujahidin, 2023). The political and policy-making elites argued that Islam and Muslims poses a challenge to the country's security, framing Islam and Islamic expressions as a matter of security concern. This nexus between political elites, policymakers, and Islamophobic forces became even more apparent in Gotabaya Rajapaksa's government, which was elected in 2019 on a claim that they would fight radical Islam.

His government debated and stressed the need to curb Islamic religious expressions and gave positions to anti-Muslim activists in government committees in the process of constructing Islam as a security threat.

This paper aims to analyse the securitisation of Islam in Sri Lanka after the Easter Sunday attacks. It attempts to answer three critical questions: How have the Sri Lankan governments, specifically the Gotabaya Rajapakse government, securitised Islam, Islamic religious expressions, and Islamic activism after the Easter attacks? What contextual and discursive factors legitimise these securitisation moves? How have Muslim community leaders responded to the securitisation moves? To answer these questions, the paper is divided into six sections, including an introduction. The section two briefly discusses research methodology while the section three explores the concept of securitisation and its development. The fourth section focuses on the Sri Lankan government's context and securitisation moves following the Easter attacks. The fifth section explores the discursive ecosystem that facilitated the government's successful securitisation of Islam, while the sixth section analyses the responses of the Muslim community in navigating these challenges. The section seven discusses the recent developments of the national security debates aftermath of the collapse of Gotabaya Rajapakse's regime. The paper concludes with an analytical conclusion.

Research Methodology

This study investigates perceptions, ideas, and social dynamics within the Sri Lankan context using a qualitative research design. Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Specifically, sections three, four, and five of the paper primarily utilised secondary materials, including journal articles, news websites, and social media pages. In contrast, section six was developed entirely from primary data, which consisted mainly of one-on-one interviews with community leaders. The interviewees were selected from prominent civil society organisations within the Muslim community. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data, allowing the researcher to identify and examine the underlying ideas and themes flexibly. The analysis was conducted in light of the major research questions that the paper aims to address.

Securitisation Theory: Formation and Development

The theory of 'securitisation' emerged in the 1990s in the context of global security dynamics changes after the Cold War. It was formulated by Ole Waver, Barry Buzan, and Jaap de Wilde in their work 'Security: A New Framework for Analysis.' Their theories eventually became known as the 'Copenhagen School of Security Studies.' According to this school, securitisation involves defining an object or issue as a security problem or threat that poses a risk to the survival of a referent object - such as state, religion, community, or culture (Waver, Buzan and De Wilde, 1998, p. 21). In such cases, political elites think that they are authorised to use any means necessary to deal with these threats (Waver, Buzan and De Wilde, 1998, p. 26). Interestingly, Waver, Buzan, and De Wilde argued that the security threat is a constructed reality rather than an objective phenomenon. In other words, an issue becomes securitised because political elites intentionally speak about it as a 'security issue' (Waver, Buzan and De Wilde, 1998, p. 21) They have other options for addressing it, but they choose to present it as an emergency case that must be dealt with exclusively by themselves. By doing so, political elites try to resist public deliberation and shift a particular political problem from 'normal politics' to 'high politics' (Waver, Buzan and De Wilde, 1998 p. 23). However, the securitisation process can only be successful if the public accepts the claims of the political elites (Waver, Buzan and De Wilde, 1998, p. 25).

The initial conceptualisation of securitisation was critiqued by later works. They pointed out that the earlier conceptualisation was too elitist and only focused on political elites as the ones who construct security threats. Later scholars added that civil society organisations, media outlets, and religious clergies also succeeded in constructing security threats, and securitisation is not just a top-down process; it could also be a bottom-up process (McDonald, 2008) They also noted that securitisation is not always a temporary exceptional condition, and it could be translated into everyday practice and normalised systemically, ultimately shaping a country's policy and institution-making process (McDonald, 2008). Additionally, they explained that securitisation agents do not construct a security threat out of thin air by merely 'speaking' about an issue as a security threat. Instead, there should be a discursive tradition and supportive societal condition that help the securitisation agents convince the public of the authenticity

of their claim (Balzacq, Basaran, Bigo, Guittet, & Olson, 2010). Some scholars emphasise the securitisation process as having a power dimension, where political actors securitise issues or objects to mute certain voices or dominate over certain actors who could threaten the power distribution of an existing political system (Camps-Febrer, 2020, p.73). Therefore, it is impossible to analyse the securitisation process in isolation from the existing political power-dynamics of a given country.

In light of the evolving theoretical debates, the term 'securitisation of Islam' is used here to refer specifically to the phenomenon of portraying Islam, or a particular interpretation of it, as a security threat to the state or the dominant national group within the state. This portrayal of Islam as a threat to national security is a process that can be initiated by political elites, security professionals, and civil society organisations. They rely on specific discursive contexts and ideological frameworks that already view Islam as a danger or an outsider to the nation. Moreover, the construction of Islam as a threat can also be leveraged to shift power dynamics within local contexts.

The Revival of National Security and the Easter Sunday Attacks in Sri Lanka: Narratives, Politics and Policies

On April 19th, 2019, nine suicide bombers blew themselves up in four large hotels in Colombo and three crowded Churches. The well-coordinated and simultaneous attack killed more than 269 innocent civilians and injured more than 500 people (Aljazeera, 2019). Though Sri Lanka had experienced massive suicide attacks previously, the Easter attacks were the first of its kind after the civil war ended between the Sri Lankan state and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in 2009. The bombers were led by a ring leader, Zahran Hashim, who was once a Salafi preacher, turned into a Jihadist (Mujahidin, 2023). The event has had a paradigmatic impact on the perception of the Sri Lankan state and society towards the Muslim community. The attacks paved the way for the political establishment to legitimately recognise Islam and the Muslim community as a security threat and introduce exceptional laws and regulations to control their religious space. As a result, there had been a public outcry leading up to the presidential elections in 2019 demanding that national security needs to be given priority in government policy making process (Rafe, 2019).

This resurgence of national security concerns in Sri Lanka temporarily altered the country's political dynamics, giving former defence secretary Gotabaya Rajapakse a chance to position himself for the 2019 presidential elections (Miglani & Aneez, 2019). Despite having no political legacy, Rajapakse was known for his authoritarian approach in dealing with public issues during his tenure as defence secretary. He was also recognised for his unwavering support for the Sinhala Buddhist nationalist project (Gunasekara, 2013). Against this background, Rajapakse highlighted the threat of radical Islam and promised to eradicate the ideology from the country if he was elected. According to him, the previous government had dismantled Sri Lanka's intelligence system, which allowed Islamist radicals to plan and execute attacks. Rajapakse's victory in 2019 elections, with an unprecedented number of votes, showed that he had successfully convinced the majority Buddhist community, his primary audience, that the country was facing a real threat of radical Islam (Kaleen, 2019). Even though he had been working on his image anticipating a political entrance as someone who could bring new technologies, professionalism, and national culture into governance, it was the revival of the national security discourse after the Easter attacks that paved the way for political debut. Now, as president, he directed his government ministers and officials to articulate policies that ensure the continued securitisation of Islam and the Muslim community, as he had promised during his campaign. The following section briefly discusses a few of those selected securitisation moves -both in the rhetorical and policy levels- taken by the Gotabaya's government officials.

Securitisation Moves

a. The Securitisation of Burqa and Niqab:

 Importing anti-Burqa politics from a few European countries uncritically, then state minister of public security under the Gotabaya government, Sarath Weerasekara stated on 13th of March 2021 that their government would definitely ban wearing Burqa and Niqab. He stated that 'In the past, Sri Lankan Muslim women and girls never wore the Burqa.It is a sign of the religious extremismthat is emerging today, so the permanent ban should be fully implemented. I have signed it, and the regulation will be implemented immediately' (Al-Jazeera, 2021). The proposed Burqa ban was criticised by many as it would further marginalise the already

victimised Muslim minority of the country. Some experts warned that curtailing religious expression is not the way to fight extremism, and it would further exacerbate the situation (Saiya, 2021).

However, examining the minister's securitisation of the Burqa ban*speech* guides us to generate two significant observations. Firstly, Weerasekara tried to portray that radical Islam is a deeply rooted phenomenon within the Muslim community. The Burqa is just a symbol of such transformation. Thus, rather than resorting to temporary bans based on exceptional conditions like what the previous government did, the minister wanted permanent policies and laws to counteract radical Islam. Secondly, by linking the Burqa with national security, the minister implicitly clarifies that national security means the security of Buddhist culture and the majority's culture. While Gotabaya initially securitised radical Islam based on the assumption that it could potentially pose a threat to the sovereignty of the state, Weeasekara's speech, a trusted minister of Gotabaya's government, reveals that referent object of the security has been shifted since *from the state sovereignty to the culture of the majority*. Thus, the state can declare anything a threat to national security deemed strange to the majority community's culture.

b. The Securitisation of Muslim Personal Law:

Adding to that, there are Sinhala Buddhist extremist groups in Sri Lanka who relentlessly campaigned that Muslims are trying to impose Shariah laws in the country, with their primary target being the Muslim personal law. They think that existence of Muslim personal law will lead to a "shariatization" of Sri Lanka and threaten the existing culture of the Buddhism. Therefore, those groups demanded the abolition of the Muslim personal law and the implementation of one unified civil law for all citisens (Schonthal, 2016). The former public security minister, Sarath Weekseraka, also echoed this sentiment soon after Easter attacks, saying that '*there should be only one law for all races in the country and no separate universities and laws for Muslims'* (Adaderana, 2019). Then he tweeted again that '*in a unitary country like ours, one law should apply right throughout. There cannot be different laws for different ethnicities as it creates dissent, frustration, and animosity amongst other communities (Weesekara, 2022).* Gotabhaya Rajapaksa used this anti-Muslim rhetoric to his advantage in his election campaign. He promised to implement a 'one country one law' policy if elected, which

he followed through on by appointing a task force to prepare an initial report on the 'one country one law project'. However, it is worth noting that the chairmanship of the committee was given to Ven. Galagodaaththe Gnanasara Thera, a well-known Islamophobic monk (Keenan, 2021). Interestingly, Gotabaya's' appointment of Ven. Galagodaaththe Gnanasara Thera indicates a critical feature of the securitisation process of Sri Lanka. It says that the securitisation of Islam in Sri Lanka is a joint venture between the political elites and right-wing radical organisations. For example, Ven. Galagodaaththe Gnanasara Thera is a member of a militant Buddhist nationalist organisation 'Budu Bala Sena' (Buddhist Power Force or BBS), that mainstreamed Islamophobic discourses in the country since 2012 (Fouz & Moniruzzaman, 2021).

c. The Securitisation of Islamic Activist and Religious Organisations:

In a similar fashion, the aftermath of the terror attacks in Sri Lanka, the country's security establishment accused Islamic movements and religious education institutions of promoting extremism, fundamentalism, and terrorism within the country. Even though there was no direct link between those entities and the attacks, they justified their stance by claiming these organisations were promoting Islamic fundamentalism. The security establishment's mantra was that fundamentalism leads to extremism, and extremism leads to terrorism, making a harmonious link between the three . As a result, the security agencies believed that those movements and religious groups indirectly contributed to the attacks by providing an ideological base for the attackers. Against this backdrop, the government initially banned most of the Salafi organisations, accusing them of promoting an intolerant version of Islam known as Wahhabism (Mohan, 2021).

It is worth noting that in addition to targeting Salafi groups, Sri Lankan Jamath e Islami, the oldest Islamic revivalist and reformist movement in Sri Lanka, was also accused of being the catalyst for extremism and terrorism in the country. The former leader of Jamath e Islami, Rasheed Hajjul Akbar, who was a respected Islamic scholar among Sri Lankan Muslims, was arrested by security forces for allegedly expressing fundamentalist ideas in his writings (Wion, 2021). Surprisingly, former Minister of Public Security Sarath Weekarsekara told the media that '*we have identified Hajjul Akbar as one of the masterminds behind the Easter Sunday attacks, and a ringleader along*

with Nawofer Movlavi' (Adaderana, 2021). By equating Hajjul Akbar with Nowofer Movlavi, who actually promoted pro-ISIS Jihadist ideas in the country, the minister tried to deliberately expand the list of perpetrators of the terrorist attack covering all the way from text book Jihadists to moderate Islamists and reformists in a generalised sense. To the list, Islamophobic monk Ven. Galagoda, the Gnanasara Thera, added All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama (ACJU), the supreme body of Islamic theologians. The monk noted that although they did not directly support the suicide bombers, they shaped the ideological context of radical Islam that gave birth to ISIS ideology in the country (Colombo Today, 2021).

The major implication of such collective securitisation of Muslim community organisations is that even though they are allowed to operate freely and lawfully after clearing their terrorism charges, the security agencies continue to view them through lens of security threat. They frequently visit their offices and programmes and request for updates of their upcoming programmes and name list of participants and cross check the authenticity of information with other members. A leading member of a Muslim organisation commented during an interview with me that 'intelligence establishment try to tell us a message through their continues surveillance: "you are free legally, but you are not free in the true sense, and we are monitoring of your activities". They are trying to create psychological pressure upon us. They see us a source of potential security threat if not now, in the future. They try to keep us under their continuous regime of surveillance' (Respondent 01, Personal Communication with the author, 31st March 2024). This statement reveals that in Sri Lanka, the securitisation of Islam has been transformed into an everyday reality.

d. The Securitisation of Islamic Religious Education:

Moving ahead, Islamic scholars and thinkers have been discussing the question of reforming traditional Islamic religious education system for last two centuries. They explored this arena mainly within the paradigms of educational philosophy, inter-civilisational dialogue, and engagement with modernity (Fouz & Moniruzaman, 2023). However, since 9/11, the need for Islamic religious education reform has been presented in a new language. The discourse now emphasises that the traditional religious education system is a breeding ground for exclusivism, fundamentalism,

and terrorism, and as such, it needs to be reformed as it poses a threat to global security. Despite criticisms from scholars, the stereotypical view persists (Bergen & Pandey, 2010, Ramzy, Alshighaybi & Rislan, 2022). The very stereotypical narratives resurfaced after the Easter attacks, with Sri Lankan policymakers presenting the Madrasa system as a sign of exclusivism and extremism. The Presidential Commission Report 2021 on Easter Sunday attacks and the Parliamentary Oversight Committee Report on National Security suggested that Madrasa education should be reformed to ensure the country's national security (Bappu, 2024). In a webinar hosted by the Institute of National Security Studies, a think tank attached to the Ministry of Defence, Sri Lanka, Rasheen Bappu, a leading defence analyst and anthropologist, spoke of the importance of regulating the Islamic religious space, particularly Madrasa education, for the consolidation of Sri Lanka's national security. During his lecture, he criticised the daily Quran classes, that train Muslim children to recite Quran, managed by All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama, claiming that they were "*severely overdosing religious education on students*" and that the system should be reformed so that *"the state would have control over the existing system"* (Ministry of Defence, 2021) A new Islamic Education Act was subsequently proposed to the cabinet on 18 July 2019, aiming to de-radicalise the Madrasa system by removing violent/extremist subjects and promoting co-existence and social harmony (Bappu, 2024).Walking on the same logic, the ministry of defence banned importing Islamic religious books except for those the ministry approves in march, 2021(Islamic foundation, 2021).

e. New Regulations for De-Radicalisation :

All the previous attempts at the securitisation of Islam culminated in the Gotabhaya government's desire to introduce new deradicalisation regulations. Gazetted on the 12th of March 2021, the regulations initially provided a broader definition of radicalisation and even approved the suspected individuals to be detained and sent to rehabilitation camps for years without a proper trial. The new regulations were titled '*deradicalisation from holding violent extremist religious ideology*' and highlighted the police can arrest anyone they suspect of 'being a person who by words either spoken or intended to be read and by signs or by visible representations or otherwise causes or intends to cause the commission of acts of violence' (cpalanka, 2023). Human rights activists noted that given the majoritarian nature of the Sri Lankan

political culture, the political elites who hold the state power might instrumentalise the regulations to demonise the religious and cultural freedom of the minorities, projecting that it is a threat to national security (International Commission of Jurists, 2021). Moreover, as per the regulations, the state could arrest anyone accusing him or her vaguely that their thinking process is extreme. A simple analysis of the act indicated that the rationale behind such flexible regulations might be to allow the state to paint a wide array of religious expressions and activities in the broader brush of radicalisation. Thus, a few leading human rights groups and activists have filed a case against implementing the regulations in the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Upon long deliberation, the Supreme Court found that the new regulations violated the fundamental rights of citisens, such as freedom of thought, conscience, and religion and freedom from arbitrary arrests. In its final decision, it strikingly mentioned that 'the definition of "extremist religious ideology" presents inherent difficulties as religious beliefs may vary widely among individuals, with one person's religious ideology potentially appearing extreme to another. In the absence of clarity, there is a risk of arbitrary decisions being made where certain attitudes, behaviours, attire, etc., can also be deemed as signs of extremist religious ideologies… People cannot be prosecuted, nay persecuted, for merely "holding religious ideology, which the state thinks to be "violent and extremist'. As a result, the Supreme Court declared that new regulations were null and void (cpalanka, 2023).

The Discursive Context of Securitisation of Islam in Sri Lanka

The Gotabhaya government and the political establishments did not construct a perception of Islam as a threat to national security without a context. This means that the securitisation of Islam did not happen merely because Gotabaya Rajapaksa, his minister of public security and his security establishment spoke about it. Instead, the government officials' narrative and policies were influenced by a broader set of discourses that had already portrayed Islamic religious practices and activism as a possible source of security threat to the state. In this section, we will briefly examine the four key layers of *discursive ecosystem* that enabled the Gotabaya government to justify its securitisation policies following the Easter Sunday attacks: Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism, Global Security Paradigm, Ex-Muslim Phenomenon and Islamic Revivalism.

The Revival of Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism

Firstly, Gotabaya's project to securitise Islam resonated well with post-war political imaginations of Sihala Buddhist nationalism in the country. In fact, Gotabaya himself is known as an ardent supporter of the Buddhist majoritarian nationalism which calls to make Sri Lanka an exclusive Buddhist state. According to this project, minorities can live peacefully if they acknowledge the supremacy of Sinhala Buddhist ethno-religious identity. Starting from the 1900s until 2009, this project viewed Christians and Ethnic Tamils as internal enemies because they challenged the unity and integrity of the Buddhist land (Schonthal, 2016). After the civil war in 2009, the Sinhala Buddhist nationalist project felt that the continued relevance of majoritarian ethnic nationalism depends upon finding a new enemy. It found a new enemy in the Muslim communities, which they painted as new villain of Sinhala Buddhist political imagination (Dewasiri, 2016, p.06). As a result, post-war Sri Lanka witnessed a new wave of anti-Muslim sentiments and violence. The right-wing Buddhist nationalist organisations such as *Bodu Bala Sena, Sinhala Ravaya,* and *Sinha-Le* movements initiated this new wave . They targeted the everyday religious practices of Muslims, highlighting that they are polluting the purity of the Buddhist land. This post-war demonisation of Muslims and collective projection of the community as being the threatening other within the Buddhist state provided the discursive justification for the Gotabhaya government to take the process of the securitisation of Islam into the policy-making level after the Easter Sunday attacks (Imtiyas, 2024). Actually, he presented such measures as signs of Buddhist revivalism under his regime. In his recent book titled 'The conspiracy to outset me from the presidency', Gotabaya mentions that it was Muslims and other minorities who largely supported the protests against him since they saw his rule would pave the way for the revival of Sinhala Buddhism (newswire, 2024).

Dominant Security Paradigm and Counter-Terrorism Experts

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, many security experts emerged and began to play a significant role in constructing a 'regime of truth' about Islam and Islamic revivalist/ activist organisations. Their focus was to address the threat posed by Islam. They developed a set of dominant discourses that portrayed the global system as being perpetually at risk of a terrorist attack and stood for a new global order

based on '*totalising security paradigm'* (Camps-Febrer, 2020, p.74). As such, security experts and professionals became crucial players in formulating and legitimising the laws and state policies that scrutinise the socio-political and economic activism of the Islamic religious organisations for the last two decades. Sri Lanka is not an exception to this global trend as the security experts and professionals effectively involved in enabling the Gotabaya government to successfully project Islamic religious activism as a security threat to the Sri Lankan state. Specially, Rohan Gunaratna, a scholar of International terrorism and the former director general of the Institute of National Security Studies, is a notable figure in this process. For example, Gunaratna tried to convince the Sri Lankan policy makers, officials and professionals that Sri Lankan could face another round of terrorist attacks if the government fails to properly regulate the religious space. He warned that the pipeline that produces religious extremism still alive (Gateway College, 2019). Mainly, he maintained that the Islamist activist organisations and Salafi movements are the primary recruitment sources for Jihadism. Moreover, Gunaratna empathetically stressed that Jihadism is the logical conclusion of the ideology of mainstream Islamist organisations. He noted that those movements inherently promote violence, extremism, and hatred towards non-Muslims, as opposed to Sufism. Therefore, he advised the government to remain vigilant, as the existence of these organisations continues to pose a security threat to the country (Gunaratna, 2023, P.137).

Ex-Muslims Factor

Along with Sinhala Buddhist nationalism and narratives of security experts, it is also important to understand the role played by ex-Muslims in securutising Islam in Sri Lanka. They become a valuable source for the government to justify its policies that securitised Islamic activist organisations, mainly after the Easter attacks, 2019. Ex-Muslims are individuals who have left Islam for various reasons such as ideological and experiential ones. They are trying to form their own counter-identity by projecting that radical Islam is currently threatening their lives as well as global peace. This identity formation is a global phenomenon, and its Sri Lankan variant should be seen as an offshoot of global ex-Muslim activism. Interestingly, ex-Muslims have played a crucial role in supporting governments'' attempts to securitise Islam globally. Examining their role in constructing Islam as a security threat in the

European context, Jocelyn Cesari highlights that their Muslim origins give them the legitimacy, which is denied to non-Muslims, to their claims in the eyes of states (Cesari, 2012). In Sri Lanka, ex-Muslims were invited by state institutions to give testimonies of so-called 'secret plots of Islamists' (Ismath, 2022) By mimicking the dichotomy of peaceful Sufis vs. radical Islamism, they stressed that Islamists have been trying to convert Sri Lanka into an Islamic state and are ready to wage Jihad when necessary. They mainly argued that Islamists show moderation and ideological transformation as a survival strategy. They testified that Islamists are calling for the full implementation of Islam in Sri Lanka, which is harmful to societal peace. Ordinary Muslims, who are just ritualistic and less concerned about Islam, are peaceful. By reproducing the prevailing conspiracy theories about Islamism, former Muslims claimed that Islamists are strategically and secretly targeting government positions to make a silent Islamic revolution from within (Ismath, 2021). Ex-Muslims wanted the Sri Lankan government to view the Muslim religious space as radical and violent and take all necessary steps to control them.

Islamic Revivalism

Finally, Islamic revivalism, religious activism and tense religious space also unintendedly contributed to the construction of a portrayal of Islam as a security threat to the state in Sri Lanka. Islamic revivalism, which emerged as an anti-colonial movement, aimed to unite the Muslim community around religious sentiments, global Muslim issues, and empower the transnational solidarity (Ali, 2023). This movement reached Sri Lanka in 1940s and 1950s and had a profound impact on shaping the Muslim identity. They played a part in creating a separate religious identity for Muslims in the context of post-colonial identity politics of Sri Lanka (Imtiyas & Saleem, 2022). Over the past four decades, these dynamics have led to an increase in religious visibility, conservativism and intra-communal contestations over the meaning and features of authentic Islam. It is true that these debates over theological and ideological issues have largely shaped the communal divisions (Numan, 2002 & Mihlar, 2019). Unfortunately, instead of being viewed as a part of the evolving discursive debate on the role of religion, religious texts, and tradition in engaging with the larger paradigm of secular modernity and post-colonial identity formation, the right-wing movements and, after the Easter attacks, the state started to securitise

the tense religious space and viewed it as an outcome of an intrusion of foreign religious ideologies into the country corrupting local traditions and unity.

The Securitisation of Islam: An Analysis of Muslim Community's Responses

Muslim community organisations in Sri Lanka have been facing the challenge of mainstreaming securitisation narratives and heightened surveillance of their activities. This paper found that these organisations followed three significant strategies in responding to the Post-easter Sunday securitisation policies and state narratives: *cooperation with the state, challenging the accusations and building bridges between communities*. It is important to note that these organisations have been working to mitigate the ultra-nationalist Sinhala Buddhist movements and their Islamophobic campaign since the civil war ended in 2009. However, their activism intensified in the aftermath of the Easter attacks as the state itself was directly involved in endorsing policies that securitised Islam. This section explores responses of only a few selected leading Muslim community organisations such as All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama, National Shura Council, Sri Lanka Jamaat-e-Islami and Muslim Council of Sri Lanka.

Cooperation with the State

The Muslim community organisations and leaders believed that one of the best ways to convince the state intelligence and security apparatus that they were not promoting extremism and terrorism was to support their investigations in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks. To prove their innocence, they provided all the details of their activities, names of their members, and financial sources to the state. After the Easter attacks, state intelligence sources traced the member's list of the leading Islamic social movements and investigated their relationships and involvement in those organisations (Respondent 01 & 02, Personal Communication with the author, 2024). They even considered independent individuals as potential terrorists for carrying or reading monthly magazines published by those organisations. This had a significant impact on the members of those organisations and dismantled their network and working machinery (Respondent 03, Personal communication with the author, 2024). Even so, the Muslim organisations advised their members to reveal whatever they knew about the organisation's activities to the

state if they were invited for interrogation (Respondent 05, Personal communication with the author, 2024). The Muslim community leaders believe that this positive and open engagement with the state security establishment in their investigation yielded positive results. The state security agencies came to realise that Islamic organisations were legally compliant entities and that none of the leadership of those organisations supported terrorism (Respondent 05, Personal communication with the author, 2024). However, some interviewees highlighted that although the state knew that Islamic organisations were not linked with violence, it attempted to use one against the other to get the information they needed and to relax themselves from taking the responsibility of the burden of proof for their accusations (Respondent 02, Personal communication with the author, 2024).

Challenging the Allegations

It is true that the Muslim organisations cooperated with intelligence agencies to clear their files of any false allegations regarding terrorism and extremism. However, they also worked to make the public aware of the baseless nature of these allegations. To achieve this, these organisations published several books and reports that clarified their ideological principles, socio-political positions, and perspectives on global violent and extremist movements. For example, Sri Lanka Jamaat-e-Islami published a book titled 'Jamaat e Islami is a Sri Lankan Movement' to refute allegations that it was trying to implement a foreign project in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the former head of Jamaat-e-Islami wrote a separate book called 'Baseless Allegations Against Me.' Interestingly, Jamaat-e-Islami translated its constitution and made it available to the public. They did this in the hope that people would understand the movement's policies better (Respondent 05, Personal communication with the author, 2024). They also published another book that clarified their positions on the theological, political, and religious issues concerning the country. In addition, Sri Lanka Jamaat-e-Islami immediately released press statements if any allegations were raised against them by the minister, accusing the movement of promoting terrorism (Respondent 05, Personal communication with the author, 2024). On the other hand, All Ceylon Jamiyythul Ulama (ACJU) published a crucial document that explained the theological and jurisprudential principles that shape the Muslim community at large. This was to make a counterargument against the state's move to

separate Sufis from others based on the notion of 'good Muslims vs. bad Muslims' thesis. All Ceylon Jamiyythul Ulama made it clear that there is no such category as good vs. bad Muslims. Instead, all Muslims are primarily following the same principles of Islam (Respondent 02, Personal communication with the author, 2024).

Building Bridges between Communities

Simultaneously, Muslim community activists strategically tried to expand the relationship with other communities and their organisations through developing collaborative projects. The leadership of the Muslim community organisations understood that these collaborations would help them to clear the misconception of other communities about Islamic organisations. Moreover, it also would help them to expand the working scope to include wide spectrum of people with different faith. For example, Sri Lanka jamaat-e-Islami diversified its activities into two main areas such as community development and nation-building. In addition, they planned a well-coordinated public relations strategy to explain the motivation and aims of the movement to general public and key stake holders of the country. Additionally, they invited leading human rights and peace activists to grace their main events to give talks and to share their ideas with the organisation (Respondent 05, Personal communication with the author, 2024). National Shura Council developed a multiple projects under the concept of '*strategic co-existence'* to strengthen the inter-communal peace between Muslims and Buddhists. The strategic co-existence operated on multiple levels such as revising the curriculum of the Islamic religious education institutions to incorporate peace education, building the capacity of Muslim community leaders to better address the inter-religious co-existence issues in their environments, organizing continues meetings with religious leaders of other faith communities in village areas etc (Afra & Ushama, 2023). Specially, Muslim Council of Sri Lanka along with other organisations directly approached the controversial politicians and right-wing monks to expel their misconceptions about Islam and Muslim communities (Khan, personal communication with the author, 2019). All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama issued a national declaration for inter-religious co-existence to direct Muslim community to work towards empowering the relationship between Muslims and other faith communities (ACJU, n.d).

Beyond Gotabaya: National Security Discourse under the New Government

Sri Lanka experienced a significant political shift over the past two years. In 2022, public protests led to the downfall of Gotabaya Rajapaksa's government amid an economic crisis. On September 21, 2024, Sri Lanka elected a new president, Anura Kumara Dissanayake, the left-leaning leader of the National People's Power party. Dissanayake became the ninth executive president of Sri Lanka on an anti-corruption and anti-racism platform (BBC, 2024). Sri Lankan Muslims have high hopes that the new president will address issues related to the securitisation of Islam and Islamic practices, while also countering Islamophobic forces that threaten to further divide the country. The new president faced an immediate challenge when intelligence services, both foreign and local, reported a potential terrorist attack targeting Israeli tourists at Arugam Bay, a popular tourist destination in Eastern Sri Lanka (Daily Mirror, 2024). The planned attack was reportedly a response to the ongoing genocide in Gaza. This intelligence report reignited the national security debate and discussions on Islamic extremism. Experts like Rohan Gunaratna argued again that national security should be a priority and that the government needs to regulate religious spaces and monitor Muslim organisations (Gunaratna, 2024). In response to these concerns, the new president stated at a public rally that his government would take swift action on national security issues, but would do so without sensationalising the matter to avoid inciting social unrest among communities (SL Noise, 2024). This statement marks a potential shift in how the government addresses national security issues, focusing on them without politicizing the discussion.

Reflective Closure

This paper attempted to examine the process of securitisation of Islam in Sri Lanka following the Easter Sunday attacks. The analysis of the process highlights fundamental dynamics that have shaped the securitisation phenomenon in Sri Lanka. Firstly, state actors and security professionals played a crucial role in justifying policies that securitised Islam. However, it is evident that a multi-layered discursive ecosystem that already depicted Islam as a security concern for the country enabled state actors to justify their policies and discourses. Secondly, the securitisation of Islam in Sri Lanka is a result of an implicit

collaboration between political elites and extremist organisations such as BBS. This relationship had been kept under the surface before the Easter Sunday attacks. Gotabaya Rajapakse's appointment of an extremist Monk for the 'One Country One Law' project exposed this collaboration explicitly for the first time. Thirdly, the securitisation of Islam in Sri Lanka was not a temporary measure that arose after the Easter Sunday attacks and then defused gradually as the ISIS terrorist threat diminished. Instead, the securitisation policies have had a lasting impact on the Sri Lankan Muslim society and its socio-religious organisations as those organisations have still been seen as security threats, and the intelligence apparatus continue to observe their activities and moves. This development indicates that the securitisation of Islam in Sri Lanka has become a mechanism of power that shapes the everyday reality of the community. Despite these realities, the leadership of the Muslim community tries to navigate the conditions of securitisation by cooperating with state security agencies, challenging allegations, and building bridges between themselves and other communities.

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Interviewees List

ABM Ashraf, Former Director of the Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs, 31st March, 2024.

Asker Khan, Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, 16th September, 2019).

MHM Hassan, Sri Lanka Jama'ath e Islami, 31st March, 2024

NM Ameen, Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, 1ST April, 2024

Sheik Arkam Noormaith, All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama, 03rd April , 2024

YLM Haneez, Sri Lanka Jama'ath e Islami, 19th April, 2024

Terrorism in the Sahel: Beyond Border Complexities and Building Resilience

Ramzi Bendebka[*]

Abstract: This research addresses the complexity of Sahel terrorism and its regional and global effects. The paper focuses on the following questions: What are the multifaceted dimensions through which terrorism in al-Sahil influences the region? Furthermore, how do regional and international actors influence and shape the dynamics of terrorism in this region? By delving deeper into these inquiries, this paper aims to shed light on the complex nature of terrorism in the al-Sahil region, considering its impact dimensions and the various influences it encounters from both regional and international actors. Concerning the findings, first, the problem of terrorism is indeed a much larger shady business in which various regional and international actors are still involved and benefiting from its notoriety. States, regimes, and transnational interests within and beyond the Sahel region are implicated in confabulating never-ending terror. Second, terrorism's obscure nature is reflected in the international practice of the possibility of the enemy today being a friend tomorrow and vice versa. Third, insecurity in al-Saharan borders is not an issue of proximity to the Sahara but the ramifications of the ongoing politics of surrogate violence perpetrated in the pursuit of wealth and power. The research concluded that facing this compound problem necessitates a comprehensive strategy to address socio-political and economic causes and promote interregional and international cooperation.

Keywords: The Sahel, Terrorism, security, international intervention, regional actors.

Abstrak: Penyelidikan ini menangani kerumitan isu keganasan di wilayah Sahil dan kesan serantau dan globalnya. Kertas kerja ini memberi tumpuan kepada soalan-soalan berikut: Apakah dimensi pelbagai rupa yang mempengaruhi

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[*]Assistant Professor**,** Department of Political Science, AHAS KIRKHS, IIUM, Malaysia. Email: ramzib@iium.edu.my.

keganasan di wilayah Sahil? Bagaimana pula aktor serantau dan antarabangsa mempengaruhi dan membentuk dinamik keganasan di rantau ini? Dengan mendalami pertanyaan ini, kertas kerja ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan sifat kompleks keganasan di rantau al-Sahil, dengan mengambil kira dimensi impaknya dan pelbagai pengaruh yang dihadapinya daripada kedua-dua aktor serantau dan antarabangsa. Penemuan kajian menunjukkan, pertama, masalah keganasan sememangnya merupakan isu yang jauh lebih besar di mana pelbagai aktor serantau dan antarabangsa masih terlibat dan mendapat manfaat daripada reputasi burknya. Negara, rejim dan kepentingan transnasional di dalam dan di luar wilayah Sahil terlibat dalam menyatukan keganasan yang tidak berkesudahan. Kedua, sifat kabur keganasan dicerminkan dalam amalan antarabangsa tentang kemungkinan musuh hari ini menjadi kawan esok dan begitu juga sebaliknya. Ketiga, isu sekuriti di sempadan Sahara bukanlah kerana isu kedekatan dengan Sahara tetapi kesan daripada politik berterusan keganasan proksi yang dilakukan dalam mengejar kekayaan dan kuasa. Penyelidikan menyimpulkan bahawa menghadapi masalah kompaun ini memerlukan strategi yang komprehensif untuk menangani punca sosio-politik dan ekonomi dan menggalakkan kerjasama antara wilayah dan antarabangsa.

Kata kunci: wilayah Sahil, keganasan, keselamatan, campur tangan antarabangsa, aktor serantau.

Introduction

The study of terrorism in the Sahel is a matter of significant concern, as the region is a hotspot of both homegrown terrorism and external threats to the world. The geographical features of the Sahel, such as its vast open spaces and poorly protected borders, enable criminals, terror groups, and armed groups to use the region as a route for illegal migration and drug trafficking (Aning & Amedzrator, 2014; Kfir, 2018; Çonkar, 2020). Such dynamics affect the region, neighbouring countries, and the world. It is therefore important to have a basic understanding of terrorism in this region to effectively intervene in the social, political, and economic causes of this vice and evolve practical, fundamental, and sustainable solutions that address its multifaceted ramifications (Bamidele, 2020).

The activities of other international groups, such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), clearly link terrorism in the Sahel to global terrorism (Apau, & Banunle, 2019; Nsaibia & Weiss, 2020). These groups keep links

with international structures for the purpose of resource sharing, idea dissemination, and synchronisation of operations. Additionally, the Sahel region has attracted the interest of external players, such as France and the United States, who are conducting counterterrorism operations, thereby broadening the scope and global nature of the conflict. This interaction places the Sahel, both regionally and internationally, as a security threat region (Bala & Tar, 2021).

From the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east, over 150 million people live across some ten countries within its more than 5000 km length. This study focuses especially on Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania as well as Chad (the United Nations, 2018). According to Dieng (2021), Sahelians experience different degrees of humanitarian challenges, including armed conflicts and violent extremism in these regions. The states of the Sahel region have been experiencing interlocking political and security crises as a result of the spread of cross-border armed terrorist groups and organised criminal gangs (drugs, weapons, and human trafficking) in that harsh desert region, which provides them with immunity and concealing the attention of their followers from the forces of the governments of that region (Adeyemi et al., 2015, p. 34; Muhammed, 2023).

Moreover, Clapham (1996, p. 137) argued that superpowers have tried to support the governments of this part of Africa under cover of brilliant concepts for a long time ago, such as assistance in nation-building, the spread of freedom and equality, and the establishment of good governance for development, which is the salvation of the peoples of the region (Claphan, 1996). But these Western "delusional" principles have taken a reverse course in that region, prompting the emergence of an entire generation represented by media, political, military, and civil society organisations to express their unequivocal rejection of the politics of superiority, influence, and domination of international forces (Ilo, 2006, p. 17; the United Nations, 2018, p. 12). For example, there is increasing hostility towards France and its influence in the Sahel and Maghreb regions because of its colonial policy towards those States (Zoubir, 2020; Mansour, 2022).

Adding to the above matters, the western part of the African coast is known for its ethnic, religious, and sectarian diversity, its social and tribal fabric, and a large population density, the majority of which are

traditional farmers, as well as their humiliation of grazing livestock in extremely difficult environmental environments and in a complex social environment (Du Toit, 2019, p. 3). With security instability and sustained political tension, poverty, and the lack of prospects for a better life for young people in the Sahelo-African States, all of this.

These factors have resulted in interlocking crises, which have become a source of great concern to the governments of the Maghreb countries, such as illegal immigration and its repercussions on the neighbouring countries of the Maghreb and the countries of the South European Union, which fear a new crisis and tension in the event that the Niger's crisis is not managed realistically (Nsaibia & Weiss, 2020; Andolfatto, 2021; Attah et al., 2021; Bala & Tar, 2021; Kohnert, 2022). Civilian elites continue to be held hostage to the dependence and neglect of the evils of dictatorships and exploit them by the traditional international and regional forces whose influence in the region has begun to fade, leaving the peoples of the region in extreme poverty (Madubuegwu et al., 2021). These factors are the main source of illegal migration, which transforms this social variable in these African countries into threats to the security of the Maghreb countries from the land borders that link Algeria and Libya directly with Niger and Algeria and Mauritania with Mali (Nagar & Nagar, 2022; Olech, 2023). Mauritania, which has no direct borders with Niger, has so far opted for neutrality and disassociation vis-à-vis the current crisis in Niger (Malakooti, 2020; Rizk, 2024).

Terrorism in the Sahel is unique because it operates in one of the poorest regions of the world with weak governance structures and environmental stressors. The Sahel's primary distinction from other regions, where ideological or political goals primarily drive terrorism, lies in its focus on socioeconomic issues, tribalism, and the exploitation of state vulnerability (Hansen, 2019: pp. 41-42). Given these considerations, we can view the Sahel as a unique context that deviates from both purely domestic and purely global settings, necessitating the serious consideration of specific factors when studying and combating modern terrorism.

The paper is developed into three main steps. The first step deals with the threat of terrorism and analyses the terrorist attacks that have hit al-Sahel countries over the past years. The second step presents some of the regional and international responses to the crisis in the

region. It shows the immense detrimental impact of these interventions on the already shaky states of the Sahel. The concluding step focuses more on the outcomes of the situation in al-Sahel on the region and neighbouring countries. Negative regional and international impacts are based on profound developments during and after the Tuareg rebellions were dealt with. The paper concludes by verifying possible means for Sahelian states to autonomously reclaim control over their territory or to at least autonomously set the difference between their relations with foreign allies and regional partners on the one hand and their choices of making war against their own citizens on the other hand.

Literature Review

The literature shows that the interaction and interconnection of social and political crises, insecurity, and interventionist counterterrorism characterises terrorism in the Sahel. The literature also has demonstrated that weak governance, a poor economy, and inter-border contexts provide an easy environment for extremist groups, while external factors such as international organisations and major powers complicate the situation with their own motives and geopolitical agendas. It shows that the nature of terrorism in the region has continuously transformed and is a product of both internal conditions, including ethnic and socio-economic factors, and the external influences of extremist groups like Al Qaida and ISIS. Many researchers have attempted to explain how local and regional actors may respond to the transnational dimensions of terrorism without recreating dependencies or threatening sovereignty. Yet this question remains largely unanswered.

Also, Destabilising Sahel countries could have negative spill-over effects on their neighbours and the sub-region (Zelin & Cahn, 2023). Today, governments in the region are confronted not with a single threat but with a complex web of intertwined menaces. Second and connected to the first concern, pressures from a number of regional and local or national actors, as well as international powers, have been increasing, thus making it difficult for national authorities to steer clear from potential regional and international tides, influencing their security policies and measures (Moussa, 2021). Third and directly related to the above-mentioned matters, a wide variety of domestic security issues are stunting the ability of possibly interested governments to handle them efficiently and resolutely, thereby increasing the danger of unwanted

escalation (Lofkrantz, 2023). This review contextualises terrorism in the Sahel starting with an overview of the region, governance, and regional resilience, with the objectives of understanding the various facets of the problem as well as showing how the pathways towards sustainable resolution can be made clear.

Overview of the Region

This overview of the dynamics pertaining to the al-Sahel area will effectively establish the necessary context for the study at hand. To accomplish this objective, this portion will briefly delve into the geographical, political, and socio-economic elements constituting the region, thus forming the groundwork upon which the security dynamics are intricately intertwined.

The Sahel region, also known as the Sahel belt, is a vast area in West Africa, stretching from the southern edge of the Sahara Desert from Senegal in the West to Eritrea and the Horn of Africa in the East. It encompasses several countries in Central Africa, including Chad, Mali, Niger, and Sudan. It is worth mentioning that parts of Nigeria, Cameroon, Mauritania, and other neighbouring countries are also connected to the Lake Chad basin, which adds further complexity to the region's composition. From another perspective, the Sahel belt can be considered to extend across the Maghreb region and into the expansive Lake Chad basin. In terms of size, the Sahel belt covers a vast surface area that is astonishingly larger than the entirety of the European Union (EU) (Sabban, 2020; Hecan & Farhaoui, 2021; al-Sabbagh et al., 2024).

Figure (1) The African Sahel Countries (The United Nations, 2018).

It is important to note that a significant portion of the Sahel's population is concentrated around the Nile Valley, which serves as a vital lifeline for many communities in the region (Hecan & Farhaoui, 2021; Roushdy, 2023). While a conglomerate desert landscape primarily dominates the Sahel belt, there are also pockets of contrasting environments, such as the Bar-El-Ghazal clay lands, including the remarkable Southern Sudan region now. These diverse geographical features contribute to the region's rich tapestry of natural beauty and environmental variations (Çonkar, 2020). The political boundaries within the Sahel belt are largely remnants of colonial powers' influence; yet they hold vital significance in the region's political dynamics (Irvine, 1978). Each country within the Sahel has experienced similar challenges, including political tensions, terrorism, corruption, lack of transparency, and transboundary trade issues (Çonkar, 2020).

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the Sahel belt's diversity also fosters interdependence among its nations on an international scale (Thiam, 2022, p. 6). The unique characteristics of these diverse areas often necessitate cooperation and reliance on neighbouring countries for various resources. This interdependence extends to international affairs, where the Sahel countries frequently connect with external partners to address their multifaceted needs (Herrmann et al., 2020; Cepero et al., 2021; Adamou et al., 2021; Schwarz et al., 2022).

Terrorist Groups Operating in the Region

According to Raleigh, Nsaibia, and Dowd (2021), the two principal terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region are Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (EIGS). These two groups, who are related to ISIS AND AL-Qaeda in terms of logistics and loyalty, posing significant security threats, are not the only active factions in the region. In addition to JNIM and EIGS, approximately six splinter groups from both organisations operate semi-autonomously (Raleigh et al., 2021). These splinter groups, demonstrating substantial strength, often rival or surpass the dominant Islamic group in their respective areas of operation. Notably, the leaders of these splinter groups maintain unwavering loyalty towards the leadership of JNIM or EIGS.

Moreover, alongside these splinter groups, there exist numerous smaller local self-defence organisations and preachers who utilize

violence in regions infiltrated by JNIM and EIGS. These local actors, like the Badiun, adopt a defensive stance and employ forceful measures to safeguard their communities from the influence and activities of these extremist organisations. While they may operate on a smaller scale, their dedication and resourcefulness cannot be underestimated in countering the threat posed by JNIM and EIGS. Looking towards the broader scope, it is encouraging to observe that in 2021, there was a 4 per cent decline in the number of deaths resulting from terrorist incidents in the region compared to the previous year (Çonkar, 2020).

It is worth highlighting that the level of violence, terrorism, and the work of the terrorist groups is generally highest in Mali and Burkina Faso. These two countries have been plagued by the atrocities of terrorist groups, who have not only maintained a constant and alarming presence but have also gradually increased their attacks in other countries in the Sahel since 2021 after reducing their nefarious activity since 2018 (Nsaibia & Weiss, 2020).

For instance, In the period between 2013 and April 5th, 2019, AQIM has executed an astounding total of 36 attacks targeting the northern region: one attack occurred in 2013, four in 2015, 15 in 2017, nine in 2018, and an additional seven up until April 5th, 2019. Moreover, Burkina Faso has endured the wrath of 33 ISGS-orchestrated attacks from 2018 to 2019. Moreover, a previously unidentified male jihadist group, often referred to as the "Sultan of the Sahel," has emerged and has already conducted five deadly attacks in Burkina Faso since January 2020 (Çonkar, 2020; Fee, 2022; Bere, 2024; Glied, 2024).

It is also deeply concerning to witness how violence has flared up repeatedly in Mauritania, where, unfortunately, several innocent foreigners have fallen victim to kidnapping incidents by terrorists in order to ask for money to finance their activities. Moreover, the activity from the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in southern Niger has also experienced a worrying surge since 2020, posing a grave threat to stability in the region (Haruna, 2022). In 2021, terrorist groups unfortunately found fertile ground for their malicious endeavours in Libya because of instability and civil war. Taking advantage of the ongoing instability, these groups have launched several large-scale attacks on major towns, causing havoc and despair among the innocent civilians caught in the crossfire (Béres, 2021).

Despite the above-mentioned literature, this research paper makes a significant theoretical contribution to the topic by identifying the missing links that contribute to the sustenance and nurture of terrorism in the Sahel regional and international systems. Usually, researchers conduct independent studies on terrorism, portraying it as a security threat in specific regions or globally, without combining both analyses. This research adds to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the roles of transnational actors, political structures, and socio-economic contexts in fostering insecurity. For instance, the paper focuses on the responsibility of intervention, which, on the one hand, claims to fight terrorism and, on the other, promotes regional conflicts. It also explores the emergent socio-political system of the Sahel and how poverty, poor governance, and an open border systematically intertwine terrorism, crime, and politics.

Further, the paper places the results in the context of sovereignty and regional resistance. The study delves into the counter-terrorism approach prevalent in the literature, interpreting terrorism as a consequence of structural factors and domestic politics within transnational politics. With these connections of different actors and analyses, the paper contributes to theoretical discourses on terrorism in the Sahel, where complex and multifaceted approaches to analysis and prevention are highly appropriate.

Methodology

The research involves an in-depth review of existing literature, including academic articles, government and non-government reports, and expert analyses, to understand terrorism in the Sahel region. By examining a diverse range of sources, the study seeks to capture the multifaceted issues of terrorism, considering regional and international perspectives (Thurston, 2020; Walther & Christopoulos, 2015). The research methodology is designed to provide a holistic understanding of the terrorism landscape in the Sahel by incorporating data. Statistical data on terrorist incidents and fatalities are collected from reliable databases, such as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and reports from the United Nations. This study employs a qualitative content analysis method to interpret textual data from literature, such as reports and academic articles. It also analyses data on terrorist acts and fatalities. This approach allows the study to put terrorism into the

geopolitical and economic perspective to understand the reasons behind the phenomenon and how to mitigate it.

Results

Many studies have shown that the impacts of terrorism on the Sahel region have been very significant, particularly in terms of the victims killed during the last two decades. The endless problems of terrorism in the region have made the number of deaths and victims ever increasing. The provided graph, titled "Violence Linked to Terrorist Groups in the Sahel," illustrates the number of fatalities from 2017 to a projected 2022 due to militant Islamist activities in the Sahel region.
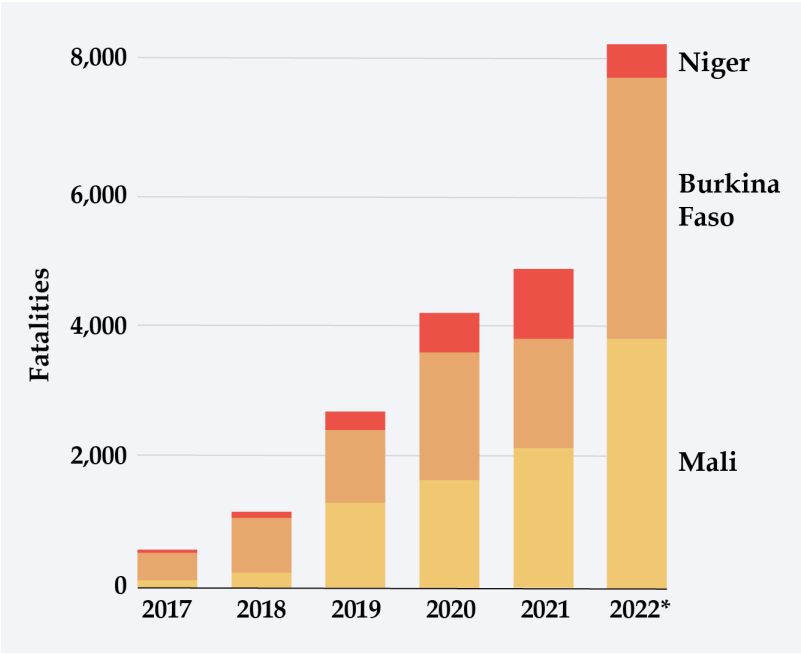
Figure (2) Violence Linked to Terrorist Groups in the Sahel (ACLEDP, 2022).

In 2017, the fatalities were relatively low across all three countries but began to rise sharply in subsequent years because of violence. By 2020, the death toll had more than quadrupled compared to 2017, with continued increases through 2021 and a significant projected peak in 2022. The graph shows that Burkina Faso and Niger, in particular, experienced the highest surges in fatalities, with Niger peaking in 2022. This upward trend underscores the growing instability and the severe

impact of militant Islamist violence in the Sahel region, emphasising the urgent need for strategic interventions and conflict resolution efforts.

Figure (3) below, presented by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, provides a detailed overview of the spread and intensification of militant Islamist violence across several regions in the Sahel from 2017 to 2022. This visualisation categorises incidents by the number of violent events in each district, with a scale ranging from 1-5 events to over 160 events. The data is organized by country, region, and district, highlighting the most affected areas in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, and Benin. The intensity of violence is depicted using varying shades of blue, with darker shades representing a higher number of events. In Mali, regions such as Mopti and Menaka have shown a significant increase in violence over the years, with multiple districts experiencing over 160 events by 2022. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, districts like Soum, Yagha, and Seno have seen a marked escalation in violence, indicating a worrying trend of militant activity.

The increasing difficulty of militant terrorist groups in the Sahel is also shown by this data, which demonstrates a substantial increase in violent events across priority districts within these areas. The patterns suggest that while some areas have been consistently affected over the years, others have seen a rapid escalation in violence, particularly in Burkina Faso and Mali. The table's projection for 2022 indicates a continuation of this trend, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address the root causes of militancy and instability in these areas. The distribution of violent events also reflects broader geopolitical dynamics, such as porous borders and local grievances, which militant groups have exploited to expand their influence. This comprehensive visualisation is a critical tool for policymakers and researchers aiming to develop strategies to combat the spread of militant Islamist violence and promote stability in the Sahel.

The Epicentre of the Sahel Crisis

Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso are among the poorest countries in the world, the most vulnerable of which are economic and security. This situation is further complicated by the threat of terrorism that has struck them for more than one decade. However, after entering a herd with the West and neighbouring countries, the military who rule these three
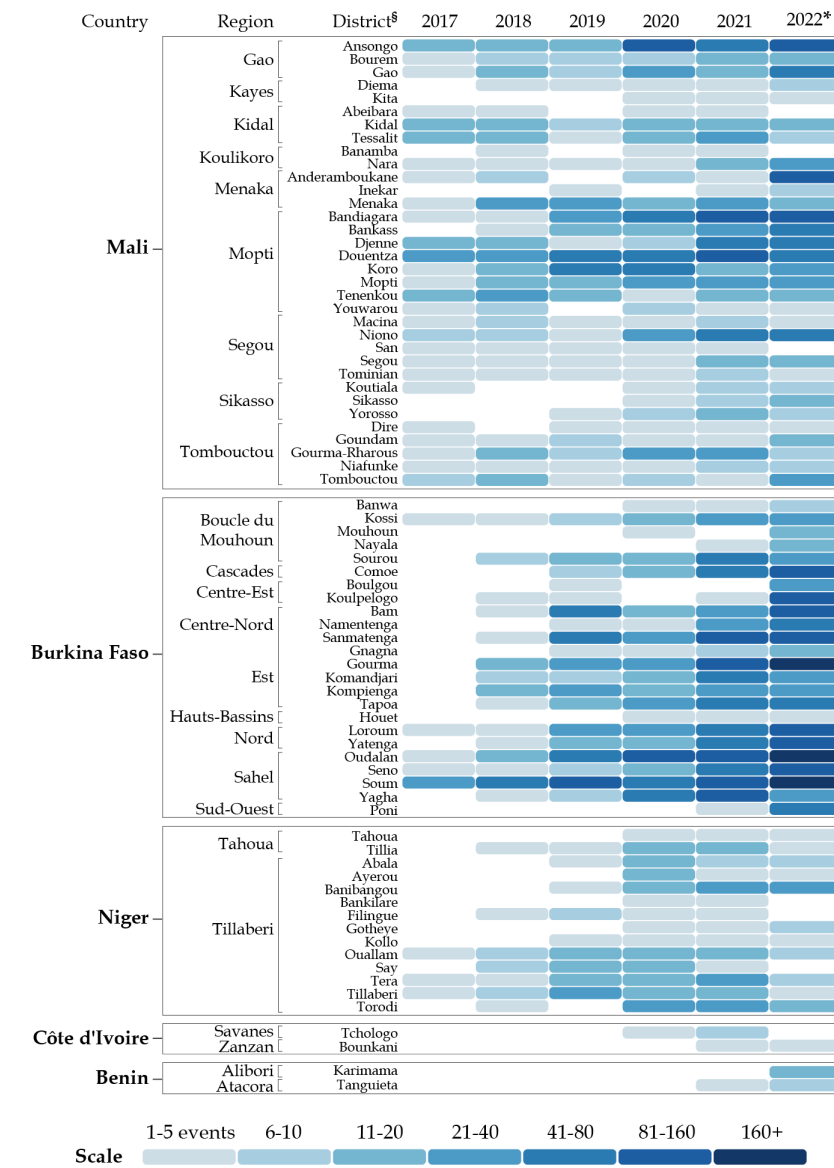
Figure (3) Spreading and Intensifying Terrorism Violence in the Sahel (ACLEDP, 2022).

countries dreams of establishing a federal unit that will enable them to face common challenges (Kamara, 2020; Markakis, 2021).

These three states have many common denominators, except poverty and security fragility (Boas & Strazzari, 2021; Koloma, 2022). According to Omotuyi, Agunyai, and Phago (2024), the most notable is that they are in exceptional constitutional situations after military coups that have led the armies to rule, making them subject to a strong regional blockade and prompting them to establish a strategic alliance with Russia (Omotuyi et al., 2024).

As a part of its new approach, last year, the three states established a military alliance under the name of the Alliance of Sahelian States (ASS) aimed at consolidating efforts to combat terrorism and organized and cross-border crime. At the same time, they announced at the end of January 2024 the official withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Grutjen, 2024; Owa et al., 2024; Onapajo & Babalola, 2024). But the most remarkable step, announced by ministers from the three states during a meeting in Burkina Faso at the end of February 2024, was their desire to establish a federal system that, if achieved, would be an unprecedented step in the history of the Sahel region (Grütjen, 2024).

During the above-mentioned meeting, several experts and officials discussed establishing a Confederacy among the three states in the first phase, which would pave the way towards a future federal system. The Minister of Defence of Burkina Faso, General Kassoum Coulibaly, concluded that the meeting would lead to finalising the federal structure the three states aspire to (Speight, 2024; Aziz & Mohamed, 2024). Following the meeting, the Minister of Defence of Mali, in February 2024, said that "the Malian army had become well-armed and had qualifications to regain control of all financial territory, but would not stop but rather sought to assist Niger and Burkina Faso in the fight against terrorism."

Although more than six months have passed since the establishment of the Alliance of Sahelian States, the level of security and military coordination among them remains low, and terrorist organisations continue to have the capacity to move freely in the border triangle, although their armies have achieved some victories, they remain limited and individually. It is because a group of generals leads these dreaming

endeavours in the three countries, but before that, they have to overcome serious difficulties related to security and military coordination at the border to regain control of large areas of their states that remain under regulatory control by al-Qaeda and ISIS (Glied, 2024; Ojewale, 2024; Bere; 2024).

It is also remarkable to highlight that while the threat of terrorism drives the Sahelian States (Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso) to unite, the military who govern these fragile States relies on the threat of terrorism as an argument to remain in power, disrupt the Constitution and declare a state of emergency, and reject any talk of presidential elections in the near future. The lack of coordination with the States of the region, particularly Algeria, as one of the regional forces in North Africa, which has previous experience in the fight against terrorism, has further complicated the process of dismantling armed groups, which often have extensions outside the three states (Bereketeab, 2024).

Terrorism Threat in the Sahel

The word 'terrorism' has different interpretations based on the point of view of the state, system, or multinational corporation (Duvall & Stohl, 2020). Atmaca (2017) indicates that the concept may vary based on the boundary of influence, presenting an intriguing perspective on its multifaceted nature. Indeed, what the analytical standpoint sides (Atmaca, 2017; Duvall & Stohl, 2020) are considering is not to disregard the possibility that the current opinion and definition of the concept change depending on the different perspectives that come into play (Horowitz, 2023). Moreover, it is crucial to acknowledge that a qualified definition of this concept does not exist. Therefore, it becomes evident that various scholars (Ackerman & Burnham, 2021), equipped with their diverse backgrounds and approaches, define terrorism in different ways both etymologically, exploring its linguistic origins, and in terms of its own unique characteristics and how it manifests in the world we live in today, that can represent the interest and perspective of some parts as well (Ackerman & Burnham, 2021).

In the case of Africa, it is necessary to mention that the concept of terrorism is often confused with the concept of freedom fighter or liberation army (Richards, 2022). Adler (2023, p. 71) argues that terms like freedom fighter or liberation army are much more likely to be designed by the ruling people imposing positive charges on them;

conversely, such negative charges are awarded to these words by the opposing side. Additionally, according to Western countries, for instance, the resistance movement in Palestine is considered 'terrorism,' but it is on the flip side for the Muslim countries. At this point, within the definition of terrorism, only four fundamental characteristics of terrorism, which have an indispensable impact on security, will be identified, starting with the necessary elements that constitute modern terrorism. The use of violence against civilians, killing people, and destroying life necessities, like roads, hospitals, and other public infrastructures, all can be considered an act of terrorism (Pašagić, 2020; Larue & Danzell, 2022; Jore, 2023; Fortna, 2023; Ahmed & Lynch, 2024).

The Sahel countries suffer from the internal spread of terrorism itself. Poverty and internal conflicts give rise to radical movements that threaten the security of people within these countries and from neighbouring countries. Second, regional actors such as criminal organisations and terrorist networks are increasingly threatening the security of the countries (Friedman, 2023). Regional and international criminal organisations, such as drug smugglers and human traffickers, are increasingly using porous borders to smuggle drugs and traffic human beings. Smugglers use the eastern and western borders of the Sahel countries as bridges to smuggle many goods, which affects the economic and social security of these nations. Third, the Sahel countries suffer from armed conflicts in neighbouring countries that have troubled cross-border implications, and therefore, the problem of the neighbouring countries became the problem of the country itself, making it difficult to deal with it alone (Hecan & Farhaoui, 2021).

The Sahel in the Regional and International Context

This study also found that actions taken by previous colonial powers, such as France, could provoke a substantial negative reaction or be seen as an instance of Western interventionism (Schmidt, 2013, p. 189; Beloff, 2024). The U.S. government initiated this initiative in anticipation of al-Qaeda and other terrorist organisations relocating to the Sahel region, which is perceived as a safe zone (Davis, 2016, p. 69). This notion gained prominence in U.S. foreign and military policy. In response to the challenging landscape and unstable governments in the Sahel region, the United States initiated the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership

(formerly called the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative) in 2005. The aim of this program was to address the perceived threat in the region (Davis, 2016, pp. 151-154). In addition, the presence of fully-equipped Tuaregs, who had previously served as auxiliary forces for Gaddafi's military, returning from Libya to northern Mali exacerbated an already complex situation (János, 2013; Hashim, 2013).

French military intervention, on the other hand, seems not to have improved security in the conflict-torn regions, with JNIM-AQIM, ISIS and switch-sides bandit chiefs operating in these regions (Godo, 2021; Sempijja & Eyita, 2022). Furthermore, the impact of French intervention goes beyond just the immediate security situation. It has also had socio-political consequences that have negative implications (Bertrand et al., 2023). It led the peoples of the region to confront their rulers, believing that they were returning French colonialism to the region. The Sahel region experienced increased security threats and instability due to subsequent coups d'état to overthrow France's loyalists.

Some view French intervention as a form of economic exploitation and a continuation of historical imperialism (Chafer, 2020; Guichaoua, 2020; Marchal, 2021; Egbewatt, 2023). They argue that the intervention only serves to protect French interests, particularly in the form of resource extraction and control. This perspective raises questions about the true intentions behind such interventions and whether they truly prioritise the well-being and autonomy of the affected populations. Moreover, the situation's complexity is heightened by the presence of various non-state actors operating in the Sahel regions.

On the one hand, some locals see the presence of former colonial powers as a necessary evil, as it provides a certain level of stability and prevents the spread of extremism. They view it as a means to safeguard their communities from further violence and turmoil (Marchal, 2021; Egbewatt, 2023).

The ongoing crisis threatened the security of neighbouring Algeria, the strongest military power in the Sahel region (Ammour, 2012; Conkar, 2020; Boukhars, 2019). However, the establishment of the G5 Sahel, which did not include Algeria, hindered these regional initiatives, but this did not generate any regret among French authorities; on the contrary, they saw it as an excellent opportunity to counter Algeria's army and its strategic influence in the Sahara-Sahel region (Camara,

2020). Furthermore, likely, France is not interested in ensuring complete security in the region, particularly in Niger, as it could impede the realisation of the Algerian-Nigerian gas project. Therefore, the ongoing situation in the Sahel also serves as a tool to weaken the influence and development of regional powers.

Discussion

In the midst of a wave of terror in the region, a series of coups has significantly rearranged the geopolitical landscape in the Sahel region, and the political repercussions of the coups d ' état of the so-called national military councils in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have changed the balance of power between international actors in the region, in ways that go beyond the Sahel (Sandnes, 2023).

The forced withdrawal of foreign forces from the Sahel began after the second coup d ' état in Mali in 2021. With popular support, the new authorities have called on foreign forces, particularly France, to leave the country, followed by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (Carbone & Casola, 2022, p. 84). After being forced out of Mali, France found a strong ally in Niger, deploying 1,500 elements to continue anti-terrorist operations on the coast. However, the coup d ' état of July 2023 and the severe resentment of Nigerians forced Paris to reconsider its presence in Niger and the Sahel region in general (Sowale, 2024). Days after the coup, thousands of Nigerians supporting the coup demonstrated in front of the French Embassy in Niamey, denouncing the alleged neocolonial behaviour of France (Prashad et al., 2023; Ukpere & Frank, 2024), sometimes waving Russian flags, although there was no evidence of Russia's involvement in the coup officially condemned by the Kremlin.

It is particularly noteworthy to mention that Mali, being positioned at the very heart of these immensely formidable terrorist networks, is presumed to possess a certain level of Jihadi activity prevailing in the adjacent areas (Ajodo, 2023). Nevertheless, it is of utmost importance to acknowledge that the intensity of such aforementioned activities is expected to diminish when juxtaposed with the levels witnessed within the geographical boundaries of Mali (Bösch, 2023). As an undeniable outcome, it becomes increasingly apparent that other countries located within the Sahelian region, where the extremist ideology has not yet taken such deeply entrenched roots and where the governmental

mechanisms are relatively better equipped to address the prevailing security challenges, shall generally experience a lower degree of terrorist activity imposed upon their territorial boundaries, like Algeria.

On the other hand, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) have been actively engaged in conducting frequent cross-border attacks in Burkina Faso while also unleashing their brutal assaults within the country's boundaries (Bere, 2024). Primarily, these infiltrations originate from Mali, with intermittent cases of incursions from Niger. However, due to the challenging topographical conditions prevailing in the Sahel region, attacks on the security forces of Burkina Faso from Niger are relatively infrequent (Glied, 2024; Bere, 2024). The extremist groups typically adopt a strategy to infiltrate the country and wage guerrilla warfare against the military forces. Consequently, the security services stationed in the three Tuareg provinces, which encompass the northern part of Burkina Faso and share borders with Mali and Niger, face an alarmingly high level of danger (Çonkar, 2020). This alarming escalation in violence reflects the volatile and precarious security situation the nation faces (Çonkar, 2020; Fee, 2022; Bere, 2024; Glied, 2024).

When the military rulers in Niger decided to put an end to the presence of American armed forces on the territory of the country in May, this move was met with great concern in Washington (Rogers & Goxho, 2023; Segell, 2023). Niger, located at the heart of the sub-Saharan Sahel region, hosts two major bases used by the United States for long-term surveillance and tracking of violent extremist organisations in Libya, Chad, Mali, and Nigeria. The U.S. Military Command in Africa is preparing to evacuate them by September 2024 (Chin & Bartos, 2024).

All the Sahel countries shared the same grievances when their armed forces were angry at the ongoing attacks by extremist organisations against the local army and population. This resentment was exacerbated by the failure of Western forces in the region to deal with these groups (Vogel, 2024). With increased popular anger, these armies had only to intervene to eliminate what they considered incompetent civilians and foreign forces unable to counter-terrorism (Jackson, 2023). Civil society representatives believe that terrorism in the region originated from the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya, with France playing a major role (Alcaro & Pirozzi, 2014, p. 19).

Terrorism, which is considered a "symptom" rather than a cause of conflict, encompasses various dimensions beyond its international scope (Olofinbiyi, 2023, p. 2). While the number of non-African actors sympathising with the Pan-Islamist cause, such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant ISIL, and al-Shabaab, is on the rise, it is crucial to recognize the intricate dynamics involving leaders with competing, albeit trans-border, political loyalties. Within the Western and North African sphere, there exists a widespread inclination among the general public and media to narrow down terrorist violence solely (Abdulmajid, 2021, p. 83; Glied, 2024).

Both governmental and non-governmental actors have their agendas and engage in regional power games. The responses to terrorist activities are different and, more to the point, motivated by different regional and international powers' interests. Algeria and the USA, for instance, have done more to address terrorism than Libya. On the other hand, the Nigerian army has explained its poor fight against AQIM for several reasons. One of them is the help, which is not enough, coming from the USA – training and adequate weapons. Hence, it is in the interest of the ruling few local clans to attract foreign aid to help secure their survival (de Larramendi, 2020). Aid from abroad may take the form of humanitarian assistance or direct support to the army in Sahelian states, such as Niger and Mali.

Local non-state organisations are not averse to the involvement of European and international actors either. For instance, the Nigerien's Movement for Justice (MNJ), as a Tuareg[1] the movement found it useful to exploit the growing momentum of humanitarian and military intervention in neighbouring Sudan's Darfur. Starting in, but much more after 2002, there are many reports about 'foreign' armed groups to whom the government of Niger assigns Tuareg identity and who benefit from the security crisis in the wasteland in different ways, like smuggling, selling weapons, and helping the other local groups in the region.

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[1] The name "Tuareg" denotes tribal and nomadic communities that speak the Tuareg language. There are an estimated 1.2 million Tuareg individuals spread across Libya, Mali, Niger, Algeria, and Burkina Faso. Nevertheless, the Tuareg are a minority community in those countries (Bashir, 2022).

On the other hand, the United Nations is the most significant international actor with regard to Sahel security, which seeks to exert its influence through its support to the G5 Sahel at the *Conseil de paix et de sécurité* (CPS)[2]. The United Nations' engagements contribute to conflict resolution, peacebuilding, promotion of human rights, and international humanitarian interventions. However, after the withdrawal of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, the mission of the UN became unclear, as there were more possibilities of non-cooperation shown by the leaders of these countries with foreign actors.

With the decline of Western influence in the Sahel region, key actors such as Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates are playing greater roles and promoting their economic interests by building relations with the region's new leaders. Consequently, Africa has become the scene of renewed competition among the great powers, reminding us of the Cold War (Stambøl & Berger, 2023). Russia has played a greater role in security issues, albeit driven by economic interests. The Sahel allows Moscow to re-establish its existence and prestige, which the Soviet Union once enjoyed. Since the first decade of the twenty-first century, Moscow has strengthened its presence in Africa, signed a number of agreements with African States, and tried to secure military bases. In the Sahel region, Moscow relied on the Vagner Mercenary Group, which has now been reconstituted as the Russian Africa Corps, which spread to Burkina Faso after the *coup d ' état* and is located in Mali, Libya, and the Central African Republic to assist existing regimes in the fight against terrorism (Omotuyi et al., 2024).

The changes in the Sahel region will have serious implications for Algeria and the wider region. The stability of its southern border with Niger and Mali is essential, not only because of the threats of cross-border terrorism and organised crime but also because of the potential impact on its large investments in various regional projects. These include the 4,100 km Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline for the export of

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[2] The G5 Sahel Alliance is a regional collaborative framework created in 2014 to tackle security concerns and development initiatives in West Africa. The coalition includes Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. The withdrawal of Burkina Faso and Niger in 2023, following Mali's departure in 2022, precipitated the disbandment of the alliance (Security Council Report, 2023).

Nigerian natural gas to Europe via Niger and Algeria and the nearly 4,800 km trans-Saharan highway between Algiers and Lagos via Niger as well (Obasi, 2023). The conflict or continuing unrest could jeopardise these projects and Algeria's political, economic, and security relations over the years with its neighbours in the Sahel region and accelerate the flow of migrants into its territory in their attempts to reach Europe.

The situation in the Sahel may be intended to conflict over the new gas and hydrogen lines. The arrival of gas and hydrogen in Europe from Algeria through the Sahel would be a powerful motive for some states, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and France, not to conflict in the region and not to allow the completion of the Algerian-Nigerian project (Voytyuk, 2023). The Turkish presence may also be intended to control the transport of gas through the Eurasia project between Azerbaijan and Turkey, of which the failure of the Nigerian Algerian project may be at the core of the foreign powers' presence in the Sahel region now for purely economic reasons (Hafner et al., 2023).

The greatest risk of redrawing the geopolitical landscape in the Sahel is that these military councils may become mere pawns rather than actors with genuine will. They lack a clear strategy and vision to ensure the security necessary for economic development and stability in the region (da Silva et al., 2023).

Conclusion

The current terrorism in the Sahel can be viewed as a comprehensive issue deeply rooted in the region's social, political, economic, and geographical frameworks. In this research, it is manifested that Saharan terrorism is not only a local affair but also an international issue that is compounded by poor governance, poverty, a borderless nature, and dynamics. Global and regional players have merged with the internal variables of the Sahel situation, such as ethnic tensions and youth marginalisation, with external factors leading to the emergence of terrorism. The problem is also echoed by the soaring influx of refugees and inadequate solutions from regional governments to address the fundamental causes that fuel instabilities. Furthermore, the paper concludes that geopolitical and economic factors often drive outside actors' participation rather than their belief in their ability to contribute to regional stability. This duplicity harms any attempt to sustain long-lasting peace and development in the Sahel region.

The author's current research highlights the use of terrorism as a political tool, a phenomenon that demands attention. The study established that today's governments and rebels use terrorism to achieve their goals by targeting governance institutions, exploiting regional conflicts, and using international efforts to further their causes. This notion of 'surge-violence,' whereby state and non-state actors pander in cycles of self-serving coalitions, vitiates the region's security landscape. This paper reveals that today's friend is the enemy of tomorrow, where governments, foreign powers, and factions are involved, as illustrated in this analysis. Such dynamics sustain insecurity and hinder efforts to establish effective counter-terrorism measures.

Thus, the study contends that eradication of terrorism in the Sahel requires more than a military-led solution and must incorporate social, political, and economic factors that promote extremism. Therefore, Effective strategies should prioritise strengthening governance, fostering economic opportunities, and promoting regional collaboration to counteract the drivers of terrorism. Moreover, by locating terrorism within this larger framework, the research also contributes to understanding the problem and puts forward the general outlines to meet the complex task of combating terrorism in the Sahel region.

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Expulsion of the "Turk" - Contextualising Islamophobia in the Balkans: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Anja Zalta[*]

Abstract: This article deals with the issue of Islamophobia in the Balkans, with a special emphasis on Bosnia and Herzegovina. The motive for discussing this topic is the analysis of political discourses and religious mythologies and the rise of nationalisms that arise from them, and which in the 90s of the 20th century led to a brutal civil war with a religious dimension. We do not claim that religious nationalisms alone ignited the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they are certainly the key factors that contributed to the legitimisation and expansion of various aggressive interventions. The article exposes the issue of Islamophobic discourses as well as the construction of the "Other" in the specific socio-cultural and historical context in combination with the Eurocentric compression of racism that can be recognised in Orientalist discourses in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in certain cases and circumstances in Europe as such. In the second part, the article presents the Islamophobic actions that are the result of orientalist discourses, from the most exposed „expulsion of the Turk" to the fear of neo-Ottomanism, which is spread by some academic and political circles in Bosnia even today. The central motive of this article is to offer starting material for further steps in analysing causes and consequences of religio-political antagonisms and consequently the search for opportunities for creative and peaceful coexistence.

[*]Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Email: anja.zalta@ff.uni-lj.si

Keywords: Islamophobia, racism, Europe, Orientalism, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Muslims, Turks, Neo-Ottomanism.

Abstrak: Artikel ini membincangkan isu Islamofobia di Balkan, dengan penekanan khusus pada Bosnia dan Herzegovina. Motif untuk membincangkan topik ini adalah analisis wacana politik dan mitologi agama dan kebangkitan nasionalisme yang timbul, dan pada dekad 90-an abad ke-20 telah membawa kepada perang saudara yang kejam dengan dimensi keagamaan. Artikel ini tidak mendakwa bahawa nasionalisme agama semata-mata mencetuskan perang di Bosnia dan Herzegovina, tetapi ia sememangnya faktor utama yang menyumbang kepada legitimasi dan pengembangan pelbagai campur tangan agresif. Artikel pada mulanya mendedahkan isu wacana Islamofobia serta pembinaan konsep "the Other" dalam konteks sosio-budaya dan sejarah yang spesifik dalam kombinasi dengan pemampatan perkauman Eurosentrik yang telah dikenalpasti dalam wacana Orientalis di Bosnia dan Herzegovina dan juga dalam kes dan keadaan tertentu di Eropah. Di bahagian kedua, artikel itu memaparkan tindakan Islamofobia yang merupakan hasil daripada wacana Orientalis, daripada „pengusiran orang Turkiye" dan ketakutan kepada ancaman neo-Ottomanisme, yang disebarkan oleh beberapa kalangan akademik dan politik di Bosnia sehingga hari ini. Motif utama artikel ini adalah untuk menawarkan bahan permulaan untuk langkah selanjutnya dalam menganalisis sebab dan akibat pertentangan agama-politik dan seterusnya mencari peluang untuk kewujudan bersama yang kreatif dan aman.

Kata kunci: Islamofobia, perkauman, Eropah, Orientalisme, Bosnia dan Herzegovina, Muslim, Orang Turkiye, Neo-Ottomanisme

Introduction[1]

Many studies have been conducted on the religious dimension and the role of national mythologies in the war in BiH or Bosnia and Herzegovina (Velikonja 1998, Seels, 2002, Zalta 2020). Our thesis in this paper

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continues initial research on the mentioned topic by emphasising that the unprocessed understanding of victimisation identity, which derives from Serbian nationalist mythology, following the defeat in Kosovo field in 1398, when the Ottoman army defeated the Serbian army, and without understanding the orientalist discourse, which is directed at Bosnian Muslims as a homogenous „Other" that threatens and betrays the Slavic and including Christian identity from then on, there will be no peaceful coexistence in BiH and beyond. One of the reason for this Islamophobic discourse is religious illiteracy, based on the failure to recognize the heterogeneity of Islamic traditions. It presents Islam as a monolithic block that is static and unresponsive to change, is culturally inferior, undemocratic, even violent and threatens the civilisational standards of the West.

This ignorance generates Islamophobia even beyond borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina and enters the bigger European scene, marking various actions and reactions towards Muslim minorities in Europe (an example of Islamophobia in Slovenia, where the majority of Muslims are Bosniaks) (Islamophobia report: Zalta 2017; 2020). The paper defines key concepts: first the Islamophobia as understood and used in the European reports on Islamophobia, and later the concept of Orientalism in the context of new racism, referring to the European attitude towards Islam and Muslims as a consequence of religious illiteracy. Islamophobic actions, which are the consequences of Islamophobic and Orientalist discourses, from the „expulsion of the Turk" to the fear of neo-Ottomanism, which is spread by some academic and political circles in Bosnia even today, will be discussed.

Contextualising Islamophobia

In order to narrow down our research and highlight the case of Islamophobia in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is important to emphasise the necessity of contextualising any report on Islamophobia. The attachment to place, time, space, political actors, socio-cultural, historical, political, economic factors is key in contextualising reports and analyses on Islamophobia. This is important to avoid the simplistic generation of binaries created (probably unintentionally) by various accounts of Islamophobia, which divide "us" and "them" and thereby further divide the public sphere and exacerbate political discourses. Such simplistic reports contribute to reductionist interpretations, based

on the idea of the "clash of civilisations" or the "clash of religions" On the other hand, there is also a danger that they might prevent or labeled as "islamophobic" any well-intentioned constructive criticism, concerns and proposals regarding particular Muslim actions and communities in Europe and their relationship with the wider European societies and policies.

There are many quality and exemplary studies and theoretical approaches that have addressed the topic of Islamophobia based on historical, political, economic, etc., perspectives. Farid Hafez and Enes Bayrakli, the editors of the most comprehensive annual Islamophobia report in Europe since 2015, with the intention to encourage politicians and the general public to discuss Islamophobia on the basis of qualitative data, are proposing the use of the following working definition of Islamophobia:

> ,'Islamophobia is about dominant group of people aiming at seizing, stabilising and widening their power by means of defining a scapegoat – real or invented – and excluding this scapegoat from the resources/rights/definition of constructed 'we'. Islamophobia operates by constructing a static 'Muslim' identity, which is attributed in negative terms and generalised for all Muslims. At the same time, Islamophobic images are fluid and vary in different contexts, because Islamophobia tells us more about the Islamophobe than it tells us about Muslim/Islam'' (Bayraklı & Hafez, 2020, 8).

We reiterate the warning that there is a danger that the complexity and diversity of the Muslim identity are many times insufficiently presented even in the reports on Islamophobia, which can generate discourse where Muslims are presented as a monolithic block, thus disregarding the diversity and complexity of Muslim communities. The diversity of these communities involves not only differences in terms of languages and ethnicity but also socio-political characteristics, which are involved in the construction of collective and individual identity.

The contextualisation of the issue of Islamophobia cannot avoid questioning and analysing the dark stains in European history, such as racism and orientalism. Salman Sayyid emphasises the problem of the Eurocentric understanding of the concept of racism, which is according

to him associated (only) with the Nazi regime of the 20th century and neo-Nazis' reviving ideology. As such, racism according to Sayyid is regarded as an "exceptional moment", not applicable to European colonial rules, Orientalist notions and other forms of segregation, carried out by colonial rulers and enabled by racial laws (Sayyid, 2010, 12–13).. Sayyid warns that it is possible to think about the Eurocentric concept of racism without recognizable racists, especially in the case of Islamophobia (Sayyid, 2010, 12–13). Regarding the context of Islamophobia and racism, Vlasta Jalušič is referring to the so called "new racism" or so called ‚'cultural racism'' which differs from the "old" one in that the former is no longer based on *, 'given biological research foundations or, in other words, on the concept of race, but* above all on cultural dimensions of various groups and characteristics ascribed to their 'members': e.g. nationality, traditional customs, religion, eating habits, dress codes and culture of (everyday) life. The allegedly fixed and unalterable biological basis of racism is thus pushed into the background, and what comes to the fore is a relatively evasive and fluid set of culturally grounded 'characteristics' that can be ascribed to individuals and groups fairly randomly''(Jalušič, 2015, 30).

While biological racism implies rejection, exclusion and unequal treatment of people on the basis of their physical appearance and other physical characteristics, cultural racism conducts discourse based on cultural differences and on differences between various types of nomos or sacred cosmos, between value systems that distinguish arbitrarily between "civilised" values and "inferior barbarian, undemocratic, etc." values. Such types of racism can be recognised in Orientalist discourses, and is enough to rummage through the "treasure trove" of stereotypical "European images" of Bosnians and/or Muslims to find a number of examples. For instance while dealing with the question of Islam and Muslims (in Bosnia and Herzegovina or in Europe), one often comes across interpretations of Islam as an alternative to secular politics and a so-called "civilisational threat" posed by political activism to destroy the secular state. Esra Ozyurek (2005) in her article, ‚'*The politics of cultural unification, secularism, and the place of Islam in the new Europe*'' is analyzing two positions dominating discussions of the role of Muslims and Islam in the European Union: the right position argues that Islam is external and even antithetical to the culture of the European Union (it is too conservative and uncivilised, it undermines standards of

the Western civilisation, etc.), while the so-called humanist-left position is arguing that only secularism allows religious minorities to live safely in the nation-state system.

Several debates and articles have already been written on this topic (Zalta, 2018), yet the challenge for the European Union remains, especially regarding the questions, how to think and live religious pluralism and how to enable different religious minorities to enter the wider public sphere, without discrimination in the workplace, in the media, in education, etc. It is no doubt that Muslims (as well as other believers or members of various religious communities in European Union, who want to live their religion and publicly demonstrate it) need to feel and to live as equal active citizens. However, through educational systems and other systemic solutions it is also necessary to clearly present historical causes and specifics involved in the implementation of secularisation in Europe as well as to defend political needs and necessity of religious pluralism. For more updated examples and recommendations, we strongly recommend to read the European Islamophobia reports, especially the sections on recommendations of good practices and their implementation into policies in different European countries (Bayraklı & Hafez, 2023).

Orientalist Discourse and the (Balkan) Muslims

Let us return to our initial research topic on the problem of Orientalism and the new racism that fuels Islamophobia in the Balkans, more specifically in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Edward Said introduces the term Orientalism to designate a constructed prism through which the West gets acquainted with the East and dominates it. Orientalist discourse creates the image of the barbarian, uncivilised, primitive and irrational Other, portraying it as a passive object, which is – just like the Orient – fixed in its own Otherness; it is a passive, inactive, non-autonomous and unsovereign being (Said, 1978). If we reintroduce Sayyid's thought at this point, his understanding of racism comes as no surprise. According to him, *, 'racialised bodies were never exclusively biological; they were marked at the same time as religion, culture, history, and territories were marked and used to group socially fabricated distinction between Europeanness and non-Europeanness. The idea that an individual can simply choose a different cultural context ignores the fact that individuals are formed by immersion into specific cultural contexts and*

that it is not possible to step outside all contexts. These cultural contexts are themselves products of overlapping networks of relations, and the boundaries of one context from another are never clear-cut'' (Sayyid, 2010, 13).

Racism is therefore a consequence of the construction of collective identities that are dependent on special social features and contextualisation. As mentioned, Muslims cannot be reduced to only one monolithic or heterogeneous group or ethnic community. Another very problematic aspect appears when religious identification prevails over other forms of identification (e.g. ethnic, sexual, class-related, occupational, etc.). Such stereotyping and portraying of a monolithic Muslim community suits and is successfully practiced by Orientalist discourse and racism, with both being based on identity antagonism that makes a sharp distinction between "us" and "them". Islamophobia is part of such processes.

In the Balkans, Muslims were (and in some areas still are) associated with the Ottoman conquest of Europe. A very negative perception of Islam derives from the term *osmanlı*, which means Turkish or Ottoman. The racist Orientalist discourse understands it as Oriental, backward, reactionary, treacherous, inferior and as something that needs to be changed, even exterminated and annihilated. It is very important to understand where such attitude comes from in order to be able to interpret local prejudices in former Yugoslavia (as well as in the wider region) that many Christians hold against Muslims. In the first years of the war in Bosnia, many observers and commentators depicted the conflict between Muslims and Christians as the clash between the "western" and "eastern" civilisations, having been inspired by Samuel Huntington's book The Clash of Civilisations(1996, 174–187). Huntington introduced the notion of "civilization identity" as something stable and unchanging. According to Said (2003, 71), Huntington has most probably borrowed the phrase "clash of civilisations" from Bernard Lewis's essay The Roots of Muslim Rage (Lewis, 1990), in which Lewis argues that Islam has never modernised itself nor separated church and state, and has been unable to understand other civilisations. Said also claims that Huntington has adopted Lewis's ideas of civilisations being monolithic, homogenous and desirous of a distinction between "us" and "them" (Said, 2003, 71) By employing metaphors distinguishing between "our" world, that is a normal, acceptable, domestic and logical world,

and the world of Islam presented as an antipode of all this, Huntington undoubtly uses Orientalist discourse, thus ignoring cultural diversity and complexity of Islamic societies and Muslim communities. In Said's opinion, both Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington are reductive authors: their definition of the Islamic civilisation is limited to the anti-western sentiment, and their rhetoric is not only based on arguments stemming from the clash; they also generate such a clash (Said, 2003, 71).

The division to the "West" and "Islam" is a manipulation enabling the reduction of religions, cultures, ethnicities, etc., to ideologies that spring up particularly in times of deep insecurity (resulting from war, imperialism, migrations or some other sudden change (Said, 2003, 75). According to Ziauddin Sardar, the Western Huntingtonian fear of Islam is nothing but fear of diversity and plurality and the Western secularism is nothing more than a monolithic ideology that diminishes all diversity, all plurality, and focuses them on the singularity of the European vision. "It's humanism is not universal, but stops at the borders of Europe: it is buried in mass graves of the innocent people killed in Bosnia" (Sardar, 1995, 8). Therefore, it is of key importance to analyse the attitude that generates racist genocidal violence. This is the only way to understand how and on what basis collective memories are transmitted from one generation to another and how racist and/or Islamophobic discourses provoke conflicts in the region and beyond.

Expulsion of the "Turk"

If one looks deep enough into the collective historical memory in the south Slavic area, one can find a typical example of such (Serbian and also Montenegrin) attitude towards Islam and Bosnians in Petar II Petrović-Njegoš's poem, *The Mountain Wreath*. published in 1847. According to Mustafa Spahić, as early as 1703 when Danilo Sčepčević, the ruler and founding father of the Petrović dynasty, convened a meeting of family leaders, a platform for genocide was formed: "It is in the interest of the preservation of the Orthodox state that all Muslims be baptised, exiled or killed" (Spahić, 1996, 7). Such a decision was adopted in line with the motto "Find all *poturicas*!" (i.e. all those who became "Turks" or Muslims by rejecting or, more precisely, betraying their Christian religion). According to Spahić, stoked by nationalism, such ideology "culminated in Serbian and Montenegrin neo-Nazism and

Orthodox fundamentalism" (Spahić, 1996, 7). The hostility towards the "Turk" or Muslim that can be recognised in the south Slavic area is not unknown to Europe, as it was of key importance in Europe's formation as a political community. According to Tomaž Mastnak, it was the antagonism between Europe and Muslims that facilitated the shaping of European identity and encouraged the construction of the Muslim world as an antithesis of Western Christianity (Mastnak, 1993 16–32). Truth be told, European history witnessed a number of exposed "Others" who helped to shape and consolidate European identity. "Infidels" or "barbarians" were searched for and found not only beyond European borders but also among European ethnic and cultural minorities, be they Jewish or heretical.

Nevertheless, it is very likely that the hostility to Muslims played a crucial role in the formation of Europe as a socio-political entity: the perception of Europe as a political idea sprang up in particular after the fall of Constantinople resulting from the Ottoman conquest in 1453 (more: Cardini, 2003, 181). The idea of war against Ottomans eventually ended under the common denominator "the expulsion of the Turk from Europe" (Mastnak, 2003, 208). The fear of or hostility to Muslims overwhelms the European political imagination even centuries later when Turkish incursions no longer pose a real threat. By analysing the Bosnian war, Tone Bringa points out anti-Muslim and above anti-Turkish prejudices held by Europe: "The presence of Islam in Europe was understood as something that belongs to the past, as a historical remnant of the Ottoman Empire [...] They thought of Islam as a foreign body on the European soil which needs to be (or rather needed to be) eliminated by defeating the Ottomans" (2002, 25). European Muslims living in the Balkans were associated with Ottoman conquests of Europe and perceived as an anachronism. According to Bringa, the very word Muslim brought up such associations as "fundamentalism," "violence," "backwardness" and "hostility to Christians," which was misused by the Serbian propaganda according to which Bosnian Muslims were Turkish conquerors of land that did not belong to them (Bringa, 2002, 26).

It is such ideas that are used as a source of national mythologies of south Slavic nations. In order to encapsulate them, Michael Sells (1996) has coined the term Christoslavism. Their intertwined system of myths portrays Slavic Muslims as the betrayers of Christ's faith (even as his killers – such an idea is related to the Battle of Kosovo in which

Prince Lazar takes over the role of Christ, which is discussed further below) and their own nation. The Christoslavic mythology is based on at least two closely intertwined myths formed in the 19th century. The first ascribes the conversion to the Muslim religion to fear and greed (introducing the character of a "*poturica*"), the second tries to present the total depravity of Ottoman authority (introducing the character of an evil Turk). It seems that such mythology resonates with Harry Norris, who argues that the "Serbian" attack on Islam was a result of the fact that Slavic Muslims, whom he sees as poturicas, had voluntarily betrayed their nation and religion (Norris, 1993, 295–297). Needless to say, the Ottoman history and its rule over Bosnia and Herzegovina are not only very rich but also extremely complicated. In 1463, Bosnia became the westernmost Ottoman province, called "Bosansko Krajište." The province was granted the status of *ejalet*, a constituent part or administrative unit of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman rule (1463–1878) brought about a cultural and religious transformation, which led to changes in social and cultural values and to the formation of cultural patterns that shaped a special ethnic identity. According to Rusmir Mahmutčehajić, what makes Bosnia and Herzegovina special in terms of socio-cultural characteristics is the Bosnian Church that even before Islamisation of the area formed its religious structure independently from the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity (Mahmutčehajić, 2000, 183–190; also: Mulalić, 2014; Fine, 2002; Velikonja, 1998). Having become part of the Ottoman Empire, Bosnia and Herzegovina underwent gradual Islamisation, which was initially only formal and entailed the acceptance of Muslim names. There are differences of opinion whether Islamisation was facilitated by economic benefits in the form of lower taxation granted to farmers, merchants and others. Harry Norris (Norris, 1993) believes that the major reason of conversion to Islam was syncretism: vernacular Christianity, which had been present in the region before Islamisation, was similar to new, popular Islam, with both of them being different from religious "orthodoxy" of Catholicism and/or the Orthodox Church. "Together with Islam, the Ottomans introduced new cultural and spiritual opportunities to Bosnia," argues Muhidin Mulalić (2014, 56).

For many centuries, Bosnia was regarded as a model of religious tolerance in Europe, mostly owing to different forms of syncretism and the fusion of or passing (i.e. converting or reconverting) between various

religions. However, the Ottoman period in Bosnia and Herzegovina should not be romanticised. On the basis of conversations with the local population, as well as on the basis of monitoring political rhetoric and discourses, there are differences of interpretation: while Muslims living there mostly see Ottoman period as the "golden age" of Bosnia and Herzego-vina during which their religious identity was born, the local Christian population mostly perceives it as a period of Turkish occupation. In the latter case we must certainly take into consideration the influences of modern nationalist rhetoric and the intrusion of so-called religious mythology.The negative image of the "Turk" sank deeply into the collective memory of especially Serbs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it is closely associated with the bitter memory of their defeat in the Battle of Kosovo. With the Serbian collective memory being focused on the defeat, the "Turk" became a synonym for the enemy posing a threat to the Serbian nation. The Battle of Kosovo took place on 15 June 1389 between the army led by the Serbian Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović and the invading army of the Ottoman Empire commanded by the Sultan Murad Hüdavendigâr. Both commanders lost their lives. In the aftermath of the defeat, Serbs became Ottoman vassals. This shared memory of the defeat in the Battle of Kosovo formed the so-called victimized identity of Serbs, who view their shared future in Bosnia and Herzegovina with fear and distrust (Sells, 1996, 2002). Together with other social factors, the fear that the "Battle of Kosovo" could be repeated created conditions for a new search for '*poturice*' – those people whom the collective memory sees as Christians who converted to Islam and betrayed the Slavic identity.

Such conditions were indeed created in the recent war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995, the words of the general of Bosnian Serbs, Radko Mladić, were that "the time has come to take revenge on the Turks in this region"(The Mladic Files, 1995). In the following days, Srebrenica witnessed the genocide of 8372 Bosniaks (Nuhanović, 2007).Within the Serbian collective memory, the searching for *"poturice"*, those Christians who converted to Islam and betrayal the Slavic identity, is still very much present even today. Because of this dormant victimized identity of Kosovo defeat (among others), political moves and discourses must be thoughtful and sensitive. Turkish discourse in particular should be especially attentive, since much of the standpoints against Turkey originate from deep-rooted prejudices.

Contemporary Debate on Neo-Ottomanism and Islamophobic network in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Various definitions accompany the term Neo-Ottomanism, from those that explain the Turkish longing and nostalgia for the great Ottoman Empire with their actions in the expansion of soft-power and integration mainly on the basis of cultural heritage, to harsher definitions in the sense of a Turkish neo-colonial project with clear political goals. As Uğurekinci notes, "some Islamic and conservative circles in Turkey do believe that under Ottoman rule the Balkans lived in peace for centuries and see the Ottoman past as a model for bringing perpetual peace and tranquility to the region" (Uğurekinci 2013, 25-26). It is possible to predict that many Bosniaks or Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina followed the Turkish spread of soft power at least with sympathy and affection. Perhaps it is more appropriate to start by simply presenting the population census in Bosnia and Herzegovina without drawing conclusions about their religious affiliation or aspiration. The category 'Muslim' was introduced in the 1961 Population Census and was at first intended primarily for those inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina who did not want to describe themselves either as Croats or Serbs and whose national identity was based on their religion; but it was soon adopted by the Muslims from Sandžak as well. The category 'Muslim' was abolished with the passing of the constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as this states that its constituent peoples are Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. Despite the introduction of the term Bosniak, the category 'Muslim' still appears in census results, but in an analysis the two categories should not be merged as the Muslims originating from Bosnia and Herzegovina now declare themselves as Bosniaks, while those from Sandžak still declare themselves as 'Muslims.' Their national identity is based primarily on religion, Islam, as they consider themselves neither Serbs nor Montenegrins. According to the last census conducted in 2013, ,'50.11% (1,769,592) of Bosnia and Herzegovina's inhabitants declared themselves to be Bosniaks (out of a total population of 3,531,159)'' (Karčić, 2022, 15).

It is the fear of Turkiye's political influence that worries the Serb and Croat population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, although some Bosniak circles in Bosnia and Herzegovina are also not in favor of the expansion and consolidation of power. As an example, after the AKP or Justice and Development Party (In Turkish: Adalet ve Kalkınma

Partisi) won the election, Turkiyeʻs new foreign policy was designed by Ahmet Davutoğlu, from 2009 Turkiyeʻs Minister of Foreign Affairs. As presented by Mitrović, for Davutoğlu bringing back the Ottoman heritage, historical and cultural affinities, does not conceptualize an imperialistic motives of hegemonic role of Turkiye, but it is "relevant due to possibility to build multidirectional and multidimensional foreign policy, for example to develop an active and rhythmic diplomacy as a main mediator and facilitator with the goal of establishing security and stability in bordering regions" (Mitrović 2014, 35). Yet Davutoğluʻs speech at the opening ceremony of the conference "Ottoman legacy and Balkan Muslim Communities today" conducted in Sarajevo in October 2009 became widely used in the literature for underlining the change in the Turkiyeʻs foreign policy identity and for confirming Neo-Ottomanist stances of AKP government (Tanasković 2011, Türbedar 2011). In the speech Davutoğlu said "Sarajevo is ours" and "İstanbul is yours," and that "the Ottoman centuries in the Balkans are a successful story that needs to be renewed." However, these words should be contextualised, "because Davutoğlu also stressed that he does not mean that there should be a return to the Ottoman state. He mostly alludes to the common Ottoman heritage." (Somun 2011, 38) For Davutoğlu, as analyzed by Mitrović, it was only during the Ottoman time that Balkans had a central role in the worldʹs politics and that Ottoman experience can be a positive example for the establishment of the inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations in the region. Yet, as Mitrović emphasised, "he is not precise about the methods and models to achieve this goal" (Mitrović 2014, 46). And it is precisely in this lack of clear methods and implementations of the old models of empire on new bases that the problem arises.

Although the majority of Bosniaks today support Turkiye's ever-growing influence in the country, there are many who are emphasising the need to preserve Bosnia-Herzegovina's own identity. In the round table discussion, broadcasted by Bosnian national television TV1 on 14 May 2015 with the title "Šta su za Bosnu i Hercegovinu Turska i Rusija" /"What is the meaning of Turkey and Russia for Bosnia and Herzegovina?" (TV1 2015), the problem of Turkish indoctrination was exposed. 24 April 2015 was the "Feast of Children", traditionally celebrated in Turkiye. Turkiye paid 250.000 Bosnian marks to cover participation of 500 children from Bosnian school at the celebration

in Zenica town. Participation of school-children to attend the event was mandatory. They got Turkish books and were forced to wave with Turkish flags. One of the participants at the roundtable discussion, Professor Kazaz Enver from the Faculty of Arts in Sarajevo, found this indoctrination scandalous. Another participant Hajrudin Somun, Bosnian diplomat and journalist, mentioned that Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have unified internal policy and that is the reason behind municipal autonomy to cooperate freely with Turkish municipalities. Discussants were of the opinion that the perception of Turkiye in Bosnia and Herzegovina is mainly "osmanophilic" and that sentiments towards Turkiye are very strong among those inhabitants who are expecting from Turkiye to help them in the case of turmoil. Somun mentioned the wish for Turkiye to help and support schools in the rural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina to develop the school curriculum, with the emphasis on Bosnia and Herzegovina's heritage and tradition. Instead Turkiye is financing ultra-modern colleges in Sarajevo, investing in newspapers, internet portals, etc. Yet another participant of the roundtable discussion, Sead Turčalo, Assistant Professor in Geopolitics and International Security for Faculty of Political Sciences, find the promotion of Turkish culture in the Balkans positive, as long as indoctrination is not taking place.

However, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Serb and Croat populations (and other religious groups) find the Turkish interpretation of a common historical and socio-cultural ties in the Bosnia and Herzegovina uncomfortable. The memory does not evoke the same positive sentiments, since Christian nations of the Balkans perceive the Ottoman reign as a period of slavery. The leader of the Serbian Republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska) Milorad Dodik accused Turkiye of having a "hidden agenda" for the Balkans. He fears that Turkiye is trying to turn Bosna and Hercegovina into a Bosniak state and undermine the autonomy of the Republika of Srpska (Strbac 2010). He found a huge support in the leading Serbian Orientalist Darko Tanasković, a Yugoslav ambassador in Ankara from 1995 to 1999, one of leading anti-Islamists in the region, who was able to influence the official Serbian policy while serving as advisor to the president of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević, during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Darko Tanasković is very critical towards Turkiye's Balkan policy. In his book entitled *Neoosmanizam – Povratak Turske na Balkan* ("Neo-Ottomanism –

The Return of Turkey to the Balkans") he claims that Turkiye's actual foreign policy is "Neo-Ottomanism" (Yeni Osmanlılık), driven by Islamism, Turkism imperialism and Ottoman nostalgia. According to Marić, the book was published in 2010 in Banja Luka, the capital city of the Bosnian Serbs, where he promoted it at a conference on "Neo-Ottomanism and Republika Srpska." Under the title "Turska traži nove janičare/ Turkey searches for new janissaries," Belgrade's newspaper *Politika* wrote that the Bosnian Serb leading politician, Milorad Dodik, had honoured the event and told them that Turkey "exclusively supports Bosniak-Muslim interests" and that "Turkey wants to make an Islamic state out of Bosnia and Herzegovina" (Marić 2010). A Serbian activist for human rights Sonja Biserko cited Tanašković in her study on Islamic fundamentalism. She exposed negative stereotypes about Muslims as a "foreign, inferior and dangerous element" in the Balkans were disseminated. In her opinion Tanašković's interpretation of the Bosnian Muslims' appeal to Turkiye for help as 'their furtive return to the old-time position of *poturice* (converts from Christianity to Islam)': for the Serbs *poturice* were "worse than Turks," and "to threaten the Serbs with Turks is even worse and more ominous than to threaten them with Germans." (Biserko in: Somun 2011, 35).

In the latest report on Islamophobia in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hikmet Karčić divides central figures in spreading Islamophobia in Bosnia and Herzegovina into three categories: 1. academic and semi-academic circles in Serbia and Republika Srpska, most notably Serbian "experts" on security, terrorism, and Islam; 2. high-ranking officials from the Serb Orthodox Church; 3. politicians and includes local Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats. (Karčić, 2023, 122). Among the many names listed in his latest report, Karčić singles out Milan Tegeltija, advisor to Milorad Dodik, already mentioned Bosnian Serb leading polititian. In an incident on November 4, 2022, Tegeltija was "mocking Bosnia's ambitions to join the European Union, telling Bosniaks that no one in Europe will forget that Bosniaks are Muslims, even if Bosniaks forget it." (Ibid, 122). Even in the latest report on Islamophobia in Bosnia and Herzegovina, provocative statements about Muslims by politicians continue. They are using the familiar template of the Muslim threat, warning against terrorism and radicalisation, emphasising Islamist extremists recruiting in Bosnia. These kinds of threats are connected with ever-new conflict hotspots in the world (Iraq, Syria, Gaza, etc.). The

problem that needs to be tackled is the fact that the fervent rhetoric has not been contextualized and that it exploits religious illiteracy, orientalist discourse and the new racism to sow hatred on nationalistic grounds. An example is the 27th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, where Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Serbian politicians tried to "undermine Bosnia and Herzegovina with nationalist rhetoric" (Karčić, 2023, 120).

Conclusion

At the core of Islamophobia lies the "civilisational threat" from Islam, whose alleged barbarian and undemocratic nature is thought to endanger European democracy, secularisation and modernity. As a result, Islamophobia maintains a "violent hierarchy," as Sayyid puts it, between the notions of the West (and everything that it represents) and Islam (and everything that it stands for) (Sayyid, 2010, 16). Such colonial hierarchy has much in common with the hierarchy that constitutes racism itself, i.e. the distinction between "Europeanness" and "non-Europeanness," or between modernity and backwardness. Such dynamics of identity antagonism, which establishes imaginary boundaries between subjects, results from a complex mental process that involves the identification and stigmatisation of the Other and wants to change or even to destroy the Other. The form of "elimination" of the Other depends on cultural specifics and, fortunately, only rarely is turned into action that requires a combination of complex social circumstances and political measures. Nevertheless, there always exists the possibility of physical "cleansing" as we could observe in relation to Islam and Muslims during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After digging deeply into the collective memory of all three constitutive nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the disclosure of the ambivalent image of the "Turk", which has shaped the historical thinking, appears. This negative presentation of the "Turk", closely related to the bitter memory of defeat in the battle of Kosovo (among others), is a constant threat for renewal of the Serbian victimised identity. Since the idea of the "Turk" as an "arch-enemy" is constantly (consciously or unconsciously) present in the imagination among Bosnia and Herzegovina's Serbs, political moves and discourses must be thoughtful and sensitive. Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to (re)shape its common socio-cultural models by political and religious institutions, cultural organisations, civil society and other decision makers, that is why the respect and preservation of Bosnia-Herzegovina's multi-ethnic and multi-religious character is as much important. Unfortunately,

the smouldering cauldron of the Bosnian tragedy has not been extinguished and is waiting for new sparks that could easily rekindle the fire of interethnic and interreligious dimensions, which Bosnia and Herzegovina had witnessed in the bloody war of the 1990s. Therefore, it is important that Islamophobia is systematically prevented by the state, civil societies and political initiatives.

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The Roles of the Indonesian Armed Forces and Police in Counter-terrorism: A Structural Functionalist Approach

Eva Achjani Zulfa[*]
Sapto Priyanto[**]
Mohd Mizan Aslam[***]

Abstract: Terrorism is an extraordinary crime, and each government makes different attempts to combat it. Before the New Order era, Indonesia's military was mainly used for counter-terrorism issues. With the changing political landscape and nature of terrorism in Indonesia, the country has implemented a law enforcement approach covering a soft approach. The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) were tasked with the mission of counter-terrorism as part of military operations other than war, following their primary tasks and functions based on an amendment to the Terrorism Law (Law No. 15/2003). The TNI's involvement in counter-terrorism in Indonesia has elicited both support and resistance, with some institutions and the general public raising worries about potential human rights issues. Despite this, the Indonesian National Police (Polri) and the TNI take different approaches to counter-terrorism, which are regulated by separate legal frameworks: Polri operates under Law No. 2/2002 that applies to the Indonesian National Police, whereas the TNI operates under Law No. 34/2004 that applies to the Indonesian National Armed Forces. The authors believe that the possibility of overlapping authorities between these entities may hinder Indonesia's success at counter-terrorism. As a result, it is

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[*] Deputy Director of the School of Strategic and Global Studies (SKSG) and lecturer of Criminal Law Studies at the Faculty of Law, Universitas Indonesia. Email: evazulfa@ui.ac.id
[**]Head of Research Center for Police Science and Terrorism Studies and lecturer at the School of Strategic and Global Studies, Universitas Indonesia. Email: saptopriyanto3792@gmail.com
[***]Professor of Security and Strategic Studies at the National Defence University of Malaysia (UPNM). Email: mohdmizan@upnm.edu.my

essential to develop coordination and synchronisation among institutions that deal with terrorism issues, potentially through establishing a supervisory body or institution.

Keywords: prevention, terrorism, TNI, Polri, differentiation.

Abstrak: Keganasan adalah jenayah yang luar biasa dan setiap negara melakukan sedaya upaya dalam menanganinya. Di Indonesia sendiri sebelum era Orde Baru, TNI lebih cenderung digunakan untuk menangani keganasan. Dengan perubahan politik semasa dan perkembangan keganasan di Indonesia, negara ini telah membuat perubahan dengan menggunakan penguatkuasaan undang-undang di samping memperkenalkan program pendekatan lembut atau "soft approach". Melalui penyemakan Undang-undang 15/2003, TNI diberi tugas untuk menangani tindakan keganasan yang merupakan sebahagian daripada operasi ketenteraan selain daripada konteks perang yang dilakukan melalui tugas dan fungsi pokok mereka. Penglibatan TNI dalam menangani keganasan di Indonesia mempunyai pro dan kontra, malah terdapat penolakan oleh institusi dan masyarakat kerana dilihat berkaitan dengan isu hak asasi manusia. Namun demikian, Polri dan TNI mempunyai pendekatan yang berbeza dalam kegiatan mereka di mana Kepolisian Negara mengikuti Undang-Undang No. 2 Tahun 2002 bagi Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, dan TNI mengikuti Undang-Undang No. 34 Tahun 2004 bagi Tentera Negara Indonesia. Tentera Negara. Penulis-penulis artikel ini percaya terdapat potensi pertindihan kuasa yang boleh menghalang kejayaan Indonesia menangani isu keganasan. Oleh itu, kami menegaskan perlunya mewujudkan entiti yang khusus untuk penyelarasan dan menyegerakkan badan-badan yang mengendalikan isu keganasan di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: pencegahan, keganasan, TNI, Polri, pembezaan.

Introduction

Terrorist crimes are serious offenses with unique characteristics distinct from other criminal activities. These crimes frequently involve national security and issues of violence, public order, or public safety. Furthermore, terrorist acts often have explicit political motivations and goals, such as attempts to replace existing governments with those based on Islamic law as interpreted by each terrorist group. Beyond the ideological spread by terrorist organisations, the problem

poses serious risks to international relations and social, political, and economic stability. This emphasises how important it is for countries to take counter-terrorism seriously. Globally, counter-terrorism initiatives are divided into two categories: the hard and soft approaches. The hard approach is characterised by military involvement, while the soft approach involves rehabilitation or deradicalisation programmes. Many countries combine these approaches to achieve more effective outcomes in counter-terrorism.

Counter-terrorism became a major issue in Indonesia beginning in 2000, notably after the first and second Bali Bombings. These incidents prompted the enactment of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law No. 1 of 2002 on the Eradication of Terrorism Crime, which was later approved as Law No. 15 of 2003 (Law 15/2003). Until 2018, the dominant opinion in Indonesia was that terrorism was caused by the growth of extremist ideologies based on religious idealism. This viewpoint significantly influenced the path of Indonesia's criminal law enforcement and counter-terrorism policies. However, there has been a reconceptualisation of terrorism over time, notably when extremism has become recognised as a component of terrorist actions. This transformation has fundamentally impacted the paradigm of law enforcement approaches to counter-terrorism.

In 2018, significant changes in terrorism-related regulations were marked by the enactment of Law No. 5 of 2018 (Law 5/2018), which amended Law No. 15 of 2003. This new law establishes a more comprehensive framework for combating terrorism and significantly changes the previous law. One major alteration is the introduction of laws governing the role of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) in counter-terrorism operations, as outlined in Article 43I of the TNI Law. The involvement of the TNI signifies a shift in the direction of counter-terrorism policy. The rationale for involving the TNI in counter-terrorism is based on the perceived limitations of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) force in counter-terrorism cases, necessitating TNI support. This involvement has been evident in law enforcement actions against terrorists conducting military training in the Jalin Jantho Mountains of Aceh in 2010 and joint operations in Central Sulawesi since 2015 (Kemhan 2015). However, the involvement of TNI authorities in counter-terrorism, as established by Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021, has caused significant disputes (Alfons 2021). Despite issuing

Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021, which formalises the TNI's involvement in counter- terrorism, the policy remains disputed. It has been criticised for being inconsistent with Law 5/2018, prioritising a law enforcement strategy. Furthermore, this programme raises serious legal and human rights problems because it promotes a military approach over a legal framework.

Amid the previously mentioned debates, there is concern regarding the potential for overlapping authorities between the TNI and other law enforcement agencies involved in counter-terrorism, including the National Counter-terrorism Agency (BNPT), the State Intelligence Agency (BIN), and particularly the Polri. The involvement of the TNI in law enforcement issues implicitly recognises it as part of the criminal justice subsystem. Being a part of this subsystem means functioning within an integrated and systemic framework. However, despite the principle of functional differentiation within each subsystem of the criminal justice system, the vastly different institutional characteristics between the TNI and other agencies raise doubts about the effectiveness of this policy approach. Functional differentiation indicates that each law enforcement entity has unique roles and authorities. The possibility of overlapping authorities between the police and the TNI, as stated in the aforementioned Presidential Regulation, is viewed as threatening the integrity of law enforcement efforts.

The issue of institutional roles concerning the theory of functional differentiation, particularly in the context of counter-terrorism policy and law enforcement, is an intriguing area of study. This issue merits investigation not only from a criminal law perspective but also in terms of the relationship between two organisations with differing organisational characteristics and objectives. This study serves as essential for understanding the impact of the TNI's involvement in its collaboration with the Polri in counter-terrorism cases within an integrated criminal justice system.

Methodology

Qualitative research methodology was used for this study. This study, which aimed to interpret the significance of particular occurrences based on theory and data, underscored the observation of phenomena from the author's perspective in line with the qualities of qualitative approaches. The author employed secondary data sourced from

books, papers, documents, and online news outlets. The functional differentiation theory was used to examine and demonstrate the data, focusing on the effects of the TNI's intervention in counter-terrorism efforts in Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

The Issue of Functional Differentiation and the Roles of Institutions within the Structure and Function of the Criminal Justice System

The theory of functional differentiation fundamentally examines the relationships among the institutions within the criminal justice subsystem in Indonesia, which comprises four main subsystems: the police with their investigative authority (including investigation and interrogation), the prosecution with its prosecutorial authority, the courts, and the correctional system. The integration and cooperation among these subsystems are crucial for achieving the goals of crime prevention and control as mandated by various criminal justice policies in Indonesia.

The basic concept of the functioning criminal justice system involves crime control efforts through cooperation and coordination among law enforcement agencies. Ensuring such cooperation requires a structure that guarantees coherence, coordination, and integration to achieve goals effectively, efficiently, and maximally (Kaligis 2006). The institutional approach in the criminal justice system is characterised by several aspects, including: 1) Emphasis on coordination and synchronisation of the criminal justice components; 2) Supervision and deployment of authority by the criminal justice components; 3) Prioritising the effectiveness of crime control systems over the efficiency of case resolution; and 4) Legal instruments serve as the primary means and fundamental rules for administering justice (Kaligis 2006).

Therefore, the operations of institutions within the criminal justice system are based on the principle of "functional differentiation" in accordance with the authority granted by law to each institution. From a classical perspective, Roeslan Saleh described the criminal justice system as a "wheel in motion," where one subsystem operates while the others await their turn (Saleh 1979). However, it remains to be seen whether this sequential case-handling process can proceed smoothly and efficiently.

Functional Differentiation and the Roles of Criminal Justice
Subsystem Institutions from a Structural Functionalist Perspective

The theory of functional differentiation is based on the idea that the criminal justice system is divided into multiple subsystems, each with its own particular function. According to Mardjono Reksodiputro, the criminal justice system is a crime control system comprising the police, prosecution, courts, and correctional institutions. He also emphasises that these four components are expected to collaborate to form an "Integrated Criminal Justice System" (Reksodiputro 1997). This process functions sequentially, meaning each stage must follow the previous one without skipping any steps. The entire process operates within a system, where each institution is a subsystem interconnected and influencing one another.

Each component interacts and coordinates with the others in this criminal justice system. As Alan Coffey notes that:

> "Criminal justice can function systematically only to the degrees that each segment of the system takes into account all other segments. In other words, the system is no more systematic than the relationships between police and prosecution, Police and Court Prosecution and Corrections, Corrections and law, and so forth. In the absence of functional relationships between segments, the criminal justice system is vulnerable to fragmentation and ineffectiveness" (Reksodiputro 1997).

In this context, it is essential to consider the concept of an "Integrated Approach." According to Hiroshi Ishikawa, although the functional components differ and operate independently (diversity), they must share a common goal and perception. This shared objective binds them together, creating a cohesive and unified force (Ishikawa 2024).

The concept of distinct roles, known as functional differentiation, demonstrates the existence of many roles in achieving the common goal of crime control. Each subsystem is expected to recognise its role boundaries to prevent overlap or conflicts that could hinder the attainment of this common goal. This concept of roles is intriguing when viewed from a sociological perspective, where each member of society has different roles within the community, as articulated by structural-functional theory.

Structural functional theory was a hugely prominent sociological perspective, especially in the 1960s. Theorists trace this tradition back to Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Comte, who developed positivistic philosophy, believed that knowledge and society are in a state of evolutionary transition. Sociological theory provides essential information regarding the inevitable and necessary factors for the evolutionary history of society. Ultimately, it aims to bring societal life into a new social order. The evolution toward a new social order is achieved through three stages: theological (fictionalism), metaphysical or abstract, and scientific or positive stage (Maliki, 2003).

Thinkers influenced by Comte's positivism include Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), who viewed social change as parallel to the evolution of species, considering society as a system composed of interdependent parts. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), deeply influenced by Comte and Spencer, believed that society could be studied through rational positivistic investigation. Durkheim introduced the concept of objective reality, referred to as „social facts," which exist outside the individual and drive actions or changes (Maliki, 2003).

In historical terms, Talcott Parsons is still the most renowned figure in structural functionalism. In 1937, Parsons published his work "The Structure of Social Action." He is well-known for his work on action and social systems within structural functionalism. Consequently, his inquiries are directed toward achieving social equilibrium, order, and stability commitments. Durkheim's impact is apparent in Parsons' responses to issues about social order. Parsons broadened Durkheim's concept of social facts as empirical, external, coercive, and pervasive factors to explain a wide range of social behaviors.

Robert King Merton, a student of Talcott Parsons at Harvard University, offered substantial critiques of earlier functional theories, including those of his mentor. As a result, Merton proposed five perspectives he considered improvements: First, functional structural theory is too focused on grand theory, and Merton is more concentrated on developing a middle ring theory that is more empirical. Second, society was viewed as fully integrated due to the macro nature of previous functional theories. The varying degrees of integration among social units become apparent by applying middle-range theory, revealing both functional and dysfunctional aspects. Third, traditional functional

theories posited that all enduring elements are functional, while non-functional elements disappear. Merton agreed but emphasised the need to differentiate the types of contributions. He distinguished between functions that cause the emergence of something (prerequisite functions) and those that cause its persistence (requisite functions). Fourth, previous functional theories mixed subjective dispositions (expected consequences of actions) with objective consequences (objective outcomes of actions). Merton argued for a clear distinction between manifest functions (intended and recognised) and latent functions (unintended and unrecognised). The last one, the previous functional theories, were criticised for their lack of attention to change, typically viewing any change as linear evolution. Merton, therefore, introduced the concept of social change. He suggested that societal integration occurs when the majority of actions are directed toward achieving goals aligned with prevailing values, norms, and means (Maliki, 2003).

According to structural-functional theory, society is a social system comprising interconnected and integrated elements or parts that maintain balance. Changes in one part will consequently affect other parts. Conversely, if it is not functional, the structure will either not exist or disappear on its own. Adherents of this theory tend to focus solely on the contributions of one system or event to another system, thereby overlooking the possibility that an event or system may operate against other functions within a social system (Ritzer, 2013). Structural functionalism views society as inherently stable, tending towards equilibrium. Consequently, no social element can stand alone, and each element has interdependent relationships with others (Johnson, 1986).

Parson and Durkheim's thoughts on structures and systems are outlined in three main principles. These principles underpin the assumption that the social system is fundamentally in a state of equilibrium: 1) Integrity indicating that the components of the system do not stand alone; 2) Stability emphasising the state of stability (relative) within the social system; and 3) Consensus striving for agreement or harmony in perceptions, sentiments, values, and beliefs within the system (Wuradji, 1988).

Ralph Dahrendorf's formulation of structural-functional theory asserts the following principles: (a) every society consists of various elements that are relatively structured, firm, and stable; (b) these structured elements are well-integrated; (c) each element within the

structure serves a function, contributing to the maintenance of the structure as a system; (d) every functional structure is based on a consensus of values among its members (Damsar, 2011).

Talcott Parsons' application to the criminal justice system defined the principles of integrity, stability, and consensus by functionally differentiating each subsystem. The criminal justice system comprises various subsystems with their respective roles, as articulated by Hiroshi Ishikawa, who stated:

> "Criminal justice agencies, including the police, prosecution, and judiciary institutions, should be compared with a chain of gears, and each of them should be precise and tenacious in maintaining good combination with each other" (Faal 1991).

According to Dahrendorf's definition of structural-functional theory, legal regulations within criminal justice subsystems contain the essential elements for preserving stability, uniformity, steadfastness, and integration. Legal provisions serve as authoritative references, delineating the scope of authority and specifying the roles undertaken by each institution and the

Military Involvement in Counter-terrorism in Various Countries

In countering the issue of terrorism, each country employs distinct approaches. Some countries prioritise the hard approach principle, utilising military methods in counter-terrorism. In contrast, others emphasise the soft approach, such as deradicalisation, and even a combination of hard and soft approaches. Varying opinions and approaches among countries contribute to ongoing debates and controversies. These differences stem from diverse perspectives on how terrorism is perceived and defined.

Strategically, in some countries, terrorism is considered an extraordinary crime that threatens national security, necessitating military involvement, which is frequently deemed more suitable than legal enforcement. This is because judicial proceedings need evidence collection and lengthy legal processes, which may limit public freedom and risk human rights violations. Successful anti-terrorism initiatives receive enormous support locally and globally, intended to minimise civilian fatalities and diminish widespread resentment against the state (Karnavian 2017). Each country devises its own method, and the

following are examples of countries that use military action to combat terrorism, covering the United States (US), Burkina Faso, Thailand, Peru, Chad, and Congo.

The USA has been a critical player in counter-terrorism through its declaration of the "War on Terror." Following the September 11, 2001 attacks targeting the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the US government established robust and sophisticated counter-terrorism efforts to mitigate the threat of further terrorist attacks (Counter-terrorism 2022). In 2019, the US and its allies, through a global coalition, defeated Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in March, and in October, launched a military operation resulting in the death of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, who proclaimed himself as the caliph of ISIS. The US also shifted its approach to counter-terrorism from one centered on the military to one prioritising diplomacy, capacity building, and prevention. Achieving a new balance in counter-terrorism efforts between military and civilian approaches requires collaboration across all counter-terrorism mechanisms and must be sustainable. Considering the shift in approach by the US, the author believes that addressing terrorism necessitates integrating both hard and soft approaches to strike a balance between security and public opinion. The US launched a military operation in 2003 to overthrow Saddam Hussein from power (George Bush Library 2003). The author viewed these humanitarian actions by the US military as strategic efforts aimed at winning public opinion and garnering support for counter-terrorism initiatives. In 2019, the US and its allies, through a global coalition, defeated ISIS in March and, in October, launched a military operation resulting in the death of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, who proclaimed himself as the caliph of ISIS. The US also shifted its approach to counter-terrorism from one centered on the military to one prioritising diplomacy, capacity building, and prevention. Achieving a new balance in counter-terrorism efforts between military and civilian approaches requires collaboration across all counter-terrorism mechanisms and must be sustainable. Considering the shift in approach by the US, the author believes that counter-terrorism necessitates integrating both hard and soft approaches to strike a balance between security and public opinion.

In addition to the US, Burkina Faso experienced an increase in terrorist attacks targeting civilians and security forces from 2018 to 2019. Due to the rising number of attacks, Burkina Faso launched two

primary counter-terrorism operations in the East and North-Central regions with clearance operations. However, the military-led clearance operations in Burkina Faso exacerbated tensions between civilians and the state, potentially leading to civilian recruitment into terrorist groups. This could indicate that inappropriate military use exacerbates public opinion against the government (Counter-terrorism 2019). Therefore, the use of the military or other instruments must have their respective tasks and limits to avoid being counterproductive.

Burkina Faso also established a specialised unit in anti-terrorism investment known as the Brigade Spéciale des Investigations Antiterroristes (BSIAT). BSIAT initiated dialogue with joint military and police units to improve access to military information, confusing the authority responsible for terrorist investigations. Hence, functional differentiation between institutions involved in counter-terrorism must be clear (Counter-terrorism 2022). The Thai government faces similar challenges. In Thailand, various agencies such as the police, special investigation departments, and military components each have law enforcement responsibilities in counter-terrorism cases. Cooperation between agencies is sporadic, and information exchange is limited, while the division of tasks between law enforcement and military units is unclear. Nevertheless, Thailand continues to create laws to regulate the responsibilities of each institution, including the police, special investigation department, and military components in law enforcement regarding terrorism cases. As a result of these laws, in southern Thailand, the military and law enforcement share responsibility for counter-terrorism efforts. Sharing information and coordinating between agencies remain challenges that Thailand needs to address (Counter-terrorism 2022).

The use of the military was also employed by the Congo, a military operation undertaken by the Congo around the end of 2022 to disband terrorist groups. Still, the military operation proved unable to reduce the activities that had been established. Based on the abovementioned examples, the author observed that military intervention can dismantle terrorist groups and eliminate their leaders. However, without a comprehensive approach, it may not be effective, as disbanded terrorist groups may still retain their ideologies and recruit new members. Therefore, prevention, soft approaches, and various efforts are also crucial.

The combination of military and police approaches is widely employed by many countries, almost universally. For instance, Peru has adopted several anti-terrorism laws over the past 30 years and has received widespread public support. Despite facing challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Peruvian military and police, working together, executed over 400 counter-terrorism operations in 2022 (Counter-terrorism 2022). Additionally, Chad, located in Central Africa, actively counters terrorism with both military and police forces. Chad faced significant ISIS and Boko Haram threats along the Lake Chad border in 2022. Chad fought terrorism in Lake Chad and the Sahel region by prioritising military organisations, while the police directorate of Chad conducted counter-terrorism investigations (Counter-terrorism 2022). Chad's investigative operations successfully disrupted the flow of illegal weapons in Lake Chad and seised a quantity of narcotics as part of efforts to prevent narcoterrorism.

In Indonesia, a combined approach based on the country's perspective on terrorism, which views it as a threat to national sovereignty and an extraordinary crime, is adopted. With this perspective, the military and police are obligated to collaborate in counter-terrorism efforts (Muradi 2019). This necessitates Indonesia to establish clear jurisdictional boundaries among its security agencies to avoid overlap and inefficiency. Indonesia used the military more frequently throughout its early years of independence until the New Order era. However, alterations in the political climate and the evolving nature of terrorism have pushed Indonesia to change its counter-terrorism approach, relying not only on the military but also on law enforcement, non-governmental groups, and other softer ways to gain public support. The author contends that counter-terrorism operations should be comprehensive and coordinated. Prioritising collaboration between the police and military, or even with other state institutions, is critical for ensuring job allocation, effective coordination, and long-term efforts.

TNI Authority on Terrorism

According to Law No. 3 of 2002 on State Defense, Article 2 states, "The essence of state defense is all-encompassing defense efforts based on the awareness of the rights and obligations of citisens and confidence in self-reliance." Article 4 further elaborates, "The purpose of state defense is to safeguard and protect the sovereignty of the state, the integrity

of the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and the safety of the entire nation from all threats." Article 7, paragraph (2), positions the TNI as the primary component of military threats, supported by reserve and supporting components. Article 7, paragraph (3) explains that one of the military threats includes armed terrorist acts carried out by international terrorism networks, domestic terrorism cooperating with international terrorism or high-scale domestic terrorism that endangers state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the safety of the entire nation.

The explanation of Article 7, paragraph (3) of Law No. 3 of 2002 on State Defense not only extends the authority of the TNI but also redefines the concept of terrorism and the efforts for "prevention and eradication of terrorism" as a form of criminal policy into state security policy.

Article 7 outlines the main tasks of the TNI, which include the following authorities:

1. Upholding state sovereignty, maintaining the territorial integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, and protecting the entire nation and all of Indonesia's blood from threats and disturbances to national integrity and security.

2. These primary tasks are accomplished through:
    1. Military Operations for War.
    2. Military operations other than war, including:
        a) Countering armed separatist movements;

        b) Countering armed rebellions;

        c) Countering acts of terrorism;

        d) Securing border areas;

        e) Securing vital national strategic objects;

        f) Participating in world peace missions in accordance with foreign policy;

        g) Securing the President and Vice President and their families;

h) Empowering defense areas and their supporting forces early on according to the universal defense system;

i) Assisting government tasks in the regions;

j) Assisting the Polri in maintaining public security and order as regulated by law;

k) Assisting in securing state guests at the head of state level and foreign government representatives in Indonesia;

l) Assisting in mitigating the effects of natural disasters, handling refugees, and providing humanitarian aid;

m) Assisting in search and rescue operations; and

n) Assisting the government in securing navigation and aviation against piracy, hijacking, and smuggling.

Counter-terrorism is classified as a military operation other than war, as defined in the law. Compared to Articles 6 and 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Law, which links counter-terrorism efforts to vital and strategic objects, including international organisations, the context of criminal law enforcement is within the authority of the Polri. This is further reinforced by Article 1, Clause 2 of Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021, which defines violent extremism leading to terrorism as beliefs or actions that use extreme violence or threats of violence to support or conduct acts of terrorism. This framework is applied in cases such as the Countering of the Armed Criminal Group (KKB) in Papua. However, this framework contradicts Article 5 of Law No. 5 of 2018, which states that terrorism is not a political crime. Conversely, the motives of the KKB Papua have political objectives. Therefore, although Article 1, Clause 2 of the Presidential Regulation categorises them as violent extremists leading to terrorism, they cannot be equated with terrorists. Consequently, in this context, the TNI has more authority than Polri, resulting in a complicated issue of authority.

In counter-terrorism, the Polri is granted authority under Article 15, Clause 2, Letter h, which specifies that "international crimes" are certain crimes agreed upon for inter-state countermeasures, including narcotics, counterfeiting, terrorism, and human trafficking. The police also have a special detachment for counter-terrorism known as Densus 88 AT

(Detachment 88 Anti-Terrorism), established under National Police Chief Decree No. 30/VI/2003. Densus 88 operates under the command of the Polri, not the Indonesian National Armed Forces (Efendi 2014).

In accomplishing their tasks, the Polri and TNI maintain interagency relationships as specified by relevant legislation. According to Article 70, Clause 1 of Law No. 34 of 2004 on the Indonesian National Armed Forces, "The relationship and cooperation of the TNI with domestic institutions and agencies are based on the interests of the TNI's tasks within the framework of national defense." Similarly, Law No. 2 of 2002 concerning the Polri regulates interagency relations in Article 42, Clause 1, which states: "The relationship and cooperation of the Indonesian National Police with domestic and international bodies, agencies, and institutions are based on principles of functional relationships, mutual respect, mutual assistance, prioritisation of the public interest, and consideration of hierarchy."

TNI History in Counter-terrorism

The involvement of the TNI as a subsystem in counter-terrorism efforts is not a novel idea. Historically, during the New Order era, counter-terrorism efforts in Indonesia were predominantly led by the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (ABRI), including the TNI, Navy, and Air Force, with Polri playing a "supporting role." Post-reformation, the operational scope of the TNI in civilian contexts has been limited, positioning the TNI as a supporting component to the police in handling security and law enforcement issues. At the same time, the TNI focuses primarily on national defense. In this context, the involvement of the TNI after the reformation is no longer the leading actor and operationaliser in anti-terrorism actions (Fahrisal 2020).

The initial legislation, Law No. 15/2003, did not grant the TNI authority in counter-terrorism. However, the amended law, Law No. 5/2018, assigns the TNI a role in counter-terrorism as part of military operations other than war, which aligns with the TNI's primary tasks and functions. The involvement of the TNI in counter-terrorism is feasible and does not overlap with the Polri authority, provided that the terrorist actions are deemed to threaten national integrity and defense. Article 43I of Law No. 5/2018 mandates the President to issue a presidential regulation regarding the implementation of the TNI's role in counter-terrorism as part of military operations (BPK 2024a). The involvement

of the TNI in counter-terrorism is feasible and does not overlap with the Polri authority, provided that the terrorist actions are deemed to threaten national integrity and defense. Article 43I of Law No. 5/2018 mandates the President to issue a presidential regulation regarding the implementation of the TNI's role in counter-terrorism as part of military operations.

In 2020, the government drafted a Presidential Regulation on the Tasks of the TNI in Counter-terrorism (Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021), which faced opposition from various parties, including the National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM), public figures, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Critics argued that Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021, even after its enactment, threatened human rights and democracy and disrupted the criminal justice system (KontraS 2020). This issue is particularly intriguing when related to the case of the KKB in Papua. The approach to countering this case should differ from terrorism under the Terrorism Law, which does not classify it as a political offense. The approach contrasts with the counter-terrorism cases in other regions, such as Poso. The inconsistent definition of terrorism across various laws has led to inconsistencies in policies regarding the authority to counter-terrorism.

According to Article 7 of Law No. 34 of 2004 on the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI Law), the primary duty of the TNI is to uphold state sovereignty, maintain the territorial integrity of the Republic of Indonesia, and protect against threats and disturbances to national unity, which can be accomplished through military operations other than war in counter-terrorism actions. These military operations are conducted to preserve the national defense (Article 20, paragraph 2, TNI Law). However, Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021 grants TNI authorities that exceed those outlined in the TNI Law, Law No. 15 of 2003, and Law No. 5 of 2018, specifically in the areas of prevention and enforcement.

Article 3 of Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021 on preventive functions authorises the TNI to conduct territorial operations, intelligence, information operations, and other operations. This preventive function overlaps with the tasks of the National Counter-terrorism Agency (BNPT), which is responsible for formulating, establishing, and implementing national policies, strategies, and

programmes for counter-terrorism (Alfons 2021). According to Articles 43E through 43G of Law No. 5 of 2018, the TNI does not perform counter-terrorism functions; instead, the BNPT does. The "other operations" mentioned are not further detailed, potentially granting the TNI a broad mandate beyond the scope defined by law and Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021.

Actually, apart from Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021, the TNI's function in law enforcement is to assist the Polri in ensuring public security and order. However, Presidential Regulation No. 7 of 2021 authorises the TNI to act directly rather than provide assistance (BPK 2024b). In addition to these two issues, there are also funding-related problems. This draft regulation stipulates that TNI funding for counter-terrorism operations should come from The Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) and other legitimate sources, which contradicts Article 66 of the TNI Law that states TNI funding should come from the national budget (APBN). This could potentially create new financial burdens for local governments.

Under the pretext of "terrorism crimes," the tasks related to this issue do not position the TNI as a law enforcement agency that independently conducts preventive and repressive functions when addressing terrorism in Indonesia. The fundamental purpose of the TNI is national defense, not law enforcement, which is the role of the police. Although the draft regulation has a strong legal basis, as provided by Law No. 5/2018, its formulation must still consider the main tasks and functions of the TNI. This is to ensure there is no overlap with the authority of the Polri or other agencies, to avoid granting the TNI excessively broad powers in counter-terrorism, and to ensure it does not contradict existing laws.

The Influence of TNI in Prevention and Counter-terrorism

James T. Ayres defined Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) as types of military operations conducted outside the context of warfare aimed at maintaining peace or preventing war (Franklin 1947). On the other hand, Samuel Huntington contended that military involvement in humanitarian operations and various other civil activities could occur; however, the fundamental principle of the military's existence was inherently anti-humanitarian, with its primary purpose being to engage in warfare (Travis 2017).

The TNI's prosecution function in the process of prosecuting criminal acts of terrorism is primarily a form of assistance to law enforcement officials; however, under Law No. 5/2018 Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism, the TNI can take direct action, which may result in overlap between the TNI and Polri. Law No. 5 of 2018 incorporates the TNI's role in counter-terrorism, which aligns with Law No. 34 of 2004 on the TNI, where counter-terrorism efforts are considered MOOTW, as also regulated by Law No. 3 of 2002 on National Defense (Fahrisal 2020).

Regarding the TNI's role in counter-terrorism, Article 7 of Law No. 34 of 2004 on the Indonesian National Armed Forces states that one of the primary tasks of the TNI is to do counter-terrorism. As previously mentioned, the fundamental principle of the TNI's existence is inherently anti-humanitarian, with its primary purpose being warfare. The TNI's involvement in counter-terrorism is intended to assist the Polri, which holds the authority for investigations, as stipulated in Article 25(1) of Law No. 5 of 2018 on the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism, which states that investigations, prosecutions, and examinations in terrorism cases must follow the law of criminal procedure.

In terms of TNI involvement in countering criminal acts of terrorism, it is a form of assistance to the main task of the Polri, such as the case that occurred in Poso where the Polri became the main target of terrorism in Poso, which the mechanism of involvement is based on fixed procedures owned by the police and by the TNI itself. However, these fixed procedures are not formal regulations or part of the legislative framework and lack legally binding authority. In practice, this sometimes leads to rivalry and a lack of coordination due to the weak regulation of the assistance role. Hence, it is necessary to adopt a different approach, applying Law No. 34 of 2004 on the TNI to frame its involvement in counter-terrorism as part of MOOTW.

Given this background, the Presidential Regulation must emphasise that the deployment of military forces is solely possible following a political decision by the government. According to Law No. 34 of 2014 on the Indonesian National Armed Forces, the involvement of the TNI in MOOTW in the context of terrorism must be based on a political decision from the state, particularly one issued by the President with the approval of the House of Representatives (DPR) as the representative of civil authority. A political decision from the state

is essential as it relates to the assessment of the current threat situation and the effectiveness of the TNI's contribution to countering terrorist actions. Regardless of the political and historical context, the role and involvement of the TNI in counter-terrorism in Indonesia must be based on operational needs. Furthermore, the importance of a political decision from the state is also tied to the principle of civilian supremacy, which is upheld by democratic nations. This principle is crucial in a stringent and accountable framework for TNI involvement in counter-terrorism. Within the MOOTW framework, one of the main foundations for regulating military assistance tasks is the legitimacy reflected in the form of political decisions issued by civil authorities.

Referring to the components of the criminal justice system, which include key law enforcement institutions, the cooperation established must be capable of producing an Integrated Criminal Justice System. This system should be based on the principle of functional differentiation, which regulates the roles and authorities of law enforcement agencies according to the stages of the process as determined by law. When considering the components of the criminal justice system, the key law enforcement institutions play a crucial role. The cooperation established among these institutions must be capable of producing an integrated criminal justice system. This system should be based on the principle of functional differentiation, which regulates the roles and authorities of law enforcement agencies according to the stages of the legal process as determined by law (Harahap 2000). The principle of functional differentiation emphasises the structural division of tasks and authorities among various law enforcement agencies. The Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP) clearly outlines this principle, involving the clarification and adjustment of the functions and authorities of each law enforcement agency. This categorisation is designed to ensure mutual supervision and coordination among law enforcement agencies throughout the interconnected and continuous law enforcement process. From the initial investigation by the police to the execution of court decisions by the prosecution, there is a continuous functional relationship that creates a mechanism of mutual supervision among law enforcement agencies within a coordinated, Integrated Criminal Justice System.

The involvement of the TNI in countering criminal acts of terrorism, in terms of cooperation between the TNI and Polri, will inevitably lead to overlaps, impacting the process in the following ways: first, roles and

authorities mean that overlapping authorities can create ambiguity and conflicts regarding the division of tasks and responsibilities; second, differences in approach mean that the Polri and TNI have different approaches governed by different regulations. The Polri operates under Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police, while the TNI operates under Law No. 34 of 2004 on the Indonesian National Armed Forces. The last one is delays in Handling, which means that overlapping authorities between the TNI and Polri can cause delays in addressing terrorism. The Polri, which has the right to conduct investigations, and the TNI, which is supposed to assist the Polri, may experience conflicts in their collaborative efforts.

Conclusion

Terrorism is a major worldwide security threat, having effects that go beyond national security and include negative social and economic consequences, making it an extraordinary crime. Each country faces different terrorism threats, leading to distinct definitions of terrorism and varying counter-terrorism strategies. Initially, when terrorism emerged as a global security issue, many countries prioritised military intervention (hard approach) in their counter-terrorism efforts. However, with the evolution of politics and terrorism, many countries now combine a hard approach with law enforcement and other activities employing a soft approach. The military's involvement in counter-terrorism has become a subject of debate in many countries, particularly concerning human rights issues and public opinion. Inappropriate military use can lead to negative public opinion and counterproductive outcomes. Some countries have successfully integrated military and law enforcement efforts. The authors believes that military involvement in counter-terrorism must be regulated and coordinated to avoid overlapping authorities among agencies. This view is based on structural-functional theory, which emphasises the need for differentiation to ensure a system operates harmoniously and productively within the existing framework.

In Indonesia, prior to the New Order era, the military was indeed used as a counter-terrorism instrument. With the development of politics and terrorism, Indonesia has since adopted a combination of approaches to counter-terrorism. The involvement of the TNI has faced opposition from various institutions and the public, particularly concerning human rights and disruptions to democracy. However, through the revision of

Law No. 15/2003, the TNI was assigned the task of counter-terrorism as part of MOOTW, in alignment with the TNI's primary tasks and functions. This assignment is based on the view that terrorism threatens national sovereignty. In the context of "terrorism crimes," the TNI is not part of the law enforcement apparatus that independently and directly performs preventive and repressive functions of counter-terrorism in Indonesia. The authors argue that this situation could lead to overlapping authorities, potentially slowing down the response to terrorism. Therefore, it is essential to have coordination and synchronisation among the counter-terrorism institutions, along with a dedicated body or institution to perform supervisory functions.

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Recognition and Integration: Examining Multiculturalism's Role in Preventing Radicalisation

Muthanna Saari[*]

Abstract: This paper examines the relationship between sentiments of disenfranchisement and the radicalisation process among certain groups within society. Systematic social, economic and political discrimination, particularly against minorities, is argued to be among the primary driving factors in the radicalisation process. Multiculturalism, as a concept that recognises the differences amongst various segments of society whilst simultaneously requiring these diverse groups to integrate into existing societal structures. The notions of difference and diversity are pertinent in determining whether an individual or group experiences inclusion or exclusion from the broader society. This paper explores how Jürgen Habermas's concept of the politics of recognition could be applied within the framework of multiculturalism to prevent radicalisation. Specifically, the outcomes of multiculturalism will be assessed in light of the progressive recognition of different views and ideologies in ensuring universal human rights. In doing so, the paper will first critically examine the view that cultural differences associated with political identity do not necessarily facilitate the building of a coherent society. Secondly, it will consider the implications of multifarious elements of political recognition in preventing radicalisation. Finally, it will explore the ways in which multiculturalism can sustainably address the challenges of integration and assimilation within multicultural societies.

Keywords: multiculturalism, radicalisation, politics of recognition, integration and assimilation, disenfranchisement

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[*] Fellow at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Universiti Malaya, and Doctoral researcher in International Development, University of Sussex, United Kingdom. Email: muthanna@um.edu.my

Abstrak: Kertas kerja ini mengkaji hubungan antara sentimen kehilangan hak dan proses radikalisasi dalam kalangan kumpulan tertentu dalam masyarakat. Diskriminasi sosial, ekonomi dan politik yang sistematik, khususnya terhadap minoriti, dihujahkan sebagai antara faktor pendorong utama dalam proses radikalisasi. Multikulturalisme, sebagai konsep yang mengiktiraf perbezaan di kalangan pelbagai segmen masyarakat pada masa yang sama memerlukan kumpulan yang pelbagai ini untuk diintegrasikan ke dalam struktur masyarakat sedia ada. Pengertian perbezaan dan kepelbagaian adalah penting dalam menentukan sama ada individu atau kumpulan mengalami pengalaman yang inklusif atau terkecuali daripada masyarakat yang lebih luas. Kertas kerja ini meneroka bagaimana konsep politik pengiktirafan Jürgen Habermas boleh digunakan dalam rangka kerja multikulturalisme untuk mencegah radikalisasi. Secara khusus, hasil multikulturalisme akan dinilai berdasarkan pengiktirafan progresif terhadap pandangan dan ideologi yang berbeza dalam memastikan hak asasi manusia sejagat. Dengan berbuat demikian, kertas kerja akan terlebih dahulu mengkaji secara kritis pandangan bahawa perbezaan budaya yang dikaitkan dengan identiti politik tidak semestinya memudahkan pembinaan masyarakat yang koheren. Kedua, ia akan mempertimbangkan implikasi pelbagai unsur pengiktirafan politik dalam mencegah radikalisasi. Akhir sekali, ia akan meneroka cara di mana kepelbagaian budaya boleh menangani cabaran integrasi dan asimilasi dalam masyarakat berbilang budaya secara mampan.

Kata kunci: Multikulturalisme, radikalisasi, politik pengiktirafan, integrasi dan asimilasi, kehilangan hak

Introduction

Little did people expect that a stabbing incident in Southport, England would trigger a mass violent riot regarded as the worst in the country's history in more than a decade. On 29 July 2024, a mass stabbing attack at a Taylor Swift-themed dance event killed three girls and injured ten others, eight of whom were children. The following day, while the nation was still in grief, violent protests broke out in the seaside town, hijacking the vigil held for the victims of the attack. Fuelled by misinformation claiming the suspect was an illegal migrant (Thomas & Sardarizadeh, 2024), the riot, agitated by far-right groups linked to English Defence League (EDL), quickly escalated to several towns across the country, charged with anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiments.

When the identity of the suspect was revealed as a 17-year-old Cardiff-born boy to Rwandan parents, the reality of resentment among

British society came to the fore. EDL—a far-right group founded to 'save the country' from Islam and immigrants—gained traction from this incident, capitalising on the social precariousness and identity crisis affecting the white working class (Sibley, 2021; Treadwell, 2013). The attack was not classified as terrorist despite the suspect facing a separate terror charge after being charged with numerous counts of murder and attempted murder. The terror charge was made after the suspect was found to possess a military study of an Al-Qaeda training manual, yet investigators believed he was not motivated by terrorist ideology in carrying out the stabbing (Martin, 2024).

Going back to when the war on terrorism heightened post-September 11, 2001, there had been pessimistic arguments about its effectiveness in stamping out global terrorism. Donald Rumsfeld, the then United States of America (US) Defence Secretary, critically asked if the world was producing terrorists faster than the US could kill or capture them (Krueger & Laitin, 2004). Correspondingly, Kruglanski et al. (2014) note that terrorism seems to imitate the mythical hydra, replicating its heads as replacements for those being chopped off. The apparent deadlock in defeating terrorism through war has led to an approach focused on tracing and reversing radicalisation, defined as "a movement in the direction of supporting or enacting radical behaviour" (Kruglanski et al., 2014, p. 70) as the root of terrorism.

Perhaps the fruit of the war on terrorism has engendered the uprisings in the Arab world a decade later. As Tariq Ramadan writes, possibly no one foresaw that the confiscation of Mohamed Bouazizi's wares in the street of the Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid would trigger major protests that brought down and caused unrest to several Arab governments. He further suggests that various socio-economic and political factors such as poverty, economic adversity, unemployment, police repression, and oppressive rule created the tipping point that led Bouazizi to become so desperate as to self-immolate, which eventually caused his death (Ramadan, 2012). It is evident that discrimination affecting one's life, involving his or her economic and political identity in society can inevitably radicalise resentful individuals.

The lack of recognition for someone to live a life that he or she values most can be decisive in determining their level of participation in society. Multiculturalism, defined as "the coexistence within the same

political society of a number of sizeable cultural groups wishing and in principle able to maintain their distinct identity" (Raz, 1998, p. 197), could serve as a framework for social cohesion. Jürgen Habermas's notion of recognition for particular cultures and identities would be applicable in the multiculturalism framework as people of minority groups are included in the political society of their adopted country. As a driving policy for a multicultural society, multiculturalism aims to provide sufficient recognition to minority groups to prevent their disenfranchisement from mainstream society.

It is vital to keep all people of different groups engaged and represented, ensuring they are not marginalised by any structural discrimination by state apparatus. Additionally, ensuring rights for all, although problematic in the discourse of differences in society, should be the prime concern as it would also prevent resentment among these groups and reduce the risk of radicalisation. Therefore, this paper explores the ways in which multiculturalism acts as a driver to avoid the radicalisation process among people of different backgrounds in a multicultural society. The first section of this paper will examine how cultural differences associated with political identity affect the building of a coherent society. It will then consider how various factors affecting political recognition contribute to preventing radicalisation. Finally, it will explore how multiculturalism sustainably addresses the challenges of integration and assimilation in a multicultural society.

Cultural Differences

The question of integration in a culturally diverse society has always been discussed within multiculturalism concepts. As Grillo (2007) illustrates through the case of Mr. S, a Muslim who questioned whether integrating into British society meant he needed to stop praying or start going to the pub during his lunch break. The answer was clear: integration means coexisting with the host culture while maintaining one's own cultural practices. Perhaps integration in a multicultural society can best be described from 'Jenkins Formula 1966' of which formulated from the words of Roy Jenkins, the then Home Secretary of the United Kingdom (UK):

> "Integration is perhaps a rather loose word. I do not regard it as meaning the loss, by immigrants, of their own national

characteristics and culture. I do not think we need in this country a 'melting-pot', which will turn everybody out in a common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies of someone's misplaced vision of the stereotyped Englishman […] I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance […] if we are to maintain any sort of world reputation for civilised living and social cohesion, we must get far nearer to its achievement than is the case today" (Jenkins, 1967, p. 267).

Difference and diversity are aspects that warrant serious attention within the multiculturalism framework. Colombo (2010) raises an interesting argument on how young migrants in Europe use their differences as a tool to keep their hopes alive. Differences have become instruments for inclusion and exclusion in constructing relationships and identity. These youths are proud of their origin whilst simultaneously feeling honoured to adopt the identity and culture of their country of residence. In this regard, difference is conceived either as closely associated with identity, especially when used to stress one's group characteristics, or as a 'dichotomous opposite' when it belongs to another group's attribute. Furthermore, difference has been manipulated as a political resource, both for greater participation and inclusion as well as to produce new forms of exclusion.

The idea of culture merged with ethnic identity is a form of identity politics. This conception poses a risk as culture is presumed to be the property of ethnic group, thus reifying the culture with boundary and distinctness (Turner, 1993). Turner (1993) argues that culture in a multiculturalist perspective is a collective social identity engaged in a struggle for equal opportunity. Culture in this context is not static and is subject to constant revision, which is not an end itself, but a means to an end. Therefore, culture as a collection of knowledge and belief systems could be dynamically constructed through shared understanding (Saari, 2019).

In the same vein, Ibrahim (2016) argues that the concept of culture should not be romanticised to past memory or even limited to the rites de passage of the past societal norms. In emphasising the need to see culture beyond an encyclopaedic knowledge, he refers to Antonio

Gramsci's idea of understanding culture as a creative process for a human to live meaningful lives,

> We must break the habit of thinking that culture is encyclopaedic knowledge whereby man [sic] is viewed as a mere container in which to pour and conserve empirical data or brute disconnected facts which he will have to subsequently pigeonhole in his brain as in the columns of a dictionary so as to be able to eventually respond to the varies stimuli of the external world. This form of culture is truly harmful…It only serves to create misfits, people who believe themselves superior to the rest of humanity because they have accumulated in their memory a certain quantity of facts and dates which they cough up at every opportunity to almost raise a barrier between themselves and others (Ibrahim, 2016, p. 235).

Heath and Demireva (2014) identify two main challenges for individuals or groups in a diverse society. Firstly, the maintenance of one's individual identity and secondly, the relationship with the larger society. These two aspects determine one's position in a multicultural society. A person is considered to have integrated into the community if they preserve their identity and characteristics whilst maintaining relationships with the larger society. Conversely, if they keep their identity but not their relationships with the larger society, they have segregated or separated themselves. A person is considered assimilated if they preserve relationships with the wider society whilst abandoning their identity. Finally, a person risks being marginalised by society if they maintain neither their relationships nor their identity.

These characterisations of an individual within a multicultural society can also be compared with the types of multiculturalism. Turner (1993) differentiates between critical multiculturalism and difference multiculturalism. The former is a type of multiculturalism which is not static and is open to a democratic culture, whilst the latter reduces culture to a tag for identity which flourishes separatism. These types of multiculturalism could be relevant to the categorisation of weak and strong multiculturalism, as introduced by Grillo (2007). Weak multiculturalism concerns recognising cultural differences in the private sphere with assimilation to the local population. Strong multiculturalism poses an opposite to weak multiculturalism, wherein differences in the

public sphere are institutionally recognised with special provisions granted in areas such as education, language, healthcare, welfare, as well as organisational representation along cultural lines (Grillo, 2007).

Notwithstanding, the categorisation of multiculturalism should be scrutinised to ensure it genuinely recognises the true diversity within society. Multiculturalism should not be skewed solely towards the ideal theory of recognising the plurality of society. The recognition must also come with an assurance that differences are given equal opportunity. There must not also be cultural hegemony from any dominant group over another. As Ibrahim (2016) rightly argues, multiculturalism brings the issue of empowerment and liberation, what Paulo Freire articulated as the act of culture that strives for freedom. Having the right understanding of multiculturalism would entail a sense of solidarity towards marginalised groups in society that come from different economic and social strata.

Heath and Demireva (2014) argue that multiculturalism policies have fostered parallel lives within societies, hence encouraging exclusion rather than inclusion. Critics of multiculturalism claim that such policies have led to radicalisation by bonding people to their groups rather than bridging individuals to the wider society. Multiculturalism policies have also been criticised for providing fertile soil for extremism. The findings from Heath and Demireva (2014), however, in referring to the in-group marriages and friendships of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in the UK, show that although these numbers are relatively high, parallel lives are relatively uncommon because residential and workplace segregation is low. The intergenerational change among groups who had been granted special rights, such as Muslims and Sikhs, also did not show any clear pattern of entrenchment.

Multiculturalism in France has been practised differently. French secularism or *laïcité*, has proven to be the underlying conception of the country in accepting people of different backgrounds. Strict policies have been implemented in an attempt to conform to the *liberté, égalité, fraternité* motto which first appeared during the French Revolution. Individuals who become French citizens by choice are obliged to assimilate with society. The assimilation policy is problematic as it requires a cultural uniformity. Muslims in France, in particular, find the assimilation policy conflicts with their religious and cultural values,

thus resulting in their reluctance to fully embrace French 'identity' (Franz, 2007).

The situation has been exacerbated by the state-sponsored ghettoisation policy whereby migrant families are situated in certain residential areas. Far from the city, poor suburbs, estates and industrial enclaves become the settlement for migrant families. Therefore, when riots erupted in the suburbs (*banlieues*) of Paris and some other towns (*communes*) in 2005, the participants were mostly immigrant-origin youth (Rattansi, 2011). These suburbs and towns were also characterised by high unemployment and low education levels. The rioters complained about social living conditions and discrimination against their ethnicity. Franz (2007) suggests that these second and third generations of migrants have been disenfranchised by official French policies, leaving them with a feeling of double exclusion based on both ethnic and economic factors.

In the UK, albeit with a slightly better multiculturalism policy compared to other European countries, multiculturalism is seen as fashionable practices whereby certain parts are accepted, whilst the more challenging and important aspects of Muslim identity remain undiscussed. The aspect of faith, which is most essential for Muslims, has often been left out. For example, women's participation in sports has been hindered by the failure to accommodate their faith-related needs. A report on British Muslim women in sports found that the lack of women-only spaces or facilities was a major barrier preventing them from participating in sports (Muslimah Sports Association, 2014). Ziauddin Sardar identified two main obstacles for the development of true multiculturalism: firstly, the Western hegemonic nature of liberal individualism, which cannot be reconciled with the idea of multiculturalism; and secondly, the failure of multiculturalism to be a transformative tool for political and cultural change in society, hence challenging Western liberal values (Modood & Ahmad, 2007).

The idea of belonging and excessive attachment to a particular set of culture and norms can reduce the ability to understand and use differences in context. Colombo (2010) suggests three ideas of belonging: admittance, involvement, and identification. Admittance concerns being accepted without discrimination based on differences. Equal opportunities for personal capabilities should be considered

rather than treating people unfairly due to differences. Involvement represents another level of participation within the larger society. It concerns actual recognition rather than mere acceptance, where proper recognition entails full rights to participate and unhesitatingly use differences for expression. Finally, identification is the idea of belonging that intensify the essentialist dimension in which differences form an identity. Acknowledged identity would promote expression of thought according to common roots.

In discussing the theory of politics of recognition, Jürgen Habermas relates it to the claim of individual rights for the recognition of collective identities. The struggle for recognition, in his argumentation, is the phenomenon of certain groups defending themselves against oppression, marginalisation and disrespect. In this regard, women, ethnic and cultural minorities, nations and cultures are groups struggling for recognition of collective identities. Although each group experiences similar discrimination and misunderstanding, they represent different dimension for recognition (Habermas, 1994).

Habermas explicates the differences in claims for recognition between feminism, multiculturalism, nationalism, and the struggle against the Eurocentric heritage of colonialism. Feminism, for example, opposed a dominant culture that interprets sexes in ways that deny equal rights (Habermas, 1994). Therefore, feminists approach their cause through the actualisation and contextualisation of their experiences in the struggle for political recognition (Saari, 2019). In contrast, with the struggle of oppressed ethnic and cultural minorities, the majority's revised understanding of minority claims does not incontrovertibly change their role in the same way that reinterpretation of the sexes changes the role of men (Habermas, 1994).

It is worth mentioning Charles Taylor's classical work on the politics of recognition in deliberating the theory of difference and recognition. In his essay, he begins with "[a] number of strands in contemporary politics turn on the need, sometimes the demand, for recognition" (Taylor, 1994, p. 75). This demand for recognition has become the galvanising force not only for nationalists but also for minority or 'subaltern groups', which is identified as the politics of multiculturalism. Taylor (1994) points out that identity is, to some extent, determined by the presence or

absence of recognition. In many instances, the misrecognition by others has resulted in unfavourable consequences for individuals.

The politics of recognition that Taylor advocates entails two different ways of perceiving recognition: firstly, the politics of equal dignity and, secondly, the politics of difference. The former is designated for universally the same set of rights and entitlements, whilst the latter recognises someone's unique identity to mark their distinctness from everyone else. Nevertheless, these two modes of politics are neither unproblematic nor beyond reproach. In disapproving of the politics of difference, the politics of equal dignity accuses the former of violating the principle of non-discrimination. On the other hand, the politics of difference denounces the politics of equal dignity as "forcing people into a homogenous mo[u]ld that is untrue to them" (Taylor, 1994, p. 84).

The politics of equal dignity, in the sense of granting equal rights and opportunities, could be equated with John Rawls's principle of justice as fairness. Argued to be the most egalitarian theory on justice, Rawls constructed the theory within the notion that people are free and equal, and that society should be fair. In the theory of justice, Rawls covered the framework for political and economic equality among citizens. Justice as fairness entails that the "original position of equality corresponds to the state of nature in the traditional theory of the social contract" (Rawls, 1971, p. 12). The theory has been helpful from the standpoint of ensuring a fair and equal society. Concepts of 'the original position' and the 'veil of ignorance' in this theory have been constructed to address the complexity of society with its varied backgrounds.

In essence, the principle aspires to ensure equality of opportunity and arrange social and economic inequalities to benefit the least advantaged people (Wenar, 2017). The theory can be identified in two components: first, thought to be strictly equal and difference-blind and, secondly, argued to be advancing the politics of difference. Through these concepts, Rawls applies a hypothetical approach in 'forcing' everyone to adopt a system which would ensure justice for all (Baharom, 2019). Therefore, Rawls has practically formulated how "a just and stable society of free and equal citizens" could be built from diverse and opposing backgrounds (Baumeister, 2000, p. 49). Nonetheless, from a libertarian perspective of individual rights and minimal state, Robert Nozick criticises Rawls's theory of justice by questioning the need for social cooperation and the terms imposed for this cooperation.

He instead proposes the entitlement theory whereby an individual's acquisition is entitled to its holding, further questioning "why isn't the appropriate (not an inappropriate) set of holdings just the one which *actually occurs* via this process of mutually-agreed-to exchanges whereby people choose to give to others what they are entitled to give or hold?" (Nozick, 1974, pp. 186-187).

Political Recognition in Preventing Radicalisation Process

As was pointed out in the introduction to this paper, political recognition for people of different backgrounds has been shown to influence people's satisfaction levels in society. Without proper recognition, people may become resentful of their abject conditions and societal position. Such situations serve a delicate case for radicalisation process to take place among these people. This premise aligns with the focal goal commitment of terrorists, which can determine the degrees of radicalisation. The underlying motivation for terrorist acts has been identified as the quest for personal significance, which represents "the fundamental desire to matter, to be someone, to have respect" (Kruglanski et al., 2014, p. 73).

The psychological trait to prove one's significance can explain an individual's radicalisation process. Kruglanski et al. (2014) effectively outline the psychological construct of the radicalisation process, which centres around the significance quest. The importance of managing personal significance can be illustrated through opportunities for significance gain or loss, which are often associated with disrespect towards one's social identity. It is worth noting that reversing radicalisation, or deradicalisation, might require the perception that one's significance goal has been fulfilled. Whilst it is not conclusive in determining radicalisation factors, the process involves an interactive framework comprising three elements: the goal of significance, the means to achieve significance, and the social process through which the goal and means are implemented.

The quest for significance has been theorised as a response to societal discontentment due to multifarious factors, including the psychological need to feel respected, recognised and valued in society. In a study conducted by Jasko et al. (2020) on the effects of the quest for significance on violent extremism demonstrated that individual and collective significance quests yield different outcomes. Their findings revealed a positive correlation between individuals seeking

personal significance and violent extremism, irrespective of their level of commitment to the cause. Furthermore, the collective quest for significance emerged as a strong predictor for violent extremism, even among individuals in less radical networks. The study also found that collective action and relative collective deprivation serve as more precise predictors than relative personal deprivation.

The states of deprivation, marginalisation, discrimination and recognition in society require careful attention for preventing radicalisation. Economic marginalisation and deprivation, which constitutes a political-economic approach, appeared to be major factors in terrorist acts (Mubarok & Hamid, 2018). Following the 2001 riots in Burnley, Oldham and Bradford involving youths of different ethnicities, the British government's commissioned investigations revealed that systematic policies had led to low employment levels and limited economic opportunities for ethnic minorities (Rattansi, 2011).

A comparable situation occurred in France in 2005, where the disenfranchisement of ethnic minorities stemmed largely from systematic and policy-based discrimination, along with their treatment as second-class French citizens. In response to riots that erupted in suburbs surrounding Paris, Lyons, Toulouse, Lille and other cities, the French government took swift action by re-establishing subsidies to local associations and rectifying its anti-discrimination policies, particularly for residents in these areas (Franz, 2007). Whilst some might simplistically blame multiculturalism without total assimilation for such unrest, the economic and social deprivations experienced by ethnic minority youths were the primary factors driving their demands for equal treatment.

In the Netherlands, multicultural policy has been accused of fostering radicalisation among ethnic minorities. This is exemplified by the case of Mohammed B., a Dutch of Moroccan origin who assassinated Theo Van Gogh, the filmmaker of *Submission,* a film that projected negative perceptions of Islam. For context, the early Dutch version of multiculturalism encouraged cultural preservation among ethnic minority communities. This evolved to include Westernised versions of Islam developed by these communities, which embraced principles such as individual freedom and equality (Rattansi, 201). However, this progress was derailed in the 2000s, particularly after

9/11, which revived earlier concerns about conflicts between Dutch and non-European minorities. Mohammed B.'s case exemplifies the incompleteness of multicultural policy; whilst group cultural rights were granted, anti-discrimination policies in the labour market were neglected.

However, more recent incidents of radicalisation within British multicultural society have somewhat called into question the effectiveness of such policies. In May 2017, a bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester Arena killed 22 people and injured hundreds. The suicide attack was carried out by Salman Abedi, who died in the explosion, having made the bomb at home with his brother, Hashim Abedi. According to the Public Inquiry into the attack, the key findings regarding his radicalisation journey indicated it was "primarily driven by noxious absences and malign presences. Noxious absences included a prolonged disengagement from mainstream English education and parental absence" (House of Commons, 2023, p. 3).

Similarly, the London suicide bombings of July 2005, which killed 52 people and injured 770 others, were carried out by 4 British nationals. The causes of radicalisation among these attackers remained concerning, as reports suggested that "the threat is as likely to come from those who appear well assimilated into mainstream UK society, with jobs and young families, as from those within socially or economically deprived sections of the community" (Intelligence and Security Committee, 2006. p. 29). The context of their radicalisation was summarised thus: "Some have been well-educated, some less so. Some genuinely poor, some less so. Some apparently well integrated in the UK, others not" (House of Commons, 2006, p. 31).

In summary, it has been shown from this section that malign neglect in the socio-economic sphere can prove fatal in the radicalisation of individuals. Various incidents in the UK and France in 2005 highlighted the need for policies that are inclusive of all citizens, providing equal opportunities in socio-economic activities and political identification. In the varied types of multicultural societies that exist worldwide, multicultural policy offers a potential solution for building social cohesion among people of different ethnicities and backgrounds. Therefore, as Raz (1998) suggests, a new mindset must be adopted that avoids dichotomising societies into majority and minority groups,

instead viewing them as "a plurality of cultural groups" (p. 197). Similarly, Modood (2003) advocates for the articulation of a plural 'us' instead of a 'them', transforming people from sojourners to be part of the future.

Integration and Assimilation of a Multicultural Society

Having discussed recognition and difference, the final section of this paper addresses the issues of integration and assimilation of a multicultural society. It must be noted that multiculturalism has attracted significant criticism. The practice has been accused of fostering and encouraging separate living by recognising the differences between various groups in society. Recognition of differences has been blamed for leading to exclusion rather than inclusion in the wider society and has been identified as a potential basis for radicalisation. Multicultural policy has also been accused of creating tension and suspicion between majority and minority groups (Heath & Demireva, 2014).

Liberal concepts of multiculturalism imply that individual rights take precedence over collective rights. This relates to debates about whether groups or only individuals are entitled to be rights claimants. These debates arose from questions about how to account for rights violations when the rights holder is a group rather than an individual. Will Kymlicka proposes group-differentiated rights as the solution to "enable individuals to form and maintain the various groups and associations", noting that many forms of these rights are individually exercised (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 26). He further argues that group-differentiated rights would address the vulnerability of minority groups against the economic and political decisions of the larger society.

Examining the details of the group-differentiated rights advocated by Kymlicka, it is worth noting that these rights aim to either guarantee rights within groups or secure external protections. First, special group representation rights ensure that minority groups would not face discrimination in country-wide decisions. Second, self-government rights emphasise the devolution of power to prevent minority groups from being side-lined by policy-related decisions of the majority. Third, polyethnic rights target specific religious and cultural practices that might be inadequately protected under normal societal arrangements. Granting these rights to minority groups allows each group to be treated

equally whilst reducing its vulnerability against the larger society (Kymlicka, 1995).

The categorisation of multiculturalism, as it relates to the relationship between individuals and their society, provides insight into how multiculturalism might prevent radicalisation. The extent to which multiculturalism is understood and practised influences inter-group relationships in a multicultural society. This encompasses the sense of recognition and empowerment of different groups, which could influence radicalisation thinking. Furthermore, the relationship between different groups in society raises issues of integration and assimilation into the larger society. This remains a contentious point in multicultural debates, as questions persist about ideal practices for multi-ethnic society co-existence. The prevalent narrative often advocates for uniformed practices and culture across all groups to maintain the cultural authority of the majority, though this is not necessarily the optimal approach.

From the perspective of receiving society, integration is a long-lasting process of including and accepting minority groups into core institutions and working environments. For migrants and minority groups, integration represents "the process of learning a new culture, acquisition of rights, access to positions and statuses" and the mutual process of building relationships between receiving and immigration societies (Grillo, 2007, p. 983). This understanding of integration relates to the Jenkins Formula mentioned earlier, which emphasises mutual tolerance. Therefore, integration should be viewed as a two-way process in which both the larger society and migrants or minorities adapt to each other. This mutual understanding was exemplified during the Salman Rushdie affair, where the concept of consent from both parties was brought forward to address questions of political community membership (Parekh, 1990).

In the context of British Muslim society, Abbas (2011) argues that the inherent value of a group and its importance are essential within a society of different ethnic and religious groups. While opportunities, recognition, and to a certain extent acceptance from the larger society are required, Muslims as a minority group need to maintain confidence in their beliefs and values. Multiculturalism can contribute to social cohesion when it acknowledges shared citizenship with common universal values as the binding force, and more importantly, when

allegiance to this citizenship is not hampered by ethnic belonging. In his example, the idea of 'Britishness' or 'Englishness' need not be developed within the preoccupied norms and values of being white and Anglo-Saxon (Abbas, 2011).

Integration from a multiculturalist perspective does not necessarily require cultural uniformity. It does not demand that minority groups with different ethnic backgrounds relinquish their culture, heritage, and language entirely. They should be permitted to maintain their cultural differences to preserve their connection with their roots. Granting minority groups their cultural rights enhance their profile in a multicultural society. However, this raises the question: what is the purpose of integration if these minority groups are not fully incorporated into the larger society? This question is best answered by reflecting on the concept of mutual tolerance in the two-way process of integrating minorities into the existing society.

Whilst cultural differences are recognised and maintained, there are notable concerns that minorities might seek to recreate their own societal culture. To the larger society, it may appear that these groups are demanding national rights to legitimately claim their cultural rights. However, as demonstrated in many multicultural societies, this is not the case. Kymlicka (1995), in his defence of minority rights, distinguished between the recognition of polyethnic rights that he advocated and the separate societal culture among minorities that worried the larger society. The sentiment of apparent threat from granting these rights to minority groups is possibly one reason why multiculturalism is deplored, as demonstrated by the emergence of the EDL and its ferocious responses. This may cause mainstream society to become adamant about pushing for total assimilation into the established society.

The case of ethnic revival in American history reinforces the belief that differentiated rights might threaten social coherence. What began as an attempt to express distinctive characteristics of minorities escalated to demands for group-based ameliorative action, challenging certain socially accepted aspects. Although minorities were recognised as ethnic groups rather than national minorities, the ethnic revival challenged the notion of integration. The integration process was condemned for oppressing these ethnic groups, resulting in demands

not only for recognition of separate ethnic institutions but also for self-determination within the existing mainstream society.

However, this does not present the complete picture of integration. Only a fraction of minority groups caused anxiety among mainstream society through their demands for national rights. Indeed, hostility towards these claims from minorities could result in ignorance of these groups' existence. Even when their existence is recognised, what Michael Walzer and Nathan Glazer termed as "benign neglect" could indirectly jeopardise the status of minority groups in society (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 64). Despite sentiment against ethnic revival, it should be noted that contemporary ethnic revival involves revising integration practices rather than rejecting integration entirely. In this regard, as Kymlicka (1995) points out, ethnic revival aims to make ethnic identity an acceptable part of mainstream society.

Multiculturalism, for that reason, provides a means to address the integration of minority groups into the mainstream community. Polyethnicity demands signify ethnic groups' readiness to participate in the larger society, thus making integration a process of inclusion. Allowing minorities to maintain certain practices is not intended to exclude these groups or separate them from mainstream society. Rather, it accommodates them by enabling adjustments to mainstream society's institutions and structures for better integration. If multiculturalism contributes one thing to multicultural integration, it is the tolerance for diversity that breaks away from a homogenous society.

The underlying principle of integration in multiculturalism is to bring people of all different backgrounds together. As Modood (1998, p. 396) writes: "the goal of democratic multiculturalism cannot and should not be cultural neutrality but, rather, the inclusion of marginal and disadvantaged groups, including religious communities in public life." Integration and differences are intrinsically linked to equal treatment of rights in society. It must be recognised that people who are different require different treatment to ensure they are placed in comparable positions. In *The Constitution of Liberty,* Hayek (1960, p. 86) argues that "uniformity theory of human nature would undermine basic ideals of freedom", thus inferring that individual differences are crucial in determining one's worth in society.

In contrast to integration, assimilation in a multicultural society appears to offer a different solution for achieving social cohesion. Assimilation is portrayed as minimising the disturbance caused by minority groups to the society they are settling in. It is fundamentally a one-way process designed to ensure that assimilating people become as similar as possible to their compatriots (Modood, 2011). This results in assimilation being viewed as a process whereby a minority individuals must surrender their native culture to merge with the majority society, even if this places them in an inferior and disadvantaged position (Alba, 1999). Although contemporary practice considers assimilation "impractical, illiberal and inegalitarian" (Modood, 2011, p. 4), its early formative phase represented a form of liberation from rigid bonds of group loyalty (Alba, 1999).

The penchant for uniform and unified cultural practices in society has consistently driven the thinking behind assimilating people of different backgrounds into one entity. However, this notion does not necessarily yield the intended outcome, as exemplified by France's case, where assimilation policy has been contentiously challenged and met with resistance. Whilst the desire for a common culture and understanding is not entirely invalid, the conception must not be taken out of proportion. In his analysis of the importance of sharing a common culture, Joseph Raz identifies that common culture should not be understood as requiring common ethnicity, language or religion. Instead, what matters is people's ability to identify with political society to which they belong (Raz, 1998).

Integration remains fundamental to multiculturalist practice as it provides greater self-identification with cultural characteristics whilst simultaneously valuing good relationships with mainstream society. In this context, one's identification with political society is essential, as Raz elucidates: "first, identification involves a sense of belonging, of being a part of a larger whole; second, people identify with a variety of groupings and institutions; third, identification with a political society does not replace, but incorporates identification with other groups in that society" (Raz, 1998, p. 203). Furthermore, the balance between integration and diversity should be understood in the context of mutual efforts between both host and new groups in society, as "without empowering the disempowered, the various ethnic, cultural, religious and gender divisions will remain, if not intensify" (Abbas, 2007, p. 297).

Conclusion

Multicultural policy, as extensively discussed, encompasses sensitive issues concerning relationships between different groups in society. It is not merely a fashionable approach with a sleight of hand to deceive people of different groups with token recognition without substantial impact in society. The challenges in managing relationships between different groups in society involve people's tendency to associate their identification with asserting their position in society. This is where multiculturalism addresses the issues of difference, diversity, integration and assimilation for people of different backgrounds. The issue of cultural identity among different groups is typified by the extent to which the maintenance of group identities and cultures can avoid the reification of culture with rigid ethnic identity boundaries, as Floya Anthias points out: "debates on cultural diversity confuse culture and ethnicity […] Is it the boundaries that should be kept or the cultural art[e]facts that act as their barbed wire?" (Yuval-Davis, 1997, pp. 197-198).

There is a substantial correlation between recognising differences and adopting integration processes in a multicultural society with tendencies towards radicalisation. The inclusion of minority groups into mainstream society is crucial for social cohesion, as the sense of disenfranchisement among minority groups could be manipulated towards radicalisation. This paper has critically discussed the extent to which multicultural policy and practice for society with different backgrounds can diminish the temptation towards radicalisation. Multiculturalism has addressed the issue of cultural differences and their identification in political society to achieve the best possibility for a coherent society. It is also pertinent to acknowledge the importance of political, social and economic recognition for these groups to ensure no room for radicalisation can be exploited.

Integration constitutes an essential element within multicultural discussion. Through integration, minority groups can be accommodated with proper treatment that regards them as inclusive members of mainstream society. It must also be noted that integration cannot be one-dimensional, as this would risk emboldening resentment among the wider society. Therefore, the extent to which differing communities integrate to become part of mainstream society would diminish factors

contributing to radicalisation. The issue of integration remains an intriguing one that could be usefully explored in further study. The dynamic nature of current society requires additional studies regarding the way in which integration is understood, thus limiting opportunities for radicalisation to take place within a coherent and integrated society.

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Local Wisdom-Based Multicultural Education: Muhammadiyah Experience

Abdul Mu'ti[*]
Alpha Amirrachman[**]

Abstract: Local wisdom plays a role in helping to face every day challenges. Indonesia's society is multicultural and has a variety of local wisdom. Local wisdom is a product of thoughts, views of life, behavior, habits, and other elements produced by certain communities that show the identity and uniqueness of that community. The diversity of local wisdom can be accessed and cultivated through education because education is a place for the nation's future generations to learn and be guided as citizens and leaders. Through its network of members spread across various parts of the country, Muhammadiyah has established a large number of educational institutions from early childhood to tertiary institutions spread across the archipelago. The motivation is the da'wah of Islam through educational institutions. At the same time, Muhammadiyah carries the spirit of inclusivity as it has organised education for all. It can be said that Muhammadiyah adjusts itself to the local wisdom by accepting students regardless of religious, ethnic, citizenship and economic background. This inclusivity of Muhammadiyah educational institutions is proven by the fact that it is mostly Christian students who attend many Muhammadiyah schools and universities in the eastern parts of Indonesia. The teachers play the most important role in ensuring that a democratic, peaceful and enriching schooling eco-system comes into existence. The training of the teachers and support staff can be perceived as emphasising on three major parts: awareness, knowledge, and skills.

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[*] Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Indonesia & Professor of Islamic Education at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University. Email: masmukti47@gmail.com
[**] Lecturer at Indonesian International Islamic University. Email: alpha.amirrachman@uiii.ac.id

Abstrak: Kearifan tempatan memainkan peranan dalam membantu menghadapi cabaran setiap hari. Masyarakat Indonesia berbilang budaya dan mempunyai pelbagai kearifan tempatan. Kearifan tempatan ialah hasil pemikiran, pandangan hidup, tingkah laku, tabiat, dan unsur-unsur lain yang dihasilkan oleh masyarakat tertentu yang menunjukkan identiti dan keunikan masyarakat tersebut. Kepelbagaian kearifan tempatan boleh diakses dan dipupuk melalui pendidikan kerana pendidikan adalah tempat untuk generasi masa depan negara belajar dan dibimbing sebagai rakyat dan pemimpin. Melalui jaringan ahlinya yang tersebar di serata pelosok tanah air, Muhammadiyah telah menubuhkan sejumlah besar institusi pendidikan dari peringkat awal kanak-kanak hingga ke institusi pengajian tinggi yang tersebar di seluruh nusantara. Motivasinya ialah dakwah Islam melalui institusi pendidikan. Pada masa yang sama, Muhammadiyah membawa semangat inklusif kerana telah menganjurkan pendidikan untuk semua. Boleh dikatakan Muhammadiyah menyesuaikan diri dengan kearifan tempatan dengan menerima pelajar tanpa mengira agama, etnik, kewarganegaraan dan latar belakang ekonomi. Inklusiviti institusi pendidikan Muhammadiyah ini terbukti dengan kebanyakan pelajar Kristian yang bersekolah di banyak sekolah dan universiti Muhammadiyah di wilayah timur Indonesia. Guru memainkan peranan yang paling penting dalam memastikan wujudnya ekosistem persekolahan yang demokratik, aman dan memperkaya. Latihan guru dan kakitangan sokongan boleh dilihat sebagai menekankan kepada tiga bahagian utama: kesedaran, pengetahuan, dan kemahiran.

Kata kunci: kearifan tempatan, pendidikan pelbagai budaya, keterangkuman, guru

Introduction

This paper explores the importance of local wisdom is fostering peace through education and to cultivate awareness among students of both their national and local identity. Later it elaborates the role of Muhammadiyah as a modernist Muslim organisation in Indonesia that establishes and run numerous educational institutions throughout the archipelago and how the organisation adopts local wisdom by being inclusive through the acceptance of students regardless of religious, ethnic, citizenship and economic backgrounds. The paper analyses why non-Muslim students have chosen Muhammadiyah schools and their parents' perception. It then discusses the nature of multicultural

education by putting an emphasis on human relations in all its forms and the incorporation of positive social contributions of various ethic and cultural groups to reduce religious tensions in the classroom. This is done while ensuring the emphasis on students' learning experience and academic achievements. Finally, the paper elaborates the importance of teachers and their role in making sure the democratic, peaceful and enriching school eco-system is sustained and how teacher training involves instilling cultural awareness of local wisdom together with the more conventional knowledge and skill requirements.

Local Wisdom in Education

Culture is a form of self-expression, which creates communal identity from which local wisdom come to take a central part in the life of a community. In various cases, local wisdom plays a role in helping people to face everyday life challenges. In this case, local wisdom can be identified across various sections of human expressions such as social patterns, perceptions and lifestyle (Pesurnay 2018). According to Geertz, (1973), local wisdom is a traditional culture element that is related to human resources, source of culture, economic, security and laws.

In Indonesia's context, society is multicultural and it has a variety of local wisdom. For example, in the province of Maluku, the local wisdom is known as *pelagandong*, which is a traditional concept of brotherhood symbolizing deep ties between different communities, often across religious and ethnic boundaries, and is built on both agreements (*pela*) and shared ancestry (*gandong*). *Pelagandong* can still be found and is customary in various villages on the islands of Ambon Haruku, Saparua, Nusalaut and Seram, peacefully connecting Muslim and Christian villages (Amirrachman 2012). In Wajo, South Sulawesi, the value of *adek pangadereng* encourages the people to respect law, human rights and democratic institutions. *Adek pangadereng* is a foundational concept reflecting a system of norms, rules, and customs that guide social behavior (Wagiran 2011).

As mentioned earlier, the diversity of local wisdom can be developed and disseminated through education by bridging and contributing to both national and local identities. With the dissemination of local wisdom through educational syllabus, it is hoped that students can realise and understand the local wisdom of the archipelago. With the

internalisation of local wisdom, a unique philosophy and identity of education in Indonesia can be created because local wisdom is the basis for the development and implementation of learning (Prihatini 2017). Furthermore, the potential of local wisdom in fostering peace through education should be given special attention by the government so that learners would be familiar with their own local area and understand well about their own local wisdom in the context of mediation and conflict resolution (Darmadi 2018).

The role of education in fostering multicultural society is important because classrooms can be perceived as a miniature of 'real' society. 'Real' here refers to societies outside school where members of the school are from. In this case, classrooms can provide a flawless environment where accepted and good values are transferred and adopted. Hence, the celebrated values would be further disseminated by members of the classrooms to the wider public once they return to their society (Hermawan 2008).

According to Prihartini (2017), to maximise positive interactions among members of the school, real efforts are needed to develop education that has an identity based on local wisdom, national vision and global citizenship. The education system contributes to forging local, national and global aspects by increasing knowledge, skills, and values that encourage students to identify, understand, and realise, and commit to applying them. The importance of local wisdom in collaboration with the needs of the national and global context is mentioned in the Indonesia's national education law. In Indonesia, the National Education System Law (UU Sisdiknas) No. 20 of 2003 concerning the management of education statess that district/city governments manage basic education and secondary education, as well as education units based on local excellence. Based on the National Education System Law, education is processed by utilising local advantages. Each region in Indonesia has its own advantages, one of which is local wisdom. One of the challenges is, indeed, how to integrate these local values and wisdom into educational setting (McConlogue 2020).

The Muhammadiyah Experience

Origin and Purpose

Muhammadiyah, established in 1912, is a modernist Islamic organisation devoting itself to establishing and developing educational

institutions. Through its network of members spread across various parts of the country, Muhammadiyah has established a large number of educational institutions from early childhood to tertiary institutions spread across various regions. One way of Muhammadiyah's Islamic da'wah is through educational institutions, which continue to adapt according to current developments, including in the era of digitalization such as the current Industrial Revolution 4.0 era (Ali & Maksum 2024; Lubis, et al 2023; Tholkah 2013). With a very large number of schools and students' diverse religious backgrounds, Muhammadiyah also had to deal with a dilemmatic situation. The dilemma is between being an educational institution that follows the government, and an organisation that has a proselytising mission, considering that Muhammadiyah is an Islamic movement of da'wah *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining right and forbidding wrong) which aims to build a true Islamic society. The background of Muhammadiyah's birth is closely related to various social and religious problems caused by a syncretic religious life that deviates from the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, the decline of Islamic education and the backwardness of Muslims, the aggressiveness of Christian/Catholic missionary activities and the penetration of European nations (Pasha and Darban 2003, pp. 121-126: see also Junaidi 2023).

What Muhammadiyah has done so far is more in the process of cultural Islamisation, not the formalisation of Islam. Muhammadiyah was a movement for the re-Islamisation of Javanese Islamic society. That is, Muhammadiyah's da'wah aims to make an Islamic society, rather than aspires to formally establish a sharia state (Nakamura 1983). Muhammadiyah realises that Indonesia is a multicultural and multireligious country. For centuries, the Indonesian people, consisting of hundreds of tribes and ethnicities, coexisted peacefully. Based on the 2000 population census, in Indonesia there are 101 ethnic groups that have their own sub-ethnics. The total number of ethnicities and sub-ethnics is more than 1000. The largest ethnic compositions with more than one million are Javanese (83,865,724), Sundanese (30,978,404), Malay (6,946,040), Madurese (6,771,727), Batak (6,076 .440), Minangkabau (5,475,145), Betawi (5,041,688), Bugis (5,010,421), Banten (4,113,162), Banjar (3,496,273), Bali (3,027,525), Sasak (2,611. 059), Cirebon (1,890,102), Chinese (1,738,936) (Arifin, E. N. and A. Ananta, 2003). Furthermore, based on the 2022 population census,

Indonesia has 275 million people who identify mainly with Islam as the overwhelming majority followed by Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism. For houses of worship - Indonesia has 285,631 mosques, 76,686 churches (including Catholic churches), 14,826 puras or Hindu temples, and 4523 viharas and klentengs or Buddhist temples (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia 2022). While Indonesian people are very religious and obedient in carrying out their religious teachings, Indonesia is not a religious state (non-theocratic state) (Hassan 2006).

The Pancasila

The Indonesian state is based on Pancasila, which is extracted from the traditional values of the Indonesian nation. Pancasila—to borrow Abdullahi An-Naim's term—is the "Golden Rule" (Basic Rule), which has universal values across cultures, religions and human rights (An-Na'im 2007, p. 47). The majority of religious people accept the existence of Pancasila because it provides an umbrella for plurality and freedom for every citizen to worship according to their beliefs. In the Congress in Semarang in 1984, Nahdlatul Ulama accepted Pancasila as the principle of the organization. A year later, 1985, through the 41st Congress held in Surakarta, Muhammadiyah accepted Pancasila as the principle of the organization and change the original purpose of the organization "to create an Islamic society" into: "to form a major, just and prosperous society that is blessed by Allah SWT." Muhammadiyah's acceptance of Pancasila took a very long time and theological debates that affected the exit of the "puritan" group from Muhammadiyah, see Harun, L. (1989) Muhammadiyah dan Azas Pancasila (Muhammadiyah and Pancasila Ideology). Jakarta, Pustaka Panjimas. At the 44th Congress in Jakarta, Muhammadiyah again included 'Islam' as the organisational principle. However, as stated by the General Chairperson of PP. Muhammadiyah, M. Din Syamsuddin, in his *iftitah* speech at the Muhammadiyah Tanwir, 25 April 2007, in Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah remains firm in supporting Pancasila as the state's foundation. In the 1945 Constitution, article 29 states: (1) The State is based on the Supreme Deity; (2) The State guarantees the independence of every resident to embrace their respective religions and to worship according to their religion and beliefs. Through the natural process of accommodation, acculturation and assimilation, religious and cultural plurality forms a tolerant and open national character. The majority of the Indonesian population is

Muslim, but the 'cultural trade marks' are Hindu and Buddhist heritage such as Borobudur and Prambanan temples, etc. The strong link between religion and culture make religions in Indonesia - including Islam - syncretic (Azra 1999). Sociologically, syncretism does not always have a negative meaning. Pesantren as an educational institution that is uniquely Indonesian is a product of Javanese-Islamic syncretism. Javanese influence in Islam is also seen in religious celebrations, mosque architecture, etc. In the context of Muhammadiyah, attitudes towards local culture are an interesting discourse. Internal Muhammadiyah debate regarding culture shows the occurrence of a dynamic plurality of thoughts throughout history. This plurality of thought causes differences in da'wah strategies and organisational movements between "puritan" groups and "cultural" groups and gives birth to several variants within Muhammadiyah, (Mulkhan 2000 and Chamim 2003). Junaidi (2023) further asserted that is a tug-of-war between "puritan Muhammadiyah" and "culturalist Muhammadiyah) within the organisation, underlining the dynamic and possible shift of religious interpretation.

Muhammadiyah also carries the spirit of inclusivity as it has organised education for all. It can be said that Muhammadiyah adjusts itself to the local wisdom by accepting students regardless of religious, ethnic, citizenship and economic background. This is line with Hermawan's (2008) argument that one of the important values that need to be cultivated and transferred to students as members of the classroom society is an awareness of the understanding of pluralism. This is because of the fact that our societies are made up of various ethnic and religious groups. This awareness is proven by not thinking and believing that we are the one and only privileged group and by recognising the possibility that other groups maybe right about things in question and could hold alternative truths. In this case, having an awareness of plurality and the idea of pluralism should prevent us from becoming a regime of truth that downplays or denies the existence of other groups that are different from us without valid reasons. Students need to essentially experience, recognise, live and hold dearly the value of pluralism. Indonesia has seen social upheavals that have been encouraged by the arrogance of particular groups over others and this should serve as a lesson that the value of pluralism needs to be deeply cultivated in school environment. As such teachers are expected to share the idea of pluralism and transfer this value to students.

Muhammadiyah Schools

Muhammadiyah schools carry three functions: education, Islamic *da'wah amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* and cadre. This can be seen in the vision and mission of the Elementary and Secondary Education Council (*Dikdasmen*) as an assembly that is specifically devoted to the organisation of Muhammadiyah education. The vision of the Council of Dikdasmen is to organise effective management and educational networks as an advanced, professional and modern Islamic movement and to lay a solid foundation for improving the quality of Muhammadiyah education. The mission of the Educational Education Council are: (a) to uphold the pure belief in monotheism; (b) disseminating Islamic teachings that are sourced from the Qur'an and Sunnah. (c) realising Islamic charity in personal, family and community life; (d) making Muhammadiyah educational institutions a center for education, da'wah and cadre. Based on this context, Muhammadiyah has an experience in helping disseminate the value of pluralism towards Indonesia's plural society.[1] This inclusivity of Muhammadiyah educational institutions is proven by the fact that mostly Christian students attend many Muhammadiyah schools and universities in the Eastern parts of Indonesia. In this case, Muhammadiyah carefully adopts local wisdom in running its education institutions. According to Mu'ti and Ul Haq (2009) there are aspects that can be learnt from this.

First, religious pluralism in the life of our nation is not only based on hard facts in the form of a diversity of cultural systems, but has also been strengthened by a socio-educational system that is oriented towards civil society education. By opening up to non-Muslim students, Muhammadiyah schools have more or less embodied the spirit of civic education shown through the dissemination and institutionalization of democratic culture into educational institutions. Citizenship education itself began to be adopted and developed in Indonesia not long after the

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[1] Studies on religious pluralism and multiculturalism have begun to receive attention since political reforms were marked by the development of democracy that tends to be liberal, regional autonomy, good governance, political openness and the spread of ethnic and religious nuanced violence. Although the ideas of pluralism, democracy, civil society and multiculturalism has been written and published quite a lot, research on pluralism in education is limited, especially those related to Muhammadiyah.

reforms rolled along with demands for democratisation, for example, the study on the development of the Muhammadiyah movement in the 1930s in Sumatra, Aceh, and Sulawesi (Alfian 1989 and Chamim 2001). Interestingly, the majority of students at various Muhammadiyah universities also come from the NU or Nahdlatul Ulama as seen at Malang Muhammadiyah University and in Surakarta and Two thirds of students of Kupang Muhammadiyah University are non-Muslims (Protestant and Catholic).

Secondly, from an academic perspective, the experience of a Muhammadiyah school in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) e.g. SMA Muhammadiyah Ende, that provides religious education to Catholic students suggests that there is a distinct socio-historical background that influences the pattern of interaction between Muhammadiyah followers and Christians in areas known to be predominantly non-Muslim. In this context, scholarly studies on the behavior of these puritan Muslim organizations outside Java are still very minimal, except as additional information from the grand narrative of the Javanese Muhammadiyah. In fact, a comprehensive understanding of this movement is very important considering that Muhammadiyah has transformed into a transcultural and multi-ethnic movement as represented in the portrait of the plurality of students in Muhammadiyah educational institutions.

In another example, in the interior of Kapuas Hulu several non-Muslims parents send children to SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Putussibau. Also in Ende (Flores), Christian parents send their children to SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Ende, and even Protestants teachers support the continuity of the Muhammadiyah Junior High School in Serui, Yapen Waropen by actively inviting the Protestant community to educate their children in Muhammadiyah schools.

The above phenomenon shows that Muhammadiyah as a dynamic socio-cultural phenomenon manifests itself in various expressions and even variants of religious understanding. In reality, the Islamisation carried out by this movement does not always lead people to an ideal model; more modernist, rational and puritanical (Chamim 2003). In fact, the process of Islamisation cannot be separated from the influence of local culture in shaping the history and identity of the local community as shown by the people of Muhammadiyah Kotagede, Yogyakarta (Priyambudi 2006; see also Saputra 2022).

High School (SMA) is different from Madrasah Aliyah (MA). If the MA is more oriented or characterised by Islamic religious education, the high school's pressing point is to teach non-religious (secular) sciences. It is this argument that allows the SMA Muhammadiyah Putussibau to accept non-Muslim (Dayak) students as their students. This is reinforced by the fact that Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Muhammadiyah Putussibau that is located not far from SMA Muhammadiyah has no non-Muslim students.

Although SMA Muhammadiyah carries out the mission of Islamic da'wah, the students' perceptions of this educational institution show another reality. If we look at the reasons why students, both Muslim and non-Muslim, choose Muhammadiyah High School, most of them they gave an answer because of the good quality of the school, low cost, it provides religious education according to the student's religion, and the distance between the school and the house. Such an illustration shows a tendency that non-Muslim students perceive SMA Muhammadiyah as a secular/non-religious educational institution where they can also study with Muslim students. The tendency to see Muhammadiyah schools as secular educational institutions cannot be separated from the views and reasons for non-Muslim parents to send their children to Muhammadiyah high schools. Parents of students of Dayak Taman (Protestant) and Dayak Baloh (Roman Catholic) do not mind that Muhammadiyah SMA is based on Islam. The most important thing for them is that Muhammadiyah schools can provide the best for their children. Even in their view, there is no difference between Islam and Catholicism because both teach goodness.

Positive Pluralism of Muhammadiyah

Muhammadiyah adheres to the principle ofpositive pluralism. In social life, there are two types of pluralism: negative and positive pluralism. According to Kuntowijoyo (2001), the tendency to move around, confuse or not be honest about religious beliefs is a form of 'negative pluralism'. On the other hand, an attitude of being candid and sticking to one's beliefs and—at the same time—being receptive to and different from other people is called 'positive pluralism'. "Muhammadiyah works for the establishment of a pure Islamic creed, free from the symptoms of polytheism, heresy and superstition, without neglecting the principle of tolerance according to Islamic teachings". This refers to MKCH (Matan, Keyakinan, dan Cita-cita Hidup Muhammadiyah or Principle, Belief,

and the Goal of Life of Muhammadiyah). Thus, the question is, what are the views and practices of positive pluralism in Muhammadiyah?

By borrowing Kuntowijoyo's understanding, positive pluralism includes four aspects. First, a positive attitude towards a belief; believe in a religion, not an atheist or agnostic. Second, be positive towards other people who have different beliefs. Third, understand and accept other people with different beliefs. Fourth, providing accommodation for others in order to carry out their beliefs.

To explain the positive pluralism of Muhammadiyah, it can be studied from three perspectives. First, Muhammadiyah's view of social life. Second, the principles and basics of religion in Muhammadiyah. Third, Muhammadiyah's efforts to build unity and relations with non-Muslims. The first and second perspectives are more ideological. While the third examines historically by looking at the roles and efforts of the organization and the figures. Muhammadiyah believes that social life is sunnatullah and part of worship. In accordance with their nature, humans are social creatures. Social life is destiny, the embodiment of God's nature.[2] Related to this issue, Hambali (2006) explained that social life is God's nature (provision) to give essential meaning and value to human life. No matter how perfect, individualistic humans are unable to reach the meaning and value of life. Living in society has a transcendental meaning as part of worship, devotion to God Almighty. Therefore, Muhammadiyah encourages its members to be actively involved in community life. In accordance with the Islamic Living Guidelines (PHI), Muhammadiyah residents should always establish brotherhood and not be discriminatory with fellow community members. Based onIslamic morals, in neighborly life, Muhammadiyah residents should maintain rights, uphold honor and foster harmonious relations with fellow Muslims and non-Muslims (Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah 2001).

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[2] In the preamble of the Anggaran Dasar (Foundational principles of Muhammadiyah): "Living in a society is the sunnah (law of qudrat-iradat) of God for human life in this world." Personality of Muhammadiyah: "... Muhammadiyah bases all its actions and deeds on the principles summarised in the Preamble of the Articles of Association, namely: a. Human life must be based on monotheism, worship and obedience to God; b. Human life in a society…"

Specifically, regarding neighborly relations with non-Muslims, PHI provides guidelines so that Muhammadiyah members interact naturally and be tolerant: "In neighbors of different religions are also taught to be kind and fair, they acquire rights and honor as neighbors, give halal food and can also receive food from them in the form of halal food, and maintain tolerance in accordance with the principles that taught the religion of Islam."

It can be argued that what Muhammadiyah has done is to have much broader impact of increasing cultural and religious or racial tolerance and reducing bias. According to Banks (1994), this mode of education encompasses programs designed to desegregate schools, but also to improve all types of relation among societal groups such as encouraging minority teachers, anti-bias programs and cooperative learning programs. Multicultural education puts an emphasis on human relations in all its forms and incorporates positive social contributions of ethnic and cultural groups, and at the same time also to enhance students' achievement and reduce religious tensions within the classroom (Sleeter and Grant 1993; see also McConlogue 2020).

The Primacy of Teachers

Teachers continue to play an influential role in society including the understanding of what is right and wrong. Teachers need to also display democratic attitude by accommodating different ideas and interpretation raised during discussion in the classroom. When our students are given an opportunity to take a stand on certain issues, they tend to be unable to make their own decisions due to their perception that the 'truth' should come from their teachers and that they might receive punishment if making 'wrong' judgment. For many of them, their teacher is their sole authoritative source of truth (Hermawan 2008).

According to Jenlink (2009), in preparing students for their role later in a society defined by diversity – ethnic, racial, religious, gender and so on – teachers should incorporate "a quality of vision that enables teachers and students to look imaginatively at the differences of individuals, groups, and society represented by the students who enter teacher-education programs. The type of vision necessary in today's diverse and multicultural societies understands that making the Other visible must necessarily involve making visible those dominant discourses in education that block teachers' and students' fuller potential

with respect to understanding their work in building a democratic, multicultural society and in helping marginalised students construct empowering identities" (pp. 16-17).

Therefore, as Hermawan (2008) argued, it is important to introduce students with the fact that the world is a contested arena, a site where people strive to have a say in particular matters. Students should be encouraged to search for justifiable grounds for the things that they argue for. And if others have different beliefs in the matter, they should be urged to study grounds before making any judgment. Students should be trained to listen and respect what others say and believe in the matter. Simultaneously, if later they are convinced that their arguments are not justifiable, they should not hesitate to take a stand that their belief is unacceptable. Students should also be convinced that pluralism should not prevent them from sticking to their argument when their ideas are grounded and true. This is particularly the case when dealing with religion; they should be informed that they should respect the differences in and between religions. Nevertheless, they should also be taught that all regions are not the same, even though as an adherent of any religion they should also believe that their religion is the truth. When they have a debate in classroom regarding that they believe and what others believe, students must be convinced that it should be conducted in a peaceful manner.

To support the implementation of education, it also imperative to address teacher education, since it is the teacher who will deal with classroom challenges in preparing students to embrace tolerant and democratic attitudes, as Lani (2021) stated that the complexity of teacher education for inclusive education lies within questions with regard to the ways support can be exerted towards diverse groups of learners and the particular needs of various disadvantaged groups.

According to Muhammadiyah experience, it can be said that teachers play utmost important role in conducting multicultural education. All in all, teachers play imperative role to make sure that this democratic, peaceful and enriching school eco-system is coming into existence. Such transformation starts with "teacher education that is multicultural and affirming of differences that define individual identity" (Jenlink 2009, p. 16, see also Carla, Brigety and Bigio, 2021 and Lani, 2021). The training of school staff can be perceived as emphasizing on three major

parts: awareness, knowledge, and skills. The awareness part consists of professionals evaluating their values, myths, worldview and stereotypes. Knowledge component involves nurturing a non-stereotyping, flexible understanding of cultural, social and family dynamics of diverse groups as well as understanding of the critical socio-political, historical and economic background of the people from diverse multicultural groups. Skills consist of developing culturally sensitive, supple and empowering treatment and task strategies that come with communication skills and the incorporation of multicultural issues in the variety of treatment modalities. Such training can be held on various levels, such as formal multicultural issues coursework, in-service training and multicultural program development (Sue, Bernier et al. 1982, Sue, Arredondo et al. 1992).

Conclusion

Indonesia is a multicultural society, which has a rich variety of local wisdom. Local wisdom is a product of thoughts, views of life, behavior, habits, and other products produced by certain communities that show the identity and uniqueness of that community. The diversity of local wisdom should further be developed through education because education is a place for the nation's generation to be educated and guided to become qualified individuals with an awareness of both national and local identity. The potential of local wisdom in fostering peace through education should be given special attention so that learners would be familiar with their own local area and understand well about their own local wisdom. Muhammadiyah has established a large number of educational institutions from early childhood to tertiary institutions spread across various regions. Muhammadiyah realises that Indonesia is a multicultural and multireligious country; hence, it carries the spirit of inclusivity as it has organised education for all.

It can be concluded that first, Muhammadiyah adjusts itself to the local wisdom by accepting students regardless of religious, ethnic, citizenship and economic background. This inclusivity of Muhammadiyah educational institutions is proven by the fact that mostly Christian students attend many Muhammadiyah schools and universities in the Eastern parts of Indonesia. Second, both Muslim and non-Muslim have chosen Muhammadiyah schools because of the good quality of the school, low cost and it provides religious education

according to the student's religion. It shows a phenomenon that non-Muslim students perceive Muhammadiyah schools as a secular/non-religious educational institution where they can also study with Muslim students. Third, according to Muhammadiyah experience, it can also be conlcuded that teachers play an imperative role to ensure that this democratic, peaceful and enriching school eco-system is coming into existence. The training of school staff can be regarded as putting an emphasis on three major parts: awareness, knowledge, and skills. The awareness component consists of professionals evaluating their values, myths, worldview and stereotypes. Knowledge part involves nurturing a non-stereotyping, flexible understanding of cultural, social and family dynamics of diverse groups. Skills consist of developing culturally sensitive, supple and empowering treatment and task strategies.

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Terrorism Industry:
Digital Data Coloniality in Southeast Asia

Mohammed Ilyas*

Abstract: The decolonisation of academia has become a popular topic among scholars, students, and activists in both Western and non-Western contexts. This movement has sparked numerous publications and initiatives advocating for decolonisation, yet the focus has been predominantly on social sciences. In contrast, the phenomenon of digital data colonialism has received comparatively little attention, particularly within non-Western countries. Digital data colonialism merges the extractive practices of historical colonialism with the computational capabilities of modern technologies, allowing for the quantification and commodification of online activities. The main agents perpetuating this form of colonialism are large technology corporations and intelligence agencies from powerful Western nations. These tech companies gather massive amounts of digital data, subsequently selling it to businesses and governmental agencies. The latter utilises the data in the name of national security and the global fight against extremism and terrorism, a practice that impacts both Western and non-Western populations. This paper explores the digital data colonisation of non-Western nations, focusing particularly on Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia and the role of Western intelligence agencies and technology companies in this process.

Keywords: Data Colonialism, Coloniality, West, Non-West, securitisation, intelligence gathering.

Abstrak: Dekolonisasi akademia telah menjadi topik popular di kalangan sarjana, pelajar dan aktivis dalam konteks Barat dan bukan Barat. Pergerakan ini telah mencetuskan banyak penerbitan dan inisiatif yang menyokong dekolonisasi, namun tumpuannya telah tertumpu kepada sains sosial.

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* Lecturer in Criminology, College of Business, Law and Social Sciences, University of Derby. Email: m.ilyas@derby.ac.uk

Sebaliknya, fenomena kolonialisme data digital telah mendapat perhatian yang agak sedikit, terutamanya dalam negara bukan Barat. Kolonialisme data digital menggabungkan amalan ekstraktif kolonialisme sejarah dengan keupayaan pengiraan teknologi moden, membolehkan pengiraan dan komodifikasi aktiviti dalam talian. Agen utama yang mengekalkan bentuk penjajahan ini ialah syarikat teknologi besar dan agensi perisikan dari negara Barat yang kuat. Syarikat teknologi ini mengumpulkan sejumlah besar data digital, kemudian menjualnya kepada perniagaan dan agensi kerajaan. Agensi perisikan dan sekuriti kerajaan menggunakan data atas nama keselamatan negara dan perjuangan global menentang ekstremisme dan keganasan, satu amalan yang memberi kesan kepada penduduk Barat dan bukan Barat. Kertas kerja ini meneroka penjajahan data digital negara bukan Barat, memfokuskan terutamanya kepada negara majoriti Islam di Asia Tenggara dan peranan agensi perisikan Barat dan syarikat teknologi dalam proses ini.

Kata kunci: Kolonialisme data, Kolonialiti, Barat, Bukan Barat, pensekuritian, pengumpulan risikan.

Introduction

In recent decades, the discourse surrounding colonialism, decolonisation, and coloniality has garnered significant attention among scholars and students in both Western and non-Western contexts (Said, 1979; Connell, 2007; Alatas, 2000; Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2011; Mwambari, 2020; Kwet, 2019; Steinmetz, 2017). This growing interest has led to two key outcomes. First, there have been calls to decolonise the social sciences in countries such as South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Bhambra et al., 2018). Second, scholars like Tuck and Yang (2012) have advocated for radical decolonisation, emphasising the need for "practical decolonisation" and cautioning against what they term "moves to innocence" — superficial gestures that fail to address structural inequalities.

However, discussions concerning digital data colonialism, particularly by Western technology corporations and intelligence agencies in non-Western countries, such as the Muslim-majority nations of Southeast Asia, remain limited. While some scholarship has explored issues related to internet ownership, access, infrastructure, and the exploitation of user data by Western technology giants such as Facebook, Google, Apple, and Amazon (Zuboff, 2019; Mejias and Couldry, 2020,

2024; Jim et al., 2016; Kwet, 2019; Coleman, 2019; Pinto, 2018; Youn, 2019; Monique and Angela, 2019; Notias, 2020), broader critiques of digital data colonialism, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a tool for radicalisation (Nelu, 2024, Burton, 2023) and a form of counter-terrorism and predictive policing have yet to be fully integrated into decolonial frameworks. Although the use of AI has been lauded 'as a magic bullet' to predict extremists, but there are many problems with such technology, ranging from racial bias to misuse by governments (Voronkov and Marie De Meo, (2021). Therefore, interrogation on how AI is/will be used by governments of powerful Global North countries at home and abroad, especially in the Muslim majority contexts, like Southeast Asia Muslim- is imperative to guard against perpetuating the colonialities.

The 2013 Snowden revelations sparked conversations about the extensive data-gathering practices of intelligence agencies from powerful Western nations and their allies, such as the Five Eyes alliance, SIGINT Senior Europe, and SIGINT Senior Pacific. These agencies collect vast amounts of digital data through various means, including internet surveillance, biometric systems, geospatial technologies, and drones. The data gathered enables these Western powers to exert control over global populations, particularly in the realm of securitisation, thus reinforcing their political and economic dominance over rival nations (The Intercept, 2018; Dorling, 2014; UNHCR, 2015; Thoma, 2018; Kaurin, 2019; Jacobson, 2017; Mejias and Couldry, 2020; Babuta et al., 2020). Despite these significant discussions, they have not been framed explicitly through a decolonial lens, leaving a gap in critical engagement with the colonial dimensions of digital data practices in Southeast Asian Muslim-majority countries.

This situation has also contributed to what Byler and Boe (2019) refer to as "terror capitalism," a phenomenon rooted in the global "War on Terror" that raises significant concerns regarding human rights. The war has justified the widespread development and deployment of digital data-gathering and surveillance technologies in counterterrorism initiatives, often at the expense of fundamental human rights. One illustrative example is Faception, an Israeli company that uses machine learning to analyse facial images and purportedly infer individuals' personalities in real time (Faception, 2020). Israel has deployed this type of technology against Palestinians, and in Berlin, the German

government has used similar technology, though it has raised serious ethical and human rights concerns, as documented in reports by Amnesty International (Baz, 2019; Huggler 2017, Amnesty International, 2023).

Another prominent case is the Israeli company NSO Group Technologies, which develops sophisticated spyware that is sold to various governments to surveil individuals deemed to be a "threat" to national security (Marczak et al., 2018). Similarly, Chinese companies like Yitu have collaborated with the Malaysian government to develop artificial intelligence (AI) software, including facial recognition technologies, to assist police forces in identifying criminals (Tao, 2018). The application of these technologies, particularly in the context of digital data surveillance, raises profound ethical issues, including concerns about extrajudicial killings and the deployment of racially biased algorithms. For example, the "Future Dangerousness" program, used in U.S. courts, has been criticised for its reliance on such algorithms (O'Neil, 2016).

Although digital data colonialism grants Western nations significant economic and political advantages, it has also faced considerable critique. Western civil rights organisations have raised serious concerns about data privacy and the ethical consequences associated with these technologies (Mejias and Couldry, 2020). However, these criticisms are predominantly centred on the impact of data practices within Western contexts. In contrast, the broader implications of digital data colonialism in non-Western regions, particularly in Southeast Asian Muslim-majority countries, remain largely neglected. This oversight highlights a significant gap in the academic discourse concerning the global scope and ethical ramifications of digital surveillance technologies, particularly in relation to their uneven and often detrimental impact on non-Western societies.

This paper builds upon and extends the definition of the "terrorism industry" as conceptualised by Herman and O'Sullivan (1989: 55-213). For the purposes of this study, the terrorism industry encompasses a range of actors, including the intelligence agencies of powerful Western countries and their allies, think tanks, lobbying organisations, research centres, security firms, scholars, media corporations, private military companies, technology firms, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The most influential entities within this industry are primarily

situated in Western nations or allied states. Emerging as an extension of counterinsurgency studies in the 1970s, the terrorism industry originally developed in response to the perceived threat posed by the Soviet Union to Western powers. However, it was not until the events of September 11, 2001, that the terrorism industry—along with its academic counterpart, terrorism studies—gained significant relevance due to the proliferation of technology and knowledge it generated (Stampnitzky, 2014).

Historically, during the colonial era, counterinsurgency efforts were instrumental in undermining independence movements, such as those in Malaysia (French, 2011; Hack, 1999, 2009). The success of counterinsurgency campaigns has long relied on the effective collection of intelligence regarding movements or groups perceived as threats to national interests (Komer, 1972; Yazid, 2019; Comber, 2008; Karari, 2018; Balce, 2016). In contemporary times, the intelligence-gathering arm of the terrorism industry continues to collect both traditional and digital data on populations, movements, and groups that nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom consider risks to their geopolitical and national interests. This shift to digital surveillance marks an evolution in how intelligence is gathered and utilised in the modern era of counterterrorism.

This paper seeks to initiate a critical examination of the relationship between the terrorism industry and digital data colonialism in Southeast Asian Muslim-majority countries. The scope of this study is intentionally focused, centring on the role of intelligence agencies from powerful Western nations and their allied networks, such as the Five Eyes, SIGINT partners, and SIGINT Pacific. These agencies play a pivotal role in perpetuating colonialities by operating within the broader framework of the terrorism industry. Through the collection and analysis of data, these intelligence agencies produce the knowledge necessary to devise strategies and programs that sustain and reproduce colonial power dynamics in the digital age. This paper has a modest remit and aims to start a discussion on the relationship between the terrorism industry and digital data colonialism and the continuity of colonialities of non-Western countries. The paper focuses on the intelligence agencies of powerful Western countries and their allies (Five Eyes, SIGINT partners and SIGINT Pacific) because they are part of the terrorism industry and play a vital role in coloniality non-Western

countries. The intelligence-gathering agencies provide the data and knowledge to develop strategies and programs that enable non-Western countries to reproduce colonialities.

The paper is organised into three main sections. The first section introduces the decolonial theoretical framework that underpins the analysis. The second section explores the collaboration between intelligence agencies from powerful Western nations and Western technology companies, illustrating how these entities work in concert to perpetuate coloniality. The third section provides an in-depth examination of the digital data colonisation of Southeast Asian Muslim-majority countries by Western powers. In conclusion, the paper calls upon scholars from Southeast Asian Muslim-majority countries to take two critical steps. First, they should adopt a decolonial perspective to analyse how the terrorism industry engages in digital data colonialism, thereby reinforcing coloniality within their national contexts. Second, scholars invested in the decolonisation of Southeast Asian Muslim-majority countries must seek practical methods to implement Tuck and Yang's (2012) recommendations for dismantling coloniality in their respective nations.

Decolonial Concepts

Digital data colonialism, however, is not solely driven by Western technology companies but also by the intelligence agencies of powerful Western nations and their non-Western allies. This form of colonialism leverages advanced surveillance and data extraction technologies for the purpose of digital intelligence gathering. While profit generation can be a byproduct of these activities, the primary motivation for powerful Western states is the acquisition of economic and political advantages over global competitors. This strategy often involves the securitisation of resource-rich non-Western countries deemed as threats to national interests, such as the Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia. The revelations from the Snowden NSA leaks exposed the extent of digital data colonialism conducted by intelligence agencies, particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom. These disclosures unveiled the vast scope of surveillance operations targeting billions of social media users and the widespread espionage on both allied and adversarial governments, underscoring the pervasive nature of digital data colonialism undertaken by these nations.

One way to conceptualise the power conferred by digital data colonialism to Western nations and their allies is through the metaphor of a 'God-Eye view,' wherein these actors gain the capacity to see and know everything. Simultaneously, this power entails omnipresence—being everywhere at all times—achieved through the use of advanced surveillance technologies. This 'God-Eye view' represents a continuation of the epistemic dominance that originated with the genocides and epistemicides of the 16th century, which laid the groundwork for Descartes' famous dictum, *Cogito, ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am") (Grosfoguel, 2013). In this context, the "I" refers exclusively to the white Western male, whose culture and epistemologies were deemed superior, granting him the unique capacity for thought, knowledge production, and agency (Grosfoguel, 2013). In contrast, as Maldonado-Torres (2014) observes, the implicit counterpart to this statement is "I do not think, therefore I am not," which relegates non-Western, non-white individuals and their cultures to an inferior status, devoid of intellectual agency (Quijano, 2007).

In contemporary terms, Descartes' "I" can be interpreted as representing powerful Western countries and their allies. Digital data colonialism grants them unprecedented control over both the present and future. This control enables them to shape, direct, manage, and dominate the futures of non-Western nations, extending their hegemonic influence through the collection, quantification, and commodification of digital data.

The second key concept is coloniality, which Mignolo (2011) refers to as the "dark side" of modernity. For Mignolo, modernity and coloniality are inextricably linked, with colonialities representing the hidden underside of modernity's progress. This interconnected power dynamic has come to shape all aspects of life, including culture, education, politics, and the production of knowledge (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2006). Coloniality can be understood through three distinct dimensions: the coloniality of power, the coloniality of knowledge, and the coloniality of being. Each of these dimensions explains different facets of the overarching structure of coloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

The coloniality of power refers to the persistence of colonial systems of domination, primarily structured around race and racism,

which intersect with other categories of social stratification, such as gender and class. This system forms the organising principle underpinning global capitalism hierarchies, including labour, economic exploitation, and gender inequalities (Grosfoguel, 2011). The coloniality of power is evident at the institutional level, manifesting in the operations of international financial and political organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, NATO, the European Union (EU), and the United Nations (UN), as well as the intelligence agencies of powerful Western nations (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Grosfoguel, 2006).

The coloniality of knowledge pertains to the displacement of local epistemologies and worldviews by Eurocentric forms of knowledge, which claim scientific legitimacy and universality. This epistemic domination results from what scholars like Quijano (2007) have termed the "epistemicide" of non-Western knowledge and belief systems. As a result, intellectual imperialism is perpetuated, creating a situation in which non-Western scholars often seek validation from Western academic frameworks due to the dominance of Western epistemologies, which assert objectivity and universal applicability (Bolivar, 2010; Alatas, 2000; Santander, 2010; Grosfoguel, 2006; Santos, 2014, 2018).

In the context of digital data colonialism, Western technology companies and intelligence agencies maintain the coloniality of knowledge. Through the extraction, quantification, and commodification of digital data, these entities continue to reinforce the coloniality of non-Western nations, such as the Muslim-majority countries of Southeast Asia. Digital data is used to further economic, political, and security policy objectives, thereby perpetuating the structures of domination and control that are characteristic of coloniality.

The third dimension of coloniality is the coloniality of being, which establishes a binary distinction wherein the West is constructed as the "zone of being," while the non-West is relegated to the "zone of non-being." This dichotomy is rooted in Descartes' famous assertion, *cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am"), implying that only Western, white men possess the capacity for thought and thus the full quality of existence, while the non-Western "Other" is denied this ontological status (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2016). The coloniality of being is the culmination of the coloniality of power and knowledge,

functioning as a mechanism for the dehumanisation and subjugation of those positioned below the "abyssal line." Decolonial scholars use the concept of the abyssal line to delineate the profound economic, social, cultural, political, and linguistic divisions that exist between the West and the non-West. This divide operates as a tool of oppression and marginalisation, creating hierarchical relations that privilege Western modes of being and knowing. A prominent example of the abyssal line in operation is the "War on Terror and conflicts of self-determination," which has reinforced a new line of demarcation between Muslims and non-Muslims, particularly in Western countries, settler-colonial states, and Muslim-majority nations targeted during the war. In these contexts, Muslims are positioned below the abyssal line, making them subjects of heightened surveillance, data collection on their religious and political affiliations, and state-sanctioned violence in the form of drone strikes, extrajudicial killings, and torture (Raphael et al., 2016; Gordon, 2016; Gallagher, 2015; Fisher, 2013). This violence reflects the broader workings of the coloniality of being, wherein non-Western populations are systematically dehumanised and subjected to colonial forms of control and exploitation.

Intelligence Agencies of Powerful Western countries and Coloniality

As previously noted, the terrorism industry encompasses a diverse array of actors, including Western technology companies and the intelligence agencies of powerful Western nations. This section examines how these intelligence agencies, often in collaboration with Western technology corporations, play a critical role in sustaining the coloniality of non-Western nations through digital data colonialism.Prior to the revelations brought to light by Edward Snowden, little was known about the extent to which intelligence agencies from dominant Western states engaged in digital data colonialism. The Snowden disclosures revealed that agencies such as the United States National Security Agency (NSA) and the United Kingdom's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), with the cooperation of allied nations and Western technology firms, had extensively tapped into global submarine communication cables. Through this method, they effectively colonised internet data from foreign states and their own populations (MacAskill et al., 2013; Davenport, 2015; Ball, 2013).

This clandestine data interception represents a form of digital colonisation, whereby Western powers, through technological dominance, gain disproportionate control over global information flows. By harvesting and surveilling digital data from a wide array of countries, including non-Western nations, these intelligence agencies reinforce existing power asymmetries and perpetuate colonial structures of domination and control.

The Snowden leaks revealed the extent to which the intelligence agencies of powerful Western nations and allied states participate in a long-standing network that engages in digital data colonialism. The most prominent and influential of these networks is the "Five Eyes" alliance, a successor to the Signals Intelligence Cooperation (SIGINT) established during the Second World War by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia (O'Neil, 2017). Following the war, the U.S. and U.K. formalised the Five Eyes network by incorporating three additional English-speaking countries—Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—all of which, apart from the U.K., are former British colonies and now settler states. These nations share mutual interests in maintaining the alliance, each contributing unique capabilities, such as technological advancements and strategic geographic positioning.

The Five Eyes alliance has been heavily dependent on technology since its inception. With the advent of satellite technology, the network developed a sophisticated data surveillance program known as Echelon. This program enabled the network to monitor and intercept communications from both private and public sector organisations across the globe (O'Neil, 2017).

> "The United States is responsible for SIGINT in Latin America, most of Asia, Russia, and northern China. At the same time, Australia is responsible for its neighbours (such as Indonesia), China, and Indo-China nations. Britain is responsible for Africa and the former Soviet Union, West of the Urals. Russia's polar regions are Canada's responsibility, and New Zealand's area of responsibility is the Western Pacific." (Richelson, 2012: 349).

Through Echelon and other intelligence programs, the Five Eyes network colonised digital data from numerous countries not only for security and surveillance purposes but also to secure economic and political advantages. This practice underscores the broader framework of digital

data colonialism, wherein the extraction and control of information perpetuate the colonial power structures and global dominance of Western states.

The Five Eyes alliance's mandate is notably broad. Its primary objective appears to be the acquisition of comprehensive intelligence on global events and their underlying causes, spanning areas such as security, political developments, and economic affairs. This vast scope underscores the network's strategic aim of achieving extensive informational dominance to maintain geopolitical leverage.

In 1982, the United States established an additional intelligence network, SIGINT Seniors Europe, which was primarily oriented toward monitoring the Soviet Union during the Cold War. This network's founding and principal members were the same nations involved in the Five Eyes alliance, illustrating the continuity and expansion of Western intelligence cooperation. This period also coincided with a surge in scholarly and policy-oriented discourse produced by the terrorism industry, much of which was focused on framing the Soviet Union as a primary threat (Stampnitzky, 2014). This synchronicity suggests a close relationship between intelligence networks and the production of strategic narratives, as both served to legitimise and reinforce the counterintelligence efforts aimed at containing perceived adversaries during the Cold War era.

The shift in focus for the Five Eyes and SIGINT Seniors Europe towards counterterrorism did not occur until the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks (Solon, 2017; The Intercept, 2018). By 2013, the Five Eyes alliance expanded into the "Fourteen Eyes," incorporating Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Sweden (Gallagher, 2018). This expansion reflects the growing transnational collaboration in intelligence gathering. The terms "Fourteen Eyes" and "SIGINT Seniors Europe" are often used interchangeably, despite the conceptual distinction between the networks, leading to some confusion, as both alliances include the same member states (Gallagher, 2018).

In addition to forming the Fourteen Eyes and SIGINT Seniors Europe, the United States established another intelligence division in 2005, SIGINT Seniors Pacific. This Pacific division comprises members of the Five Eyes alliance, alongside South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, France, and India, and is primarily focused on intelligence monitoring

in the Asia-Pacific region, with an emphasis on counterterrorism efforts (Snowden, 2007; Gallagher, 2018). This expansion reflects the increasing geopolitical significance of the Asia-Pacific region and the growing emphasis on intelligence-driven counterterrorism initiatives.

The SIGINT network is an expansive intelligence-gathering framework that involves numerous Western and non-Western nations. Within this network, certain countries, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom, occupy dominant leadership positions, while others function primarily as data providers. The most significant relationship within the SIGINT architecture is the bilateral cooperation between the United States and the "Second Party" members of the Five Eyes alliance, with the United Kingdom serving as a key partner (Greenwald, 2014). In contrast, the relationships between the United States and the "Third Party" countries, which include nations such as Algeria, Singapore, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates, are comparatively less central. Nevertheless, the U.S. maintains bilateral security agreements with several of these Third Party members, enhancing their strategic value.

Despite their secondary status relative to the Second Party members, Third Party nations play a critical role within the SIGINT network by providing intelligence that is essential for the U.S. and other Five Eyes members. This intelligence is instrumental in sustaining the ongoing structures of coloniality that impact non-Western countries. Beyond the Five Eyes alliance, the United States also maintains robust intelligence partnerships with members of SIGINT Seniors Pacific (SSPAC), SIGINT Seniors Europe (SSEUR), NATO, and Israel (Greenwald, 2014; Giosue, 2019). These alliances underscore the transnational and hierarchical nature of the SIGINT network, which perpetuates geopolitical dominance through the extraction and utilisation of global intelligence resources.

Integrating all SIGINT partners into a single, extensive network significantly enhances the intelligence-gathering capabilities of the United States and other Five Eyes members, enabling them to expand their reach in colonising digital data across a broader range of countries. This networked approach increases the efficiency and scope of intelligence operations. For instance, including France allows for more effective data collection from regions such as Africa, South America, and Russia, capitalising on France's strategic presence and capabilities

in these areas (Pfluke, 2019). Similarly, the involvement of nations like South Korea and Germany strengthens the network's ability to closely monitor geopolitical developments in North Korea (Pfluke, 2019). This expanded partnership facilitates the surveillance of a wider range of global regions, further consolidating the geopolitical and economic dominance of the Five Eyes members.

Before the Snowden leaks, there was limited public knowledge regarding the extent to which intelligence agencies from powerful Western nations engaged in digital data colonialism. Key members of intelligence networks, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, exploited submarine communication cables to gain access to vast amounts of internet and telecommunications data. These agencies also deployed advanced surveillance technologies to eavesdrop on global leaders, including leaders from allied countries within their networks, such as former German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) referred to its data surveillance program as PRISM, while the UK's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) named its equivalent program Tempora (MacAskill et al., 2013; Greenwald and MacAskill, 2013). Both programs specifically targeted internet data by tapping into submarine cables, which form the backbone of global internet infrastructure (Digital Methods Initiative, 2020). This allowed intelligence agencies to extract and colonise vast amounts of data from both Western and non-Western internet users, further entrenching the asymmetrical power dynamics inherent in digital data colonialism.

Submarine cables form a critical component of global communication infrastructure, connecting numerous countries through landing stations, each of which may host one or several such stations. Some of these landing stations are strategically utilised as intelligence-gathering hubs, such as those in Oman, which the United Kingdom's intelligence agency uses to collect data from the Middle East and surrounding regions (Wright et al., 2013). Ownership of these cables is often divided among private companies or consortiums, with prominent Western technology corporations, such as Facebook, Google, Microsoft, and Amazon, being key stakeholders. According to media reports, these companies have been implicated in assisting intelligence agencies such as the NSA and GCHQ in tapping into submarine cables (Zimmer, 2018; Gallagher and June, 2018; Greenwald, 2014).

Gallagher and June (2018) note that a significant proportion of global internet traffic passes through the United States, primarily due to two factors: the geographical position of the U.S. between Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, and the dominance of U.S.-based technology companies in the global internet services sector (The Intercept, 2018). This positioning provides the NSA with substantial opportunities to engage in digital data colonialism, as the majority of internet traffic is routed through U.S. infrastructure. Furthermore, this surveillance is facilitated by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which grants U.S. intelligence agencies the legal authority to collect foreign intelligence through electronic surveillance (Congressional Research Service, 2020). This legal framework, coupled with the control over global data flows, underscores the asymmetry of power in digital data colonialism, enabling the U.S. to maintain and extend its geopolitical influence through data extraction.

Intelligence Agencies and Coloniality in Southeast Asian Muslim-majority Countries

Most discussions surrounding digital data colonialism have focused on the activities of the United States and the United Kingdom. However, the Snowden leaks also provided insight into how the Five Eyes and SIGINT Senior Pacific networks operate within the Asia-Pacific region (Snowden, 2007). According to reports from *The Sydney Morning Herald* based on the Snowden disclosures, Singapore, a member of the SIGINT Senior Pacific network, collaborated with the United States and Australia to conduct surveillance on neighbouring countries, including Malaysia and Indonesia (Dorling, 2013, 2014). These revelations not only heightened tensions between Southeast Asian neighbours but also strained relations between Malaysia, Indonesia, and Australia (ABC, 2013). Additionally, the leaks exposed that Indonesia had been a long-term target of Australia's intelligence agency, which used its diplomatic posts across Asia to intercept phone communications and data as part of the broader Five Eyes network's digital data colonialism efforts (MacAskill and Taylor, 2013; Dorling, 2013; Walsh et al., 2015). Australia's intelligence agency reportedly infiltrated Indonesian telecommunications networks, including Indosat and Telkomsel, and monitored Indonesian politicians to assist other Five Eyes members, such as the United States and New Zealand (Dorling, 2014; Beckford, 2015).

These revelations highlight the transnational and expansive scope of digital data colonialism, where intelligence agencies from powerful Western nations, often working in collaboration with regional allies, systematically exploit digital infrastructures to extend their geopolitical influence across both neighbouring and distant countries.

In the case of the United States, Australia's Signals Directorate intercepted communications between Indonesia and the U.S.-based law firm representing Indonesia in trade disputes with the United States (The New York Times, 2014). Similarly, New Zealand's Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) leveraged the XKEYSCORE Internet surveillance system, which was accessible due to New Zealand's membership in the Five Eyes alliance, to gather intelligence on the World Trade Organization (WTO) director-general candidates. New Zealand's objective was to support its own candidate, Trade Minister Tim Groser, in his bid for the position. Among those targeted by GCSB was Mari Elka Pangestu, Indonesia's candidate for the WTO director-generalship, as New Zealand sought to prevent her appointment (Gallagher and Hager, 2015).

Beyond Pangestu case, the surveillance extended to other non-Western candidates, including Alan Kyerematen (Ghana), Amina Mohamed (Kenya), Anabel González (Costa Rica), Herminio Blanco (Mexico), Taeho Bark (South Korea), Ahmad Thougan Hindawi (Jordan), and Roberto Carvalho de Azevêdo (Brazil) (Gallagher and Hager, 2015). This pattern of targeting exclusively non-Western candidates underscores the underlying power asymmetries in digital data colonialism, where Western intelligence agencies manipulate global digital infrastructures to preserve their geopolitical and economic dominance. The selective surveillance of these individuals, particularly Mari Elka Pangestu, reflects the broader dynamics of exclusion and control inherent in the practices of digital data colonialism.

Southeast Asian Muslim-majority countries are particularly vulnerable to digital data colonialism due to their reliance on critical communication infrastructures, such as the SEA-ME-WE 3 submarine cable (Dorling, 2013). This cable, which extends from Perth, Australia, and passes through key Southeast Asian nations, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Oman, connects thirty-nine countries, thirty-three of which host landing stations. Spanning four continents, it remains

one of the longest submarine cables in existence (Submarine Networks, 2020). The cable is owned by a consortium of telecommunications corporations, including Singapore's SingTel Optus, British Telecom, and Australia's Telstra, granting these entities access to the data transmitted through the cable (SEA-ME-WE 3, 2020; Dorling, 2013). However, the ability to tap into these cables and extract digital data is not uniformly distributed among all countries. For instance, Pakistan's intelligence agency, ISI, attempted to intercept data at two of the three landing stations near Karachi but lacked the technological capability to do so (Guardian, 2015). In contrast, Singapore, as noted by Dorling (2013), possesses the most advanced signals intelligence capabilities in Southeast Asia and has facilitated Australia's access to data transmitted through the SEA-ME-WE 3 cable.

Tapping into submarine cables allows intelligence agencies from powerful Western countries to capture vast amounts of digital data as it travels between sender and receiver. This interception enables these agencies to utilise the data to further their economic and political agendas, exemplified by the intelligence activities of countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. Through such practices, Western powers continue to assert dominance in the digital domain, reinforcing the asymmetrical power relations that characterise digital data colonialism.

Conclusion

This paper has undertaken the task of examining how the intelligence agencies of powerful Western nations, in collaboration with their allies, engage in digital data colonialism as a means of perpetuating coloniality. Digital data colonialism refers to the exploitation of submarine cables that span the globe, transmitting vast amounts of data from the Internet and other communication channels. Access to this data provides Western nations with the capacity to securitise non-Western countries and assert political and economic dominance over them. This system not only reinforces coloniality but also grants Western powers a form of omnipresence akin to the "God-Eye view," contributing to a potentially dystopian global order.

This scenario raises critical questions for scholars researching the coloniality of non-Western nations and offers pathways for addressing these issues. First, scholars must investigate whether Western technology

companies are sharing the digital data they extract from non-Western countries and with whom this data is being shared. This inquiry leads to two further questions: (1) Are Western tech companies providing this data to powerful Western governments or non-Western regimes? (2) If so, how is this data being utilised by these governments and agencies?

Second, scholars need to explore the motivations behind the digital data colonialism conducted by Western intelligence agencies. Specifically, they should ask: (1) How do these agencies engage in the process of digital data colonialism? (2) Is the primary objective of this data collection to advance the political and economic interests of Western nations in non-Western countries, such as Indonesia? Third, scholars should examine the concept of "terror capitalism" and assess whether the intelligence agencies of powerful Western nations, alongside Western tech companies, are utilising the colonised digital data to create profiles and develop predictive technologies aimed at identifying potential extremists or terrorists. This mirrors the practices of companies like Faception, which claims to offer predictive capabilities based on facial recognition technology. Fourth, scholars must develop tools and strategies to raise awareness among non-Western populations about the practices of digital data colonialism carried out by Western tech companies and intelligence agencies. Fifth, they should advocate for non-Western governments to implement stringent data protection regulations to safeguard against digital data colonialism. Finally, scholars should encourage non-Western governments to be more vigilant in monitoring Western nations' activities, particularly their exploitation of submarine cables and their data interception and hacking practices.

By addressing these key questions, scholars can contribute to a broader understanding of digital data colonialism and its implications for non-Western nations, while also advancing strategies to counter its perpetuation.

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Malaysia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy: A Top-Down Policy Analysis of Legislative, Rehabilitative, and Educational Approaches

Raja Muhammad Khairul Akhtar Raja Mohd Naguib[*]
Danial Mohd Yusof[**]

Abstract: This paper examines Malaysia's implementation of the MyPCVE (Malaysian National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism). It takes a top-down approach and focuses on the ability of policymakers to design clear and practical policy objectives and manage the implementation phase. Interviews were conducted with eight prominent figures and stakeholders who are involved in the implementation of this policy from various fields, including the MOHA (Ministry of Home Affairs), MinDef (the Ministry of Defence), the E8 or Counter-Terrorism Division of the RMP (Royal Malaysia Police), AIPA Caucus (Members of Malaysian Parliament and ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Caucus), experts, and academics. The findings show that the plan is implemented centrally, with power passing from the first tier of government to the second tier and the third tier playing a less active role. The implementation consists of three phases: before, during, and after detention, with distinct stakeholders for each phase. These findings are helpful for law enforcement, intelligence agencies, and non-governmental organisations tasked with PCVE (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism) in Malaysia.

Keywords: PCVE (Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism), Malaysia, MyPCVE (Malaysian Action Plan on Preventing & Countering Violent Extremism), policy implementation

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[*]PhD candidate at the Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), IIUM. Email: khairulakhtar93@gmail.com
[**]Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and Madani Studies. Email: danialmy@iium.edu.my

Abstrak: Makalah ini memeriksa tentang perlaksanaan dasar MyPCVE (Pelan Tindakan Malaysia bagi Mencegah dan Menangani Fahaman Pelampau Keganasan). Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan atas ke bawah dan memfokuskan ke atas kemampuan pembuat dasar dalam mereka objektif sesuatu dasar dan mengurus fasa perlaksanaannya dengan lancar dan praktikal. Temubual telah dijalankan bersama lapan figura penting dan pemegang taruh yang terlibat di dalam perlaksanaan dasar ini dari pelbagai bidang, termasuk KDN (Kementerian Dalam Negeri), KEMENTAH (Kementerian Pertahanan), E8 atau Bahagian Anti-Keganasan Polis DiRaja Malaysia (PDRM), KAUKUS AIPA (Ahli Parlimen Malaysia dan Kaukus Dewan Antara Parlimen ASEAN), pakar-pakar dan ahli-ahli akademik. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan pelan ini dilaksanakan secara berpusat, dengan aliran bidang kuasa yang bermula dari peringkat pertama kerajaan ke peringkat kedua dan peringkat ketiga yang memainkan peranan yang kurang aktif. Perlaksanaan dasar ini mengandungi tiga fasa: sebelum, semasa dan selepas penahanan, bersama dengan pemegang taruh yang pelbagai akan terlibat di dalam setiap fasa tersebut. Dapatan dari kajian ini amat membantu kepada pelaksana undang-undang, agensi-agensi perisikan dan badan bukan kerajaan yang ditugaskan untuk PCVE (Mencegah dan Menangani Fahaman Pelampau Keganasan) di Malaysia.

Kata Kunci: PCVE (Mencegah dan Menangani Fahaman Pelampau Keganasan), Malaysia, MyPCVE (Pelan Tindakan Malaysia Bagi Mencegah dan Menangani Fahaman Pelampau), perlaksanaan dasar

Introduction

Since 2010[1], Malaysia has been confronted with the significant emergence of new terrorist threats to the country's security. At this point, IS, or the Islamic State, was able to reach 86 countries, including Malaysia and was vastly enabled by the Internet. Consequently, in Malaysia, the threat included not only physical ones in the form of organised attacks but also well-planned recruitment and the promotion

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[1] Malaysia has experienced threats from violent extremism and terrorism due to various factors, regional instability, the rise of online radicalisation, and the involvement of Malaysian citizens in international terrorist organizations like ISIS. This specific year is particularly notable as it marked the beginning of increased recruitment efforts and domestic incidents linked to extremist ideologies.

of violent and extremist ideas through social media to legitimise their objectives. The global reaction to terrorism has progressed over time. In response to the threat posed by Al-Qaeda and its affiliates throughout the past two decades, significant portions of the international community have attempted to combat violent extremism within the framework of security-based counter-terrorism measures.

Nevertheless, with the emergence of a new generation of terrorists, there is a growing worldwide consensus that current counter-terrorism measures have been unsuccessful in preventing violent extremism. Conflating violent extremism and terrorism today includes broad-based policy deployment of counter-terrorism measures, including prevention and intervention against activities that lead up to potential terrorist acts. (The United Nations Global Strategy Against Terrorism, 2015).

The policy implementation process considers actions taken by various parties to achieve a specific objective (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984; Pulzl & Treib, 2007; Bempah, 2012; Dunn, 2014). This study of policy implementation explains why and how policies deviate from their intended purpose or are effectively implemented (Signé, 2017). It is believed that the choice of implementation strategy is crucial to the policy's success or failure. According to Dunn (2014), the policy implementation process enables researchers to examine fundamental aspects, including identifying actors and administrative units that can manage how the policy is executed. Governments should have clear objectives, limit significant changes, and assign implementation responsibility to an agency that understands the policy›s objectives (Signé, 2017). Governments can better manage the implementation phase by identifying the right actors and administrative units, leading to more efficient and effective policy outcomes.

Jani (2017) asserts that security efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism had been implemented in Malaysia long before, during the 1948-1960 Malayan Emergency. This condition was due to three key elements: legislation, rehabilitation, and education. At the time, the law allowed police to detain terrorism suspects without any warrant. Therefore, this research examines the PCVE policy from a bureaucratic point of view, contributing to a better understanding of the implementation of public policy regarding PCVE in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia. There has been a variety of literature on PCVE

policy in Malaysia; however, little work has narrowed down to the central component, particularly from a bureaucratic perspective.

Problem Statement

Southeast Asian countries, particularly Malaysia, are concerned about the volume of terrorism in this region. Samuel (2016) and Mohd Sani (2016) report that IS has used social media and usrah (small group discussions) in Malaysian educational institutions to persuade young people to join the so-called jihad in the Middle East. According to the Straits Times, at least 53 Malaysians have reportedly joined IS in Syria (2015). Hart (2018) explained that the recruitment and radicalisation of Malaysians are now different and more advanced. Today, radicalisation occurs via social media channels and encrypted electronic messaging apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram. This situation raises concerns regarding the possibility of lone-wolf attacks inspired by IS.

Terrorist organisations such as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and IS have utilised Malaysia as their operational base. In October 2019, it was reported that a group of Indians with alleged LTTE sympathies had been detained. The Royal Malaysian Police traced significant money transfers to the LTTE in Sri Lanka, with prominent politicians among those arrested. Chew (2018) also reported that Malaysia›s police foiled a plot by foreign militants to use Malaysia as a haven to engage in militant activities. Even before the launch of the official MyPCVE document as the country›s national action plan in 2024, the Malaysian government took specific approaches to combat terrorism, combining the so-called «hard» and «soft» methods. These approaches include replacing the Internal Security Act (ISA) of 1960 with the Security Offenses (Special Measures) Act (SOSMA) of 2012 and adding a new provision to the existing penal code that oversees terrorism-related offences. Additionally, the Malaysian government passed the 2015 Prevention of TerrorismAct (POTA) and the 2015 Special Measures Against Terrorism (in Foreign Countries) Act (SMATA). The Malaysian authorities have used these laws and regulations to curb terrorism. Additionally, to combat terrorism in rehabilitation centres, the Malaysian government also employed both the so-called hard and soft approaches. Guay (2018) and Ram (2019) contend that Malaysia takes a non-judgmental perspective on progressing rehabilitation. In analysing the implementation of the policy, it is pertinent to determine

the current policy, the actors involved in its formation, and the barriers encountered during its implementation.

Methodology

The interview method was chosen for this study as it is focused on analysing Malaysian policies on PCVE. The technique is also selected to contribute more data and achieve data saturation, especially in studying PCVE policies (Fusch and Ness, 2015). Glaser and Strauss (1967), Bernard (2012), and Fusch and Ness (2015) stated that data saturation is essential; however, it could impact the study when participants provide inconsistent feedback. Therefore, this study collects data through interviews with major stakeholders that could contribute to PCVE policy-making.

Data collection utilised primary sources include collecting the data by analysing official government documents, such as Malaysia's National Security Policy, specifically on PCVE, which was released by the National Security Council through its official website and others - such as The Ninth Schedule of the Federal Constitution, The Defence White Paper by the Ministry of Defence and MyPCVE. The study also conducted in-depth interviews with nine individuals from the elite group of stakeholders, including management executives, practitioners, and researchers in this field. They are, namely, from The RMP, specifically in the E8 or Counter-Terrorism Division (Special Branch); experts from the National Defence University of Malaysia (UKM), which is currently conducting a project related to counter-terrorism; as well as an expert in counter-terrorism analysis and advisor to Royal Malaysia Police, who also serves as a panellist in the rehabilitation programme for terrorist detainees. In addition, a policymaker group was consulted as well, from the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA Caucus), and are members of the Parliament of Malaysia, and also respondents from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and Ministry of Defence (MinDef).

Findings of the Study

i) Evolution of PCVE

This study identifies the differences between counter-violent extremism (CVE) measures implemented during counterinsurgency and those implemented in the present. In Malaysia, CVE combines hard approaches (legal and detention) and soft (rehabilitation and educational initiatives).

The rehabilitation component refers to ideologically rehabilitating the incarcerated, while the educational activities usually aim to educate citizens. According to Jani (2017), The education module added to Malaysia's PCVE framework involves public awareness campaigns and the involvement of government agencies and organisations to provide similar "counter-narratives" as prevention against religiously inspired extreme ideologies. These counter-narratives play a crucial role in PCVE campaigns.[2]

However, the government's education initiative was not specifically about PCVE. It was about building the nation-state and instilling patriotism in people's minds and hearts. No education and campaign modules clearly explained to the citizens directly the dire consequences of radical ideology and extreme actions.

Table 1: Author's Comparison of Policy Implementation during the Pre-PCVE Period in Malaysia

The Implementation of Counter-Terrorism in Malaysia	
Pre-PCVE	
1948-1960 (Implementation of Internal Security Act) (ISA)	**2012-Now (Implementation of The Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 & The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015) (SOSMA & POTA)**
Similarities (Elements)	
1) Hard and Soft Approaches 2) Proactive and Reactive Measure 3) Top-Down policy implementation	
Differences (Mechanisms)	
Only Use Law and Legal as a Reference and Guidance **Only**	
Pre-detention ↓ During-detention	Pre-detention ↓ Mid-detention ↓ Post-detention

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[1] There is usually an interchangeable usage of CVE and PCVE, which can sometimes be more prominently used in the USA (United States of America) or EU (European Union), respectively. In this paper, PCVE in the Malaysian context is simply used as an evolution of CVE after the introduction of education and public awareness components.

Table 1 shows the ISA law application that spanned from 1948 to 1960 and was eventually abolished in 2011. This law was based on the authority's emphasis on proactive and reactive strategies. Modifications made were the statute and the refreshment of procedures. The Malaysian government then introduced SOSMA 2012 and POTA 2015 to replace the ISA 1960. They focused exclusively on the targeted group of individuals suspected of committing terrorist crimes. Nevertheless, these approaches do not address the root cause of terrorism issues, such as disagreement and repression concerning political roots, unfair economic distribution or competition (Ehrlich & Liu, 2002; Richardson, 2006; Davis & Cragin, 2009; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011).

For this reason, a need arises to develop comprehensive measures to prevent the inception of extremist doctrines and post-detention support among the nation's population. People avoid extreme acts due to potential punishment by law. However, the people were also not educated on expressing their feelings or understanding why they should never commit terror acts while establishing its fundamentals and principles. Consequently, the Malaysian government initiated an effort to combat terrorism by enhancing and empowering the existing National Security Policy. This policy includes comprehensive mechanisms from pre-detention to post-detention, combining hard and soft approaches and proactive and reactive measures. Civil society will be a representative and agent of awareness at the grassroots level. According to one of the respondents, interviewee #5 (personal interview, November 18, 2019),

> "PCVE or CVE is an initiative from the government to de-securitise prevention and countering violent extremism. This approach means that from security to de-security, the government wants to pass the responsibility to the society or stakeholders".

The government uses the national security policy to ensure the nation's security policy becomes more comprehensive. This policy includes punishing terror-related offences, taking preventive action before an attack, and countering violent extremism. This mechanism is considered proactive by Shields, Smith, and Damphousse (2015). Nevertheless, the National Security Policy does not focus only on PCVE; therefore, the focus of these policies is a general reference for security policy. There was no specific focus on PCVE. In addition, the 'hard approach' entails the amendment of laws and legislations, including the launch

of deradicalisation programs, replacing the Internal Security Act (ISA) 1960 with the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act (SOSMA) 2012, and enacting the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) 2015 and the Special Measures Against Terrorism (in Foreign Countries) Act (SMATA) 2015. These laws and regulations provide the government with the means to counter terrorism. Even though these rehabilitation acts were not clearly stated, the authorities still implemented them as their courtesy and initiative. According to Guay (2018) and Ram (2019), the soft approach focused on the deradicalisation program. The Malaysian government used hard and soft approaches to tackle VE and CT.

MyPCVE

This paper found that the implementation process of the PCVE policy continued without a national action plan until the inception of MyPCVE at the end of September 2024.
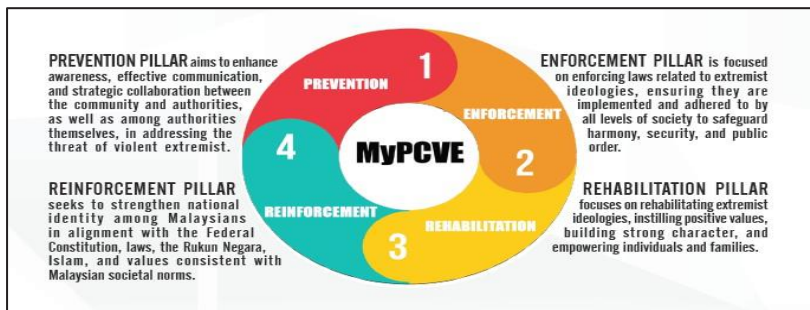
PREVENTION PILLAR aims to enhance awareness, effective communication, and strategic collaboration between the community and authorities, as well as among authorities themselves, in addressing the threat of violent extremist.

1 PREVENTION

ENFORCEMENT PILLAR is focused on enforcing laws related to extremist ideologies, ensuring they are implemented and adhered to by all levels of society to safeguard harmony, security, and public order.

2 ENFORCEMENT

MyPCVE

REINFORCEMENT PILLAR seeks to strengthen national identity among Malaysians in alignment with the Federal Constitution, laws, the Rukun Negara, Islam, and values consistent with Malaysian societal norms.

4 REINFORCEMENT

REHABILITATION PILLAR focuses on rehabilitating extremist ideologies, instilling positive values, building strong character, and empowering individuals and families.

3 REHABILITATION

Figure 1: Pillars in National Action Plan on Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism.
(Source: Adapted from the document of MOHA (Ministry of Home Affairs (2024). MyPCVE 2024-2028. Putrajaya: MOHA)

However, no implementation examples have been provided in this section since the launch of MyPCVE. Whatever initiatives and efforts have been done before can be adopted and incorporated as long as they tally with the plan (Mohd Yusof, 2024). Above all, the new plan's framework summary has been comprehensively touched upon, and the implementation can be more comprehensive than previous policy implementations. *In the MyPCVE, four pillars are to be used to implement the PCVE policy in Malaysia, i.e. the Pillars of Prevention, Enforcement, Rehabilitation, and Reinforcement (refer to Figure 1).*

Table 2: Author on the Comprehensive Pillars of MyPCVE

The Implementation of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism				
Pillars				
	Prevention	Enforcement	Rehabilitation	Reinforcement
MyPCVE	✓	✓	✓	✓
ISA	Informal	✓	✖	✖
SOSMA & POTA	Informal	✓	Informal	✖

Table 2 illustrates how MyPCVE will be implemented in Malaysia. Unlike before, if the Malaysian government continues implementing PCVE without a national action plan, the authorities must refer only to the law and legal perspectives in CT and VE with no appropriate plan and continuous programming. The 'informal' implementation of PCVE before MyPCVE was without a framework for monitoring, planning, standardisation, and sustainability.
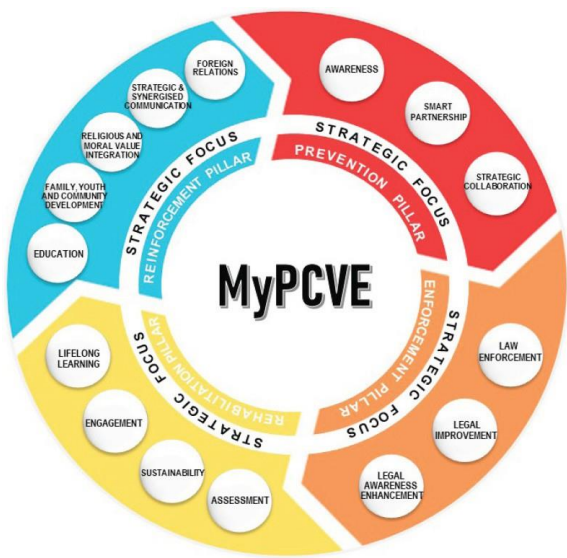
Figure 2: MyPCVE Strategic Focus Areas 2024-2028

(Source: Adapted from the document of MOHA (Ministry of Home Affairs (2024). MyPCVE 2024-2028. Putrajaya: MOHA)

In contrast, Figure 2 depicts implementing a new plan of action, MyPCVE; this plan covers all implementation strategies, initiatives, mechanisms, and indicators. It provides formal prevention efforts, effective enforcement, comprehensive rehabilitation, and continuous reinforcement. Four pillars comprising 15 focus strategies, 59 initiatives, and 60 performance indicators were identified. MyPCVE has already covered the indicators and mechanisms for implementing the policy in Malaysia. According to the MyPCVE document book, all the pillars and plans under them aim to deal with the underlying problem and the cause of the outbreak of VE. The widespread dissemination of extremist ideologies rooted in political or ethnonationalism, beliefs, religion, and radical foreign influences has begun to affect the mindset of Malaysians. As such, a comprehensive and effective plan of action at the national level that could cater to multifaceted issues and problems was needed. Hence, MyPCVE was made.

Table 3: Author's Comparison of Policy Implementation During Pre-PCVE and PCVE Period in Malaysia

The Implementation of Policies during Pre-PCVE and PCVE		
Pre-PCVE		**PCVE**
1948-1960 (Implementation of Internal Security Act) (ISA)	**2012-2023 (Implementation of The Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 & The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015) (SOSMA & POTA)**	**2024-2028 (Implementation of National Action Plan on Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism) (MyPCVE)**
Similarities (Elements)		
i. Hard and Soft Approaches ii. Proactive and Reactive Measure iii. Top-down policy implementation		
Differences (Mechanisms)		
Use Law/Legal as a Reference and Guidance **Only**		Proper Policy Implementation Framework Together with the Law and Legal Practice
Pre-detention ↓ During-detention	Pre-detention ↓ Mid-detention ↓ Post-detention	Prevention ↓ Enforcement ↓ Rehabilitation ↓ Reinforcement

All stakeholders can now refer to a formal and proper plan of action in MyPCVE as their guidance according to pillars and adequate initiatives. PCVE has evolved from a predominantly law/legal perspective to a policy-implementing one in society. The comprehensiveness of indicators and mechanisms, phases from pre-detention until post-detention, is already suited under all pillars mentioned in the MyPCVE (refer to Table 3).

ii) *Actors of PCVE Implementation*

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, has caused every country to improve their security system in combating terrorism. Malaysia was no exception, with actors from the highest government to the grassroots level getting involved in the fight against VE. This paper identifies the actors engaged and their roles in implementing Malaysia's PCVE programme.

Popoola (2016) highlighted the importance of policy actors as agents of policy implementation who supervise and coordinate other actors. Knoepfel, Corinne, Varone, and Hill (2011) hypothesised that participants in the policy process acquire strategies and tactics and can even adopt "goal-oriented behaviour." Public policies are mainly produced and involve ministries, agencies, and non-government organisations as stakeholders (Marques, 2013). These policy actors may bridge the government and its agencies with private and civil society sectors. Thus, the assessment of policy implementation of governments typically uses criteria such as having a clear and consistent purpose, limiting the scope of needed change, and delegating responsibilities to actors who understand the policy's objectives (Signé, 2017). MyPCVE was conceived with Malaysia being highly bureaucratic and state-centric in her security affairs, and top-down policy implementation is emphasised at the expense of direct civil society collaboration and execution of the plan despite their consultation in the policy-making phase and identification as stakeholders.

In Figure 3, Abdul Rahman et al. (2021) identify three levels of actors involved in implementing the PCVE program. Tier 1 includes policy-making entities of the state, Tier 2 provides enforcement authorities, and Tier 3 includes civil society (Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Think Tanks, and academic institutions). Tiers 1, 2, and 3 are also stakeholders that assess the implementation of government programs based on criteria such as having a clear and

consistent purpose, limiting the degree of change necessary, and giving implementation responsibilities to an agency sympathetic to the policy's objectives (Signé, 2017).
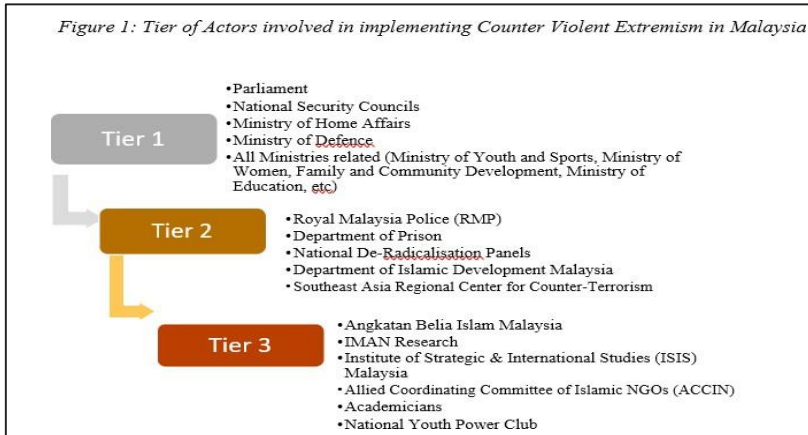

Figure 3: Tiers of Actors Involved in Implementing PCVE in Malaysia

(Source: Abdul Rahman, A. H., Raja Mohd Naguib, R. M. K. A., Aminudin, R., Mohd Yusof, D., Syed Yusuf, S. N., & Zolkaflil, S. (2021). An Overview of the Policy Actors and Their Functions in Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Policy Implementation in Malaysia. *Journal of Public Security and Safety, 12, 1–36)*

iii)   *Indicators and Mechanisms of PCVE Implementation*

a) Indicators

This research examines the indicators and mechanisms of PCVE in Malaysia. The PCVE implementation framework was created before the existence of MyPCVE and was implemented by experts in the National Deradicalisation Panel, which advises the government. The experts who participated in the survey responded:

> *"CVE in Malaysia has been implemented comprehensively based on time frames such as before, during, and after detention towards the target group, detainees, and former detainees. All detention processes depend on fundamental indicators of behaviours of extremism-inclined individuals"* (interviewee 2, personal interview, October 23, 2019).

Hence, the government identified indicators of the behaviours of extremism-inclined people to help identify essential circumstances that may contribute to radicalisation.

> *"There will be no exact model that can fit all cases and apply to all nations. Usually, before deradicalisation, indicators are formed, and experts will do some research related to "What are the radicalisation indicators?"* (Interviewee 6, personal interview, November 28, 2019)

The radicalisation process is an individual's transformation and transition from ordinary to extremist. "The adoption process begins with the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual learning, inculcation, and consolidation of an extremist ideology or story until it becomes part of a person's ideology" (El-Muhammady, 2020, p. 160). From this, he identified four linguistic patterns that signify the various aspects of radicalisation. In general, these indicators are utilised by specialists (Tier 3) in collaboration with actors from Tiers 2 and 1 to justify severe actions against an individual or group of individuals when necessary. Based on the indicators, Aslam (2018) and El-Muhammady (2020) recognise the phases of radicalisation. The first phase is cognitive-oriented radicalisation, followed by the second, emotional-oriented radicalisation. Faith-oriented radicalisation and action-oriented radicalisation are the final phases. At the last level of these processes, the individual engages in aggressive behaviour towards others. It is also emphasised that "terrorism will not arise until an individual acts violently following their ideology" (interviewee 6, personal interview, November 28, 2019).

According to Aslam (2018), The deradicalisation of terrorism-affiliated detainees is a reactive strategy that begins with the detention of the militant by the Royal Malaysia Police. This involves re-educating and correcting political and religious misconceptions and monitoring them after release. Both initiatives employ a similar reactive strategy, as the process of deradicalisation begins with the detention of the militant, and detainees whom extremist or terrorist groups have radicalised will then undergo the deradicalisation procedure. Due to its emphasis on efficiently targeting interventions, this CVE model was adapted from the Public Health Model, which understands that testing, treatments, and interventions must be affordable, acceptable to people, accessible, and relatively convenient (Schneider & Isola, 2015). According to Interviewee 5 (personal interview, November 18, 2019),

> *"This public health model to be imposed on the CVE issue has been used during our regional meeting by the United*

> *Nations. We have been trained and exposed to identifying fundamental indicators of the behaviours of extremist-inclined individuals and are now trying to use it in Malaysia."*

Since the PCVE policy combines coercive and non-coercive tactics and reactive and proactive measures towards VE, there are specific signs and indicators of individual behaviours in which PCVE efforts can intervene (Challgren et al., 2016). Primary, secondary, and tertiary are the three phases of the "illness". The primary stage refers to the audience, whereas the second stage refers to the suspected target group. If experts believe that these individuals are culpable based on their extreme behaviour, tertiary-level intervention must be begun. Each condition will implement various programs according to the client's behavioural circumstances. Consequently, PCVE was formed for the correct reason; it penalises terror-related offences that have already occurred and functions as a preventive measure before any attack can occur. This paper found that three phases can help identify individuals: the primary stage, which is the general population; the secondary stage, which is the person suspected of becoming an extremist; and the tertiary stage, which is the confirmed terrorist and should be dealt with by the relevant or unique task force. These phases and mechanisms at each stage demonstrated that Dunn's (2014) policy implementation process framework enables the researcher to examine the fundamental aspects of policy implementation, such as identifying task-performing actors and administrative units capable of managing policy implementation.

b) Phases and Engagement Mechanism

In this part on mechanisms and indicators, three main phases of the PCVE application will be explored, with particular emphasis on the prevention phase and its relevance for individuals during detention and subsequent release.

• *Prevention phase*

Figure 3 depicts the involvement of actors or stakeholders from various sectors mentioned in the tiers before. The prevention phase was meant to provide early preventive measures against possible symptoms of extremism before it infiltrated people's minds. Prevention efforts are to build a societal shield about awareness, knowledge, and rejection of radical ideologies that may lead to VE.
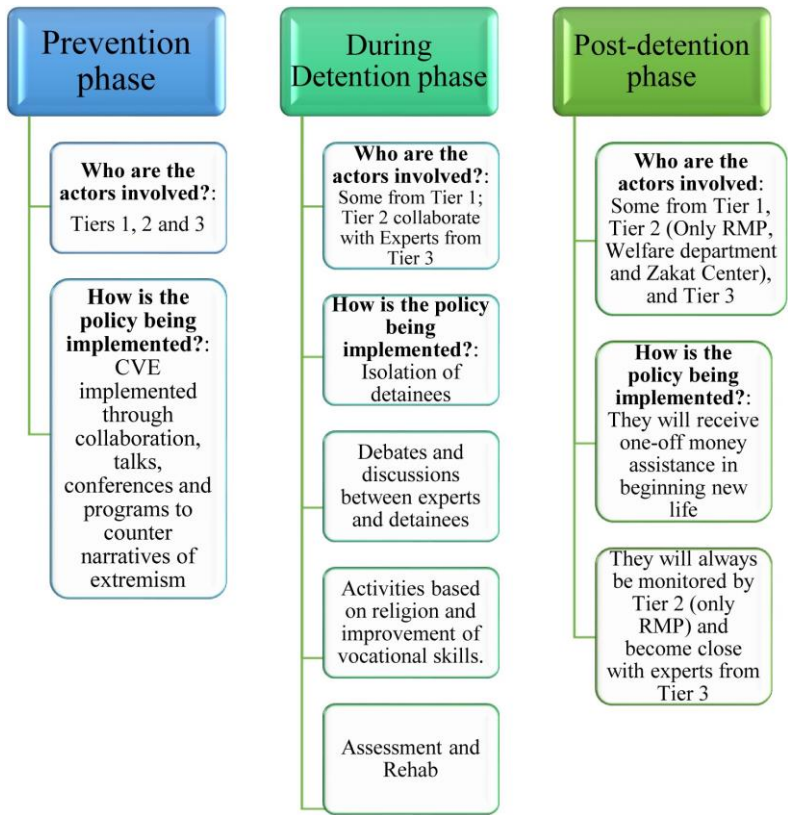
Figure 3: Phases and Engagement Mechanism of PCVE in Malaysia According to the Author

Regionally, Malaysia's efforts include collaboration and diplomatic engagement to discuss, share, and exchange information and developments among countries in the neighbourhood, including platforms such as the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Transnational Crimes (AMMTC). A parliament member (who was also a respondent to this study) discussed the goal of the regional meeting and stated that representatives from Malaysia presented the current status of terrorism, radicalism, and extremism in Malaysia. Simultaneously, "all ASEAN parliamentarians participated in a regional information exchange at which the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States of America was also present" (interviewee 1, personal interview, October 21, 2019). This international project can be seen as the effort of Tier

1 policy actors to enhance national security, particularly regarding counter-violent extremism policy. Following this, partnerships and collaborations taken by Tier 2 policy players involve the intelligence of the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) and professionals from the International Police (Interpol), as well as so-called 'Friendly Services' intelligence from across the world. Interviewee 6 (personal interview, November 28, 2019) expressed that.

> *" 'Friendly services,' a concept uncommonly used by laymen. It refers to intelligence agencies in other countries that work with intelligence agencies in our country. However, there are friendly countries whose intelligence agency does not cooperate and nor want to collaborate".*

The concept of PCVE strategies at the international level encourages collaboration between intelligence agencies, threading a web of connectivity to share information on terrorist activities and update the current status of terrorist actions. Global initiatives are required. Malaysia adopts this type of effort for alliances within international ties. Thus, "other nations aid Malaysia by telling the Malaysian intelligence agency about extremist recruitment among our youth via Telegram and Facebook" (interviewee 6, personal interview, November 28, 2019). Cooperation at the international and domestic levels includes exchanging information on terrorist movements and activities on social media platforms. At the domestic level, actors from all Tiers 1, 2, and 3 have committed to organising educational initiatives and programs with their target groups in mind, such as ministries implementing the PCVE initiative. According to interviewees 3 and 4 (personal interview, October 31, 2019),

> "The Ministry of Higher Education focuses on tertiary education and students in universities, The Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development focuses on women's involvement directly and indirectly in countering violent extremism efforts, while the Department of National Unity and Integration under the Prime Minister Office, focuses on the involvement of the neighbourhood committee in countering any radical behaviour amongst society."

Meanwhile, the "Ministry of Youth and Sport under the Sahsiah (or good personal conduct) Unit focuses its activities on youth and behaviour towards extreme ideology" (interviewee 5, personal interview, November

18, 2019). This interview demonstrates that each ministry is vital in the whole-of-society approach to formulating PCVE policies based on their responsibilities and target populations. MinDef (Ministry of Defence) is tasked with protecting and shielding Malaysia from external security threats, including terrorism and extremism. Proactive internal operations are implemented to prevent the Malaysian Defense Force from being influenced by extremist ideology. This is important as members of the Defense Force possess access to abilities and weapons that could lead to disaster should they fall into the wrong hands. According to interviewee 7 (personal interview, December 5, 2019), "the scope of PCVE activities implemented by the Ministry of Defence is limited; efforts are only implemented internally among soldiers." By Section 18 of the National Security Act 2016, the Malaysian National Security Council (NSC) states that The Ministry of Defense is responsible for acting publicly in an emergency and proclaiming a security zone, particularly in the event of terrorist offences. Its objective is to protect and defend the country's interests at the core of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and economic well-being (Ministry of Defence, 2020). Mindef itself mentions that:

> *"We are managing the policies, which involve us internally, we have engagement with agencies within the State, including NSC (National Security Council) as its big brother, and also in the form of Multi-lateral and Bilateral efforts in CT"* (interviewee 7, personal interview, December 5, 2019).

During this phase of prevention, a myriad of initiatives and educational-based programs have been implemented by all actors, notably by those in Tier 2 (Royal Malaysian Police and Department of Prison) and Tier 3 (the National Youth Power Club and ABIM (Malaysia Islamic Youth Movement). These initiatives include exposure to counter-narratives, counter-messaging, raising awareness and warnings on terrorist recruiting methods via social media, the causes and effects of joining militant groups, and more. This phase focuses on "the citizen capacity-building idea" (interviewee 5, personal interview, November 18, 2019). Tier 2 policy actors, such as the Royal Malaysia Police, the Department of Prison, and SEARCCT (the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-terrorism), have collaborated with grassroots associations among Tier 3 policy actors, such as the National Youth Power Club and the Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic Non-Governmental Organizations (ACCIN). The National Youth Power Club and professionals and

academics from a higher learning institution carried out awareness and prevention activities such as The Convention of Youth Empowerment on PCVE in 2019. Civic society organisations are broadly defined, and the grassroots have been pivotal in promoting the government's security strategy by participating in multiple programs and initiatives (Youth Power Club, 2020). They are the third sector of society, complementing government and business (Cooper, 2018; European Union, 2020). ACCIN, for example, consistently distribute and share information on comparative religion to promote tolerance and acceptance of Islam and universal values of other religions among the general public, where they help to "lead engagement on Islamic affairs and inter-faith relations, as well as preaching and fostering understanding among the people" (ACCIN, 2020). Additionally, IYRES (or Malaysian Youth Research and Development Institute), under the Ministry of Youth and Sports, is a Tier 3 think tank that conducts education and awareness programs to promote youth development while cooperating, coordinating, and participating in youth development programs or activities related to research conducted by a national or international organisation (IYRES, 2020). IYRES also researches youth and terrorism, and among its 2016 publications are "Youth and ISIS Threats in Malaysia" and "Knowledge of Public University Students and Acceptance of the ISIS Movement."

In this phase, the primary purpose is to facilitate mass awareness and preventive programs targeting the broad spectrum of society. Programs like education, social services, and government activities must be general for the target audience. The PCVE model collaborates with authorised bodies to sensitise society to the dangers of terrorism. It monitors individual behaviour but also includes a broad target population due to their potential exposure to pre-radicalised sentiments and beliefs regarding faiths, races, and other topics. "The story of extremism has been fostered" in society (interviewee 6, personal interview, November 28, 2019). The effectiveness of PCVE efforts at the prevention level will clear many rooted problems that potentially lead to future conflicts. Proactive measures are seen as an educational strategy to expose, educate, and cultivate PCVE values within the public.

• *During-Detention phase*

The detention phase is active for some Tier 1 actors, such as MOHA. The bulk is from Tier 2, such as the RMP, who collaborated with a

handful from Tier 3, including experts and academics. Target groups from the tertiary stage are often included in this phase, sometimes called the rehabilitation process. Authorities frequently implement the PCVE programs at this level after identifying prospective extremists (individuals) or those who have translated extreme ideology into violent action(s). According to interviewee 8 (personal interview, January 3, 2020), "the implementation of PCVE occurred during detention and after the release of inmates." RMP's E8 or CT Unit conducts monitoring alongside the Department of Prison, a representative from Tier 1, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and in collaboration with Tier 3, experts consisting of academics, to test radicalisation levels in terms of their psychology, behaviour, and rate of radical religious affiliation. Before their release, a psychologist and religious expert will evaluate them. Numerous deradicalisation programs have been implemented to reorient them and ensure their integration into mainstream society.

Wan Yaman (2020) outlined four steps for managing detainees: first, segregating all terrorist detainees from other inmates and isolating them from one another and second, employing former militants, religious experts, academics, and panels from the National Deradicalisation Center to debate and perform counter-narratives of their ideology, explanations, and rationale for the violent acts. Although extremism is frequently associated with religious extremism, extremism is mainly related to the manifestation of religious fanaticism. Actions of religious extremism are usually justified by rigid and literal readings of religious doctrines while rejecting rational and reasonable responses to present conditions and contexts (Jaafar & Akhmetova, 2020). Thus, the RMP also involves the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia in implementing its PCVE policy. Inmates should also be equipped with practical and vocational skills to improve their state of life following the loss of employment due to conviction. This helps detainees acquire the required skills to live after their release. Finally, the detainees are offered workshops or specialised treatment to address specific difficulties, such as anger control.

The third indicator is described as the confirmed radicalised or extremist group membership. These individuals are not only radicalised but also carry self-made or acquired weapons and have plans to recruit and conduct assaults. They are henceforth labelled as fanatics. After the person has been detained, they must be put into the disengagement

and deradicalisation phases by the authorities (Wan Yaman, 2020). Aslam (2018) states, "The rehabilitation process is separated into four phases." In the initial phase, counsellors from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia and the police attempt to erase any harmful ideologies or distorted Islamic perspectives. The misinterpreted views are then addressed following the counsellors' introduction of conversation. While the militants attempt to defend their understanding, each counsellor faces an onerous duty because terrorist captives would initially claim that the counsellors are infidels. Counsellors must respond with replies based on a clear and comprehensive understanding of Islam. In the third stage, incorrect interpretations of the Quran and Sunnah are substituted for all distorted Islamic conceptions and ideologies. When all the concerns have been addressed, more comprehensive education on Islam will commence (p. 95).

Additionally, family members receive briefings and explanations regarding why and how their family members were detained and that they must accept the circumstances, especially after the prisoner is released. This is crucial for both sides, as family members' acceptance of former detainees curbs them from feeling alone or pressured, hence decreasing the likelihood of relapse. Meanwhile, family members of detainees receive financial aid from the state centre of Zakat and welfare organisations due to loss of income. Even though the detainees are being held in jail, their families continue to receive assistance (interviewee 8, personal interview, January 3, 2020).

- *Post-Detention phase*

After passing the evaluation, inmates are freed during the post-detention period. The actors involved are primarily Tier 1 (MOHA), Tier 2 (RMP, State Zakat offices, and welfare bodies), and Tier 3 (researchers, academicians, and specialists). After inmates are freed, the RMP team observes them remotely. In addition, the authorities will continue to supervise and monitor them even by becoming their friends, as well as creating WhatsApp groups for former detainees solely for peer support and assisting the police and experts in gaining a deeper understanding of terrorism (interviewee 6, personal interview, November 28, 2019, and interviewee 8, personal interview, January 3, 2020). Interviewee 8 says:

> *"We (police) released them not just to let them go without monitoring, sometimes even for Hari Raya celebration they*

> *still invite us to come, we never leave them behind, we know*
> *they still need support."*

As stated earlier, RMP engages with state Zakat centres and Welfare departments to help former prisoners reintegrate into their respective societies by assisting them in regaining employment or consulting and persuading former employers for re-employment. If not, former captives will be given money to help them begin their new lives. During this post-detention era, fewer than 3% of former detainees rejoin terrorist or extremist organisations (Interviewee 3 and Interviewee 4, personal interview, October 31, 2019). In a nutshell, these mechanisms and indicators were implemented before MyPCVE existed. The application of mechanisms and indicators can either remain or be improvised for contemporary challenges under the present MyPCVE.

Conclusion

PCVE and CT are two essential tools for national security. PCVE involves an education-based intervention to prevent extremist ideology from increasing, while CT involves security-based engagement during or after an event. Both are necessary for national security and if the government adopts PCVE tactics, it does not mean that CT is ineffective. The pre-PCVE period was when the authorities primarily performed under trial and error without formal guidelines and references. Not only that, but they were also not sure whose jurisdiction and job scope it was to take on such various initiatives. Additionally, it is challenging to identify stakeholders who may lead the programs. The readiness of stakeholders to manage PCVE projects is of utmost importance, especially in terms of understanding and knowledge in handling society, managing stigma, and promoting future acceptance of detainees or former detainees. MyPCVE, launched on 30th September 2024, with better framing of strategies, initiatives, ownership and guidelines, will hopefully facilitate better future mapping and governance of the sector. Monitoring and measuring the plan's implementation in the future is vital. All stakeholders should support the government and its agencies in executing the policy across the strategic thrust areas and initiatives. Moreover, the government is now expected to establish an official MyPCVE unit for effective monitoring and measurement.

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APPENDIX

<u>The List of Interviewees:</u>

No.	Date of interviews	Name of positions	Designation	Place of interview
1	October 21, 2019	AIPA Caucus members	Interviewee 1	Parliament of Malaysia
2	October 23, 2019	Expert-Academician	Interviewee 2	Kuala Lumpur International Airport
3	October 31, 2019	Representative from the Ministry of Home Affairs	Interviewee 3	Ministry of Home Affairs
		Representative from the Ministry of Home Affairs	Interviewee 4	
4	November 18, 2019	Expert-Academician	Interviewee 5	ISTAC-IIUM
5	November 28, 2019	Expert-Academician	Interviewee 6	Dome Restaurant, KLCC
6	December 5, 2019	Representative from the Ministry of Defence	Interviewee 7	Restoran Memori Santai, Setiawangsa
7	January 3, 2020	Representative from the Royal Malaysia Police (E8)	Interviewee 8	Hornbill Restaurant & Café, Kuala Lumpur

The Value of Patriotism Based on the Principles of *Rukun Negara* in Islam: Engaging the Reality of Malaysia's Plural Society (2018-2024)

Hairol Anuar Mak Din[*]
Norazmi Anas[**]
Shamrahayu Ab. Aziz[***]
Rafidah Abd Karim[****]
Mohd Mahadee Ismail[*****]

Abstract: Changes in the reins of the national government since 2018 have had an impact on the value of patriotism among Malaysians. The principles of the *Rukun Negara* are neglected as the basis of unity. Instead, communities often conflict with each other due to differences in political ideologies that affect ethnic harmony in Malaysia. The issue of insulting Islam and the institution of the Constitutional Monarch is increasing. For example, this includes incidents insulting the national coat of arms, the issue of the *Jawi* script and the act of putting the Malaysian flag upside down by irresponsible individuals. Even worse, several cases have been committed by Malay and Muslim individuals. Some citizens do not appreciate the value of patriotism in the *Rukun Negara*,

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[*]Faculty of Social Sciences, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Selangor, Malaysia. Email: hairolanuar@kuis.edu.my
[*]Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak, Malaysia. Email: norazmianas@uitm.edu.my (corresponding author)
[***]Ahmad Ibrahim Kuliyyah of Laws (AIKOL), IIUM, Email: srahayu@iium.edu.my
[****]Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak, Malaysia. Email: feida16@uitm.edu.my
[*****] Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia. Email: mahadee@upm.edu.my

which is the pillar of harmony between ethnic groups in Malaysia. This article examines the concept of patriotism based on the *Rukun Negara* in Islam and the effect of its neglect on the harmony of the pluralistic society in Malaysia as well as its relationship with the current government policies regarding unity. The value of patriotism based on the *Rukun Negara,* which preserves religion, the institution of the Constitutional Monarch in the country, the rule of law and character must be sown and cultivated in every citizen of this country to maintain national unity, which is the heart of peace and the backbone of the country's social well-being.

Abstrak: Perubahan tampuk pemerintahan negara sejak tahun 2018 sehingga kini telah memberi kesan terhadap nilai patriotisme dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia. Prinsip Rukun Negara telah terabai sebagai asas perpaduan, sebaliknya masyarakat sering bertelagah sesama sendiri akibat perbezaan ideologi politik yang menjejaskan keharmonian etnik di Malaysia. Isu penghinaan terhadap agama Islam dan institusi Raja Berperlembagaan semakin meningkat, diikuti penghinaan terhadap jata negara, isu tulisan Jawi dan tindakan memasang bendera Malaysia secara terbalik oleh individu yang tidak bertanggungjawab. Lebih parah lagi, sebilangan kes telah dilakukan oleh individu berbangsa Melayu dan beragama Islam. Terdapat segelintir rakyat yang tidak menghayati nilai patriotisme dalam prinsip Rukun Negara yang menjadi tunjang keharmonian antara kumpulan etnik di Malaysia. Artikel ini meninjau konsep nilai patriotisme berasaskan Rukun Negara dalam Islam dan kesan pengabaiannya terhadap keharmonian masyarakat majmuk di Malaysia serta hubungannya dengan dasar kerajaan semasa berkaitan perpaduan. Maka, nilai patriotisme berasaskan Rukun Negara yang memelihara agama, institusi Raja Berpelembagaan dalam negara, kedaulatan undang-undang dan budi pekerti perlu disemai serta ditanam dalam diri setiap rakyat negara ini demi menjaga perpaduan nasional yang menjadi nadi keamanan dan tunjang kesejahteraan sosial negara.

Introduction

The principles of the *Rukun Negara* are the national principles to realise Malaysia's ideals to increase unity among the people, maintain the spirit of democracy, create a just society, maintain a liberal approach in dealing with diversity and create a society that is advanced and technological. They are also to build national identity (Hussin, 2020) and the spirit of unity and integration in a pluralistic society (Haniffa et al., 2021). It remains relevant today as (i) a philosophy of unity that fosters ethnic harmony and continues to be experienced throughout the country's history, (ii) an important guide in creating a just society in the context of bridging the economic gap and (iii) a significant preamble in the interpretation of the Federal Constitution (Mohamed Adil et al., 2023; Hamid et al., 2021). Nevertheless, efforts to undermine ethnic harmony and unity in Malaysia have been detected over the past years following the neglect of the principles of the nation's pillars and the failure to live them with true understanding.

The first principle emphasises the aspect of trust in God. According to Mohd Ramly et al. (2020), insults to the Islamic religion also occur in our country even though Islam is recognised as the official religion of the country or the religion of the Federation, which is protected in Article 3(1) of the Federal Constitution, especially on social media. As evidence, the *Unit Pemantauan Isu Hina Islam* (a monitoring unit), Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) reported that there were 431 complaints related to insulting Islam on social media until 30 June 2020 with 83 links identified as insulting Islam (Abu Hassan, 2020) with complaints exceeding 10,000 cases (Jamaludin, 2019). Based on the Syariah law in Malaysia, there are specific enactments related to the offense of insulting Islam (Samudin, 2022) and provisions of civil law such as Section 298A of the Penal Code and 233 of the Communications Act (Mohd Ramly et al., 2020). It is in line with the order of the His Majesty the King (YDPA) and the Sultan of Selangor, who insist that action must be taken against actions that may affect the unity and harmony of the country, especially involving insults to Islam (Taher et al., 2020).

The second principle focuses on the aspect of loyalty to the King and the country. Malaysia practices a system of Parliamentary Democracy under the administration of a Constitutional Monarch with His Majesty

as Head of the Country as protected in the Federal Constitution. Even so, the issue of insulting YPDA was on the rise, especially in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic earlier in the decade. According to Yusof and Hassan (2020), there were 7 cases of insulting the institution of the King in Malaysia that have been prosecuted involving 5 cases committed by Malay Muslim individuals, followed by two non-Malay cases. All these wrongdoings are committed through social media such as Facebook and Twitter openly. According to Muhammad (2020), freedom of speech is not only controlled in oral speech or correspondence and writing but also any games, shows, gatherings, or forms of entertainment, and it applies to individuals and legal entities laws such as companies, organisations, and statutory bodies if they are incorporated under Malaysian law. The right under Article 10(1) (a) of the Federal Constitution is not only subject to freedom of speech and expression, but it extends to numerous aspects of legislation. It is also subject to several related acts and laws, such as the Sedition Act of 1948, the Defamation Act of 1957, and Laws Related to Print and Electronic Media (Communications and Multimedia Act 1998, Computer Crime Act 1997, Digital Signature Act 1997, Telemedicine Act 1997, Copy Rights Act 1997 (amendment) & Electronic Government Activities Act 2007) and the Penal Code Act, Section 500, and Section 14 of the Minor Offenses Ordinance 1955 (Yusof & Hassan, 2020).

The third to fifth principles involve the supremacy of the constitution, the rule of law, and good behaviour and morality. Several issues have arisen that challenge these three principles, including the issue of insulting the national coat of arms, the issue of *Jawi* script or writing and the issue of placing the Malaysian flag upside down. According to Meerangani et al. (2022), the issue of religious freedom is the cause of dissatisfaction among non-Muslims that includes concerns about the jurisdiction of the Syariah court in cases involving Muslims and non-Muslims, the issue of Islamisation of non-Muslims, apostasy, the construction of non-Muslim houses of worship, language and Islamic state (Musa, 2022). The non-Muslim citizens think that issues related to Islam are also related to the dominance of the Malays in the national government. Non-Muslims raise their demands to protect their religious freedom rights that they perceive are threatened due to these issues. This phenomenon, if not properly addressed, can have a negative impact on the harmony of ethnic and religious diversity, with the racial unrest of

May 16, 1969, serving as a stark reminder. The spirit of patriotism that is fostered based on the *Rukun Negara* needs to be strengthened with the injection of religious and spiritual elements to be in line with human nature.

The phrase of Allah SAW, which means:

> And verily if We make it obligatory upon them (with a command): "Sacrifice yourselves, or leave your place of residence", then they will not do it, except for a few among them. And indeed, if they practice the advice of teaching (including orders and reassurances) that have been given to them, that would certainly be better for them and would strengthen (their faith) (4: 66).

The preceding verse's translation demonstrates that regardless of a person's ethnicity, religion, or skin colour, the human spirit of love for the nation is compliant with Islamic Shariah. Allah SWT has tasked every human being with defending their own rights, and this puts people to the test to see if they are willing to make sacrifices or not. The greatest request made by any patriotic citizen is to devote all of their love and energy to upholding the wonderful ideals of Islam, live in a spirit of complete brotherhood, and honour all of the tenets of Islam (Mohd Salleh, 2023). Given the notion of the diverse culture of our nation, it is imperative that all citizens, Muslims or not, unite in defence of the nation. It is consistent with co-existence in diversity, which is defined as co-existence with the intention of co-existing in a community that is bolstered by a loving spirit, a high degree of tolerance, acceptance of difference, mutual understanding, trust, and complementarity (Khambali, 2020). Thus, to ensure the security and sovereignty of their individual nations, all inhabitants of a country share rights and obligations that must be met in order to uphold the spirit of love and nationalism. Thus, the purpose of this study is to answer the following questions:

i.   What is the concept of patriotism based on the *Rukun Negara* in Islam?

ii. What is the effect of neglecting the values of patriotism based on the *Rukun Negara* Islam toward the harmony of the pluralistic society in Malaysia?

iii. How does the framework of Shariah-compliant patriotism (S-CP) help in the construction of a multiracial Malaysian nation?

Review of Literature

Rukun Negara as Foundation of Malaysian Patriotism: An Increasingly Disregarded Value

Patriotism is defined as a strong feeling of love for the homeland (DBP, 2020) involving matters of confidence, loyalty, citizenship, courage, independence, identity, and sovereignty, which are the heart of a country's freedom, independence, stability, and progress (Ku Halim, 2020). Dana et al. (2023) state that patriotism is an attitude of willingness to sacrifice to defend the nation and the country from internal and external disturbances that are interconnected with the concept of nationalism. Therefore, the feeling of nationalism that exists in a person directly highlights the spirit of patriotism that is considered the shield of the sovereignty of a country so that all members of society, especially the new generation, appreciate this spirit to form a whole and strong identity (Hashim, Osman & Keling, 2020). These values that are shared without discriminating ethnic and religious identity as the basis of equality form a community based on six main values, which are loyalty, sacrifice, pride, belonging, discipline, effort, and productivity (Ramli, Abdullah, Samsi & Azzis, 2020) and (Rahman, 2021).

While there are various types of patriotism, the sense of love for one's country that stems from logical allegiance and one's activities that involve questioning and criticising the government for the common good is known as constructive patriotism. It is thought to be superior and more successful. This kind of patriotism is seen to resemble a more developed democracy. According to Basir, Bakar, Ismail and Hassan (2020), the spirit of patriotism focuses on three main areas of act, namely (i) patriotism is for the country but not necessarily for the government, (ii) a person's love for his country is more than his love for other countries and feeling this is directed through appropriate actions such as taking care of its economic, political and social well-being and (iii) a person has a sense of pride towards his country and thus cultivates a deep sense of attachment. Efforts to foster values and the spirit of patriotism are hindered by four main factors, namely the value of individualism that only cares about itself, the era of globalisation and liberalism with

the easy entry of foreign cultures into the country, prejudice based on stereotypes without solid evidence and racial sentiments that can destabilise the country (Daud & Ishak, 2022). The patriotism that is embedded in the principles of the *Rukun Negara* makes it a symbol of national unity and ethnic diversity in Malaysia (Mohammad, 2020).

The *Rukun Negara* was first introduced on 31 August 1970 as the basis of national identity and the socio-cultural medium of a pluralist society in Malaysia with five main principles that are (i) Belief in God, (ii) Loyalty to the King and State, (iii) Integrity of the Constitution, (iv) Rule of Law and (v) Good Behaviour and Morality. It serves as a guide for the people in developing the identity of the Malaysian nation, setting aside differences, and strengthening the social solidarity of the diversity of religions, cultures, and races (Muslim, 2021). Historically, *Rukun Negara* as a national philosophy was conceived as a response to ethnic unrest that culminated with riots on May 13, 1969, that led to a state of emergency. The parliamentary system of government was suspended, and the establishment of the National Movement Council (MAGERAN) was to restore peace, re-establish the law of the land and foster an atmosphere of harmony and trust in the people.

According to Haniffa et al. (2021), the *Rukun Negara* acts as an axis of national stability based on five main goals, which are to achieve closer unity among the entire community, preserve a democratic way of life, create a just society with the prosperity of the country will be enjoyed fairly and equitably, guaranteeing a liberal approach to rich cultural traditions and various patterns and building a progressive society that will use modern science and technology. The five main objectives of the *Rukun Negara* serve as the axis of national stability. These objectives are to foster greater community unity, uphold democracy, establish a just society in which the nation's prosperity is distributed fairly and equally, ensure a liberal approach to rich cultural traditions and diverse patterns, and construct a progressive society that makes use of contemporary science and technology (Hamid et al., 2021). The main concern that is always touched upon and discussed in relation to the *Rukun Negara* is the equality of rights between ethnic groups (Mohammad et al., 2021).

Five decades after *Rukun* Negara, it is unsurprising that there is neglect in nation-building and that national security is threatened and contributed to the rise of the new dynamics of racial propaganda (Johari

& Muhamad, 2022). As mentioned earlier, the JAKIM has received more than 10,000 complaints of insults to Islam since its monitoring unit, *Unit Pemantauan Isu Hina Islam*, began operating in 2019 (Jamaludin, 2019). It has also received and screened 42,500 messages of complaints related to insults to Islam on social media until 30th June 2020, with 431 identified as complaints, while 83 links on social media were extended to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (SKMM) under Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 [Act 5881], while the offense of insulting Islam committed by someone practicing Islam can be subject to action under the State Shariah Criminal Offenses Act or Enactment according to the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) (Abu Hassan, 2020).

The results of the study found that 5 cases out of 7 total cases (71.4%) related to the insults were carried out by Malay Muslim individuals on social media such as Facebook and Twitter (Yusof & Hassan, 2020). These cases illustrate a possible disconnect between the current generation with patriotism and Islam or Malay Muslim institutions that include the monarchy. The Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) urges citizens to consistently uphold the principles of the *Rukun Negara*, which is loyalty to the king and the country, to avoid disloyal tendencies against the YDPA or the government and may be subject to action under Section 4(1) of the Sedition Act 1948 for causing hatred or insult to any the YDPA or the country (Ramli, 2020).

Figure 1: Insulting the Malaysian Coat of Arms

Based on Figure 1, the Malaysian government takes seriously the abuse and modification of the National Coat of Arms by any party without permission, and it is an offense according to Act 414 of the Emblems and Names Act (Preventing Improper Use) 1963. The National Coat of Arms is the official symbol of the Malaysian government, which was allowed and gazetted by the Malay Kings on 30 May 1952 (Mohamad et al., 2021). This particular case involved a book entitled "Rebirth: Reformasi, Resistance, and Hope in New Malaysia" in 2020, written by Kean Wong. It used a visual similar to the Coat of Arms, which displayed a naked child on top of the moon and stars as well as the image of two tigers that was modified in addition to adding the shape of a crocodile at the bottom. This case was investigated by the Classified Crime Investigation Unit (USJT) of the Prosecution and Legal Division (D5), JSJ Bukit Aman under Section 4(1) of the Sedition Act 1948 as well as Section 8(1) of the Printing and Publishing Act 1984 as well as Section 233 of The Communications and Multimedia Act 1998, which is the offense of improper use of network services, and was subsequently banned by the Malaysian government since 2020 (Zahir et al., 2024). This case sets a precedence and reminder to Malaysians pertaining to the need to respect national symbols.

Additionally, there have also been contentious problems involving the sensitivity of the Islamic faith, the Malay race, the institutions of Kings, and other topics. This includes arguments against the use of the name of Allah in the Bible, apostasy and change of religion, denigration of other faiths, and challenges to Article 153 concerning the Malays' special rights and Article 152 with the status of the Malay language (Razali et al., 2021). The issue of language extended to the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) in Chinese education, the usage of languages other than Malay in official matters in the Ministry's official media, and intentions to ratify ICERD (International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination), which may have implications on the monarchy, are among other contemporary issues mentioned (Saiman et al., 2023).

Rukun Negara and Patriotism from an Islamic Perspective

Yusof Al-Qardawi expressed, "When we want to see the face of the country in the future, look at its young generation today. Suppose the young people today are among those with high morals and prudence,

of course. In that case, our future country is a peaceful and prosperous country, but if the situation is the other way around then be prepared to face the possibility of bad things that will happen" (Ismail & Mohd Poad, 2021). According to Shahabudin et al. (2024), psychological studies prove that citizens with a high level of patriotism are able to be good citizens and contribute to the progress of the country that is combined with the love of universal religious values, compounding a moral vision of the world and the hereafter. For Muslims, this can be explained as believer patriotism.

There are several characteristics of believer patriotism, namely love for the Messenger of God, the believers, fellow Muslims, neighbours and guests, saying good things, commanding what is good and forbidding what is bad, giving advice, putting faith first, observing the obligatory things, trust and wisdom (Shahabudin et al., 2024). It is supported by the study of Arif and Aulia (2018), which affirms the value of being a patriotic believer that is built on three main characteristics namely humanity, freedom, and transcendence. The phrase of Allah SWT which means: "O you who believe! When you meet an enemy, you should remain steadfast in facing them and mention and remember Allah SWT so that you will succeed in victory (Surah Al-Anfaal: 45). It is clear here that the value of patriotism based on Islam can form the superior personality of citizens, a fair and just government based on the concept of monotheism and morals in line with the Shariah. It is in line with Rohman and Hamami's (2021) findings that the integration of patriotic values with religion, especially Islam, is significant in producing Muslims who love their country.

The specific emphasis on patriotism within the framework of Islamic morals illustrates the principles of the *Rukun Negara* are suitable to be practiced by Malaysia's plural society through universal values and perceptions of leadership, humanity, and justice (Khalli et al., 2020). Rahman and Shah (2020) also believe that religion can bring unity among the three largest ethnic groups in Malaysia and is in line with Ibn Khaldun's Model of Unity in Diversity aspects such as *ukhwah* (brothers), *nubuwwah* (prophecy), *daawat al-haq* (call/summon of the truth), *al-mulk* (the kingdom), *asabiyyah* (tribalism) and *ma'unah* (aid/assistance) (Abdullah, 2022).

> The Prophet SAW once prayed: "O Allah, make us love
> Madinah as much as we love Makkah or more than our love
> for Makkah" (HR Bukhari).

According to the interpretation of the preceding hadith, it is evident that the Prophet Muhammad SAW had a deep love for both Madinah al-Munawwarah (The luminous city), the first Islamic nation, and Makkah, the site of his birth. Therefore, the spirit of patriotism needs to be nurtured and instilled in every madani or citizen regardless of religion, race and skin colour so that the sovereignty of a country can be maintained to avoid colonisation and imperialism.

Engaging the Reality of Malaysia's Plural Society

Religious diversity, language differences, economic specialisation, residential architecture, and political direction are examples of identification in Malaysia's plural society (Rahman and Shah, 2020) and (Jusoh & Embong, 2021). Malaysian culture prioritises the values of politeness, simplicity, beauty, and harmony of life between family members, neighbours and the community. Malaysia also consists of various ethnic groups, such as Orang Asli, Iban, Bidayuh, Kadazan, Dusun and other Bumiputera tribes that inhabit Sabah and Sarawak (Muhammad et al., 2023). The culture practiced by Malaysians is based on mutual respect and shared values among the population (Mohd Hamidin & Talib, (Eds.) (2018). Historically, the diversity of society in the Malay Archipelago is proven during the prosperity of Malay civilisation. It facilitated the interaction of various cultures of people around the world for trade, diplomacy and cultural exchanges. Later, colonial policies facilitated cultural pluralism that would define modern Malaysia (Rohana, Rameli, Nordin & Hashim, 2017).

In the context of a plural society, the symptoms of conflict are certainly unavoidable. Effective conflict management can provide positive effects through the mobilisation of ideas and actions to achieve a better life and avoid negative effects such as hostility, hatred, negative stereotypes, fights, and violence (Din et al., 2020). Ethnic and religious elements are not the only factors of conflict between communities, but the socio-economic imbalance and the government's weakness in offering a comprehensive policy and solution in dealing with the issue causes affected parties to manipulate ethnic and religious factors to trigger conflict and tension in society. The provocation of identity

politics by parties hiding behind certain agendas and demands fuels the fire of sensitivity and conflict (Meerangani, Rosele & Marinsah, 2020). According to Shahidi et al. (2021), the process of nation-building and integration between the ethnic groups in Malaysia is still at a low level due to the failure of the implementation of the National Cultural Policy (DAKEN).

In an attempt to bring peace back to our nation's communities after the riots on May 13, 1969, the DAKEN was instituted in 1971. Ramli (2021) contends that DAKEN must embrace Malay culture and refrain from opposing the admission of other cultures so long as they do not clash with Islam. It is consistent with DAKEN's guiding principles, which state that Islam plays a significant role in the development of national culture and that other cultural elements that are appropriate and appropriate are also accepted. That culture should be based on the culture of the people of regional origin (Shahidi et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, the policy was continued by the Malaysian government with the introduction of the revised DAKEN in 2021. High-value culture, community harmony, cultural heritage preservation and conservation, cultural development and expansion, cultural empowerment, cultural, economic generation, and cultural excellence are the seven main pillars of the DAKEN Strategy and Action Plan (2021–2025) (Yaakob et al., 2023; Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, 2021).

Consequently, the option of equality of values through the mechanism of civilisational or inter-religious dialogue can be put into practice to minimise the risk of conflict and the emergence of sensitive issues in society. The Malaysian community that is different in religious and cultural aspects and inherits the polarisation of the colonial remnants needs to build common values that become the starting point for the formation of the culture of a contemporary Malaysian nation. Therefore, a solid foundation based on the principles of *wasatiyyah* (moderation) and wisdom (Aziz, 2021) must be developed to facilitate the continuity and sustainability of Malaysia's nation-building.

Methodology

The research method of this case study is qualitative, using content analysis of academic articles and documents related to the value of patriotism, the principles of the *Rukun Negara* and Islam. Content

analysis is a set of analytical procedures that can be used in a variety of media messages (text, speech, video recording) and envoy to identify its purpose (Badzinski et al., 2021). This case study also focuses on the neglect of the values of patriotism in the last seven years, from 2018 until 2024. During that period, there has been a drastic change in the reins of government with changes in national policies. This situation has caused the plural society in Malaysia to lack appreciation for those policies which have been the heart of unity and patriotism in our country since independence. Therefore, the three current government policies related to unity described in this paper include (i) Malaysia MADANI Policy (MADANI), (ii) National Social Policy (NSP) and (iii) National Unity Action Plan (NUAP) 2021-2025. Next, the S-CP framework developed by Johari et al. (2022) has been analysed to answer the third question of the study.

Findings

According to Johari et al. (2022), believer patriotism consists of eight elements, five of which are based on the Quran, namely (i) Faith in Allah & Prophet, (ii) The strength of Religious Belief, (iii) Defending the National Sovereignty, (iv) Love for the Motherland and (iv) Penalty of Exile, as well as three (3) elements drawn from al-Sunnah, specifically :(i) Love for the Motherland, (ii) Sacrifice for the Country and (iii) Praise & Appreciation. Johari developed the S-CP Framework in Malaysia based on faith, Shariah and morals sourced from revelation (al-Quran & al-Sunnah), Malay literature and the principles of the *Rukun Negara*. It was recognised by Shahabudin et al. (2022), who stated that all elements of revealed patriotism stated by Johari et al. (2022) a complement to the main elements of patriotism from an Islamic perspective, including Islam (in general), figure and *Maqasid Shariah* (objectives of Shariah). Patriotism based on the *Rukun Negara* is not only an emotional attachment to the country but also a commitment to active participation in upholding the values that ensure the prosperity, peace, and unity of Malaysia. The principles outlined in the *Rukun Negara* provide a holistic framework for citizens to understand their role in nation-building, emphasising the importance of loyalty, lawfulness, and moral integrity. This deep connection between the *Rukun Negara* and patriotism underlines the shared responsibility of all Malaysians to contribute to the nation's progress, stability, and enduring unity.
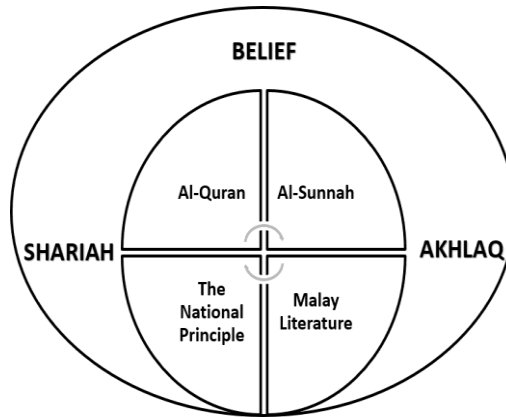
Figure 2: Shariah-Compliant Patriotism (S-CP) Framework in Malaysia
(Johari et al., 2022)

S-CP framework can play a significant role in nation-building within Malaysia's multiracial society by emphasising values and principles that resonate with the diverse population while aligning with Islamic teachings. The values and principles consist of:

i. Promotion of Universal Values

    S-CP emphasises values such as justice, compassion, and respect, which are universal and can appeal to people of all races and religions. These values can help foster mutual respect and understanding among different communities.

ii. Inclusive Framework

    By integrating principles from the Quran and Sunnah with local cultural and national values, such as those found in Malay literature and the principles of *Rukun Negara*, this construct of patriotism creates an inclusive framework. This helps bridge the gap between religious and national identities, making it easier for people from various backgrounds to feel a sense of belonging and commitment to the country.

iii. Moral and Ethical Foundation

    The emphasis on *akhlaq* (morality and ethics) encourages individuals to act with integrity and fairness in their interactions.

This can lead to stronger social cohesion and reduce cases of racial and religious discrimination, promoting a more harmonious society.

iv. Unity and Solidarity

S-CP highlights the importance of unity and solidarity. Focusing on shared beliefs and common goals can help unite people from different ethnicities and religious backgrounds in the pursuit of national development and prosperity.

v. Educational and Developmental Programs

The framework can be used to develop educational programs and initiatives that instill a sense of patriotism and national pride in young Malaysians. This can help counteract contentious tendencies and build a generation that values unity and cooperation.

vi. Support for National Policies

Aligning with the National Unity Policy (NUP), S-CP can help ensure that national policies are inclusive and considerate of the needs of all communities. This can enhance trust in government institutions and policies, fostering a sense of collective responsibility for national progress.

vii. Conflict Resolution

By promoting principles of justice and mutual respect, S-CP can provide a framework for resolving conflicts amicably. This is crucial in a multiracial society where tensions can arise from cultural and religious differences.

viii. Strengthening National Identity

It helps in building a strong national identity that is inclusive of all races and religions, encouraging citizens to see themselves as Malaysians first, while still respecting and celebrating their individual cultural and religious identities.

In summary, S-CP aids nation-building by promoting values that foster unity, respect, and cooperation among Malaysia's diverse

population, thereby contributing to a stable, prosperous, and harmonious society (Johari et al., 2022).

Unity-related Policies of the Government

Malaysia MADANI Policy (MADANI)

Under the leadership of Anwar Ibrahim, the 10th Malaysian Prime Minister, the unity government unveiled the Malaysia MADANI Policy, which is based on six key pillars from Malaysia SCRIPT: (i) S- Sustainability, (ii) C- Care and Compassion, (iii) R- Respect, (iv) I- Innovation, (v) P- Prosperity, and (vi) T- Trust. By fostering confidence between the populace and the government and implementing an open and cooperative policy, it seeks to make Malaysia a more developed and affluent nation. By focusing on sustainability, well-being, and respect, in addition to the virtue of civility that all Malaysians should be taught, the government offers the people confidence. It demonstrates its commitment to advancing the objective of unity.

National Social Policy (NSP)

NSP focuses on social development that is based on moral values and the improvement of human capacity to achieve social cohesion and stability, national resilience, and the well-being of a developed and stable Malaysian society. Ethnic unity through patriotism based on the principles of the *Rukun Negara* can be achieved by implementing strategies in the NSP, which are (i) Developing and empowering people throughout life (the second objective of the DSN) and (ii) Strengthening and developing the social support system and social services (https://www.kpwkm.gov.my).

National Unity Action Plan (NUAP) 2021-2025

NUAP 2021-2025 is a framework that will be implemented within a period of 5 years (2021-2025). Based on the *Rukun Negara*, NUAP contains specific efforts and programs aimed at resolving issues related to unity to reduce tension, conflict, and ethnic polarisation.

Conclusion

The value of patriotism based on the principles of the *Rukun Negara* becomes the basis of ethnic unity in Malaysia in line with the goals of the Malaysia MADANI Policy (MMP), the NSP and the NUAP 2021-

2025. Due to the diversity of our population in terms of both race and religion, our nation is exceptional in that it can successfully achieve inter-ethnic accommodation to forge a secure and durable national identity. Sensitive issues pertaining to the so-called 3R (race, religion and royalty) must be handled as best and as constructive as possible to foster the development of a competitive Malaysian society domestically and internationally.

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A Reflection of the Peaceful Life between Muslims and Christians in *Desa Kertajaya*: An Analytical Study from Qur'anic and Biblical Perspectives

Ungaran@Rashid[*]

Abstract: Living in peace is, perhaps, a term or a situation that every community in the world has longed for. Living in peace may mean living a harmonious life, being secure and prosperous, and loving one another in a community. In many cultures, people can find the concept of peace in language, worldview, art, and other ways. However, the owners of these cultures forget that they have that notion in their lives. Thus, in many conflict issues, people within a particular culture often seek a third party to be a mediator. In this article, the researcher describes a case study of a peaceful life in a village in West Java, Indonesia, named *Desa Kertajaya*. The researcher observed that some aspects supporting the harmonious life in *Desa Kertajaya* bear similarity with the facets of peace found in the Qur'ān, the Bible, or Sundanese culture. The researcher collected the data for this study through participant observation and two types of interviews - semi-structured and unstructured. The researcher used the data to develop some themes and analysed the relationship between the themes that involved thirteen Sundanese from *Desa Kertajaya*. The semi-structured interview included five questions that serve as a guide. In the community of *Desa Kertajaya*, where Muslims and Christians coexist, the concepts of peace from both Qur'ānic and Biblical perspectives can be applied together. However, the peaceful life in this village seems to be more influenced by Sundanese culture, although there are some interrelated aspects of harmony from the Qur'ān and the Bible.

Keywords: peace, Qur'an, Bible, Muslims, Christians

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[*]Assistant Professor at the Department of Uṣūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion, AHAS-KIRKHS, IIUM. Email: ungaranrashid @iium.edu.my

Abstrak: Hidup dalam keadaan yang aman mungkin menjadi istilah atau keadaan yang diidam-idamkan setiap masyarakat di dunia ini. Hidup dalam keadaan yang aman mungkin bermakna hidup dalam kehidupan yang sejahtera, aman dan makmur, serta mencintai sesama sendiri dalam sesuatu masyarakat. Konsep keamanan boleh ditemui dalampelbagai budaya, sama ada dalam bahasa, pandangan hidup, atau seni. Walau bagaimanapun, pengamal budaya-budaya ini sering lupa bahawa mereka mempunyai konsep keamanan itu. Hal ini menyebabkan mereka sering mencari pihak ketiga untuk menjadi orang tengah setiap kali berlakunya konflik. Dalam artikel ini, pengkaji membincangkan sebuah kajian kes mengenai kehidupan aman sebuah di sebuah kampung di Jawa Barat yang bernama *Desa Kertajaya*. Pengkaji mendapati bahawa terdapat beberapa aspek yang membuktikan persamaan antara kehidupan aman *Desa Kertajaya* dengan aspek keamanan yang terdapat dalam al-Quran, Bible dan juga budaya Sunda. Pengkaji mengumpul data untuk kajian ini melalui pemerhatian peserta dan dua jenis temu bual—temu bual separa berstruktur dan temu bual tidak berstruktur. Pengkaji menggunakan data tersebut untuk membangunkan beberapa tema dan menganalisis hubungan antara tema yang melibatkan tiga belas orang Sundadari *Desa Kertajaya*. Temu bual separa berstruktur yang digunakan mengandungi merangkumi lima soalan yang menjadi panduan kajian. Dalam komuniti DesaKertajaya, di mana umat Islam dan Kristian wujud bersama, konsep keamanan dari perspektif Al-Quran dan Injil boleh diterapkan bersama. Namun, kehidupan damai di kampung ini nampaknya lebih dipengaruhi oleh budaya Sunda, walaupun terdapat beberapa aspek keharmonian yang saling berkaitan daripada al-Qur'an dan Bible.

Kata kunci: keamanan, Al-Quran, Bible, Muslim, Kristian

Introduction

Living in peace is, perhaps, a term or a situation that every community in the world has longed for. Living in peace may mean living in harmony, being secure and prosperous, and/or loving one another in a community. On the contrary, living in peace generally does not mean living in fear, insecurity, or distrustfulness in the community. To gain a fuller understanding of peace, it is not possible to only review its meaning and definition, but it is essential to understand who takes the initiative for brokering the peace and for whom the peace is made. In addition, it is significant to know and understand that creating and maintaining peace is not a simple task. This knowledge will help those concerned to appreciate peace better.

Living together peacefully in diverse communities, especially those with different religious backgrounds, can present some challenges. Prioritising one's religious beliefs can cause conflicts. However, this article discusses how it is possible to lead a peaceful life among people who embrace different religions but share a cultural background, a reflection of the understanding of culture and religion that can lead to a harmonious life, which is longed for by every community. The researcher conducted his research in *Desa Kertajaya*, West Java, Indonesia. The research in *Desa Kertajaya* is significant to enable people to compare the truth from their culture with the truth from the Qur'an for Muslims and from the Bible for the Christians, and to show as a model that is not only a dream for many communities but can be achieved if they have the ardent desire to develop a harmonious life.

The Concept of Peace in the Qur'ān

In the Qur'ān, the term peace is reflected in two words, s-l-m (س ل م) and ṣ-l-ḥ (ص ل ح). The trilateral s-l-m (س ل م) occurs 140 times in 16 derived forms in the Qur'ān; meanwhile, the trilateral ṣ-l-ḥ (ص ل ح) occurs 180 times in 8 derived forms. Furthermore, the ternary s-l-m (س ل م) is translated as submit, greeting or saluting, free, to pay, peace, save, safely, secure, sound, stairway, and ladder. While ṣ-l- ḥ (ص ل ح) is translated as righteous, reconciliation, make peace, reform, improve, good, cure, corrected, set it right, set it in order, proper, repair, virtuous, honest, and amend (Lane, 1968, pp. 1412-1417, 1714).

The term *salām* appears in the Qur'ān with several meanings. Firstly, *salām* is commonly used as a greeting among individuals, particularly among Muslims, and it is also extended from angels to humanity (Qur'ān 11:69; 14:23; 15:52; 25:63). Secondly, *salām* is utilised as a prayer or expression of hope (Qur'ān 6:54; 10:10; 19:15; 19:33). Thirdly, it represents a sign of peace with God, which is initiated through repentance (Qur'ān 6:54). Fourthly, salām is described as a reward from God for those who have faith and strive to follow His path (Qur'ān 6:127; 10:25; 13:24). Fifthly, *salām* signifies salvation from God for those whom He has chosen (Qur'ān 21:69; 50:34). Lastly, *salām* is a blessing bestowed by God upon His messengers (Qur'ān 37:79; 37:109; 37:120).

The other term of peace used in the Qur'ān is ṣ -l- ḥ (ص ل ح). Muhammad Asad translates some terms that have root ṣ -l- ḥ (ص ل ح)

that is *tuṣlīḥū* as "promotion of peace" in 2: 224 (Asad, 1980, p. 49), *Yuṣliḥā* as "to set things peacefully" in 4: 128, *ṣulḥān* as "peace", also in 4: 128, *'aṣlaḥa* as "makes peace" in 42: 40, and *'aṣliḥū* as well as "makes peace" in 49: 9 and 49:10 (Asad, 1980, pp. 49, 129, 746, 793). Furthermore, Asad uses "promotion of peace" in 2: 224 to refer to an oath relating to divorce, which is uttered by a husband to his wife. Then, he translates the trilateral as "to set things peacefully" in 4: 128 in the context of a woman who has reason to fear ill treatment from her husband, it is good if they set things peacefully, rather than to be selfish. Asad writes "makes peace" in 42: 40 to point out a struggle against tyranny that tends to use a similar tyrannical attitude towards the previous oppressors. In addition, he interprets "makes peace" in 49: 9 and 10 in the context of fighting between two groups of believers involving any form of discord or contention, either verbal or action; they have to make peace for they are brethren.

Thus, Muhammad Asad translates trilateral ṣ -l- ḥ (ص ل ح) and its variants to mean peace as expressions referring to solving problems if there is a conflict between two or more parties, but not as prevention of a conflict or for maintaining peace.

Various Issues Related to the Trilateral S-L-M (س ل م) And Ṣ-L-Ḥ (ص ل ح) on the Teaching of Peace

The teaching of peace in the Qur'ān, based on the trilateral roots, s-l-m (س ل م) and ṣ-l-ḥ (ص ل ح) is also seen in the interrelated issues of submission to God, forgiveness, love, and others. In this section, the researcher discusses eight interrelated issues that link; either directly or indirectly, to the teaching of peace. The researcher expects that this will provide a framework for peacebuilding for those who are interested in becoming peacemakers according to the Islamic perspective.

The first issue that the researcher discusses is submission to God. According to the discussion above, submission to God is the state of peace where someone realises that God is always with him and this understanding motivates him to do good deeds according to God's law, as can be seen in the Qur'ān surah al-Nisā verse 125. The one who has this understanding is called a Muslim, one who has a relationship with God, which is based on faith. On the one hand, submission to God is one of the means to attain peace; on the other hand, demonstrating peace is

a reflection that one has faith in God. So, peace and submission to God are like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated from one another.

The second issue for discussion is reconciliation (*iṣlāh*). Conflict stemming from contradictory opinions is an unavoidable part of human life and needs a solution (Miller, 2005, p. 22; Galtung, 2004, pp. 1-2). It should be resolved; otherwise the conflict will deplete one's energy, physically and spiritually. An unresolved conflict can damage one's mind and intellect, which can also cause bodily weakness (Amin, 2006, p. 15). The researcher believes that reconciliation is one of the solutions to re-establish friendship and peaceful relationships between two or more parties involved in a conflict (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004, p. 72).

In the context of conflict between Muslims, reconciliation should be adopted by fellow Muslims as a solution to re-establish the harmonious and fraternal relationship among believers. The purpose of reconciliation is to bring believers back to the law of God and eventually receive forgiveness and mercy from God, as can be seen in al-Baqarah (2): 128 and al-Hujuaraat (49): 10.

The third issue that the researcher observes is repentance, as mentioned above in al-An'an (6): 54. The word repentance in Arabic comes from the trilateral root, t-w-b (ت و ب) which means a man returns to God from his sin, and it signifies he desists from his sin (Lane, 1968, p. 321). This term is important in the Qur'ān, so much so that God even revealed one chapter called al-Tawbah. As seen in its definition and occurrence in the Qur'ān, repentance is an interaction only between human beings and God, it does not occur between human beings. Effectively, repentance restores peace between human beings and God.

The fourth interrelated point is forgiveness, which is derived from the Arabic root '-f-w (ع ف و) as asserted above in al-Shūrā (42): 40. If there is a man who has power to revenge but he does not use the power to do that, conversely, he forgives the one who wrongs him, he shows that he is a worshiper of God. This indicates that this man is learning from God, as one of His characteristics and names of Him is the Forgiver. There is no reason for Muslims not to apply forgiveness and thereby bring peace. Abu Nimer, a peace practitioner and professor, says, "Forgiveness is the way people (Muslim and non-Muslim) ought to deal with each other" (2006, p. 153).

In the Qur'ān, the term forgiveness is also taken from the Arabic root word gh-f-r (ف غ ر). This term occurs 234 times in the Qur'ān, in nine derived forms, which are usually translated as to forgive, forgiving, forgiver, and forgiveness. Most of these appearances can be classified into two categories, namely the character of God as a forgiver and exhortation for human beings to forgive, either to be righteous or to get a reward from God.

The fifth interrelated aspect is the practice of greeting someone by wishing peace upon him or her, as seen in al-Furqān (25): 63. Greetings are an expression of friendship and one of the human universals (Lundmark, 2009, p. 1) that should be performed by anyone who wants to interact with others. It is most unusual, especially for a first meeting, to begin an interaction with someone by asking the name, occupation, or address without first offering a greeting. Likewise, for people who already know each other, a greeting is usually used as the beginning of communication when they meet up.

The sixth issue that implicitly deals with peace is tolerance. Tolerance refers to the willingness to accept feelings, habits, and beliefs that differ from one's own (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Although the word 'tolerance' is not used explicitly in the Qur'ān, the concept is present through various other terms and phrases such as "no compulsion" (Qur'ān 2:256, Yusuf Ali), "do not insult" (Qur'ān 6:108, Sahih International), and "to you be your way and to me mine" (Qur'ān 109:6, Yusuf Ali). Furthermore, tolerance has played a significant role in the spread of Islam. It facilitated the acceptance of Islam from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the present day. The Prophet (PBUH) exemplified tolerance in an Islamic context through the Constitution of Medina, which acknowledged and embraced other religious groups, uniting them as one community.

The seventh topic that interrelates with the concept of peace is love. The Qur'ān does not record peace and love together in one passage, but this does not mean that they do not have any relation to each other. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal, an interfaith activist, says, "Peace is a stage of love, and human love for God requires peace" (2010, p. 246).

The eighth or last related point is non-violence. The picture of Islam as a violent religion came to the fore after the terrorist attacks on 9/11 when the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York

and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. were hit by aeroplanes that had been hijacked by terrorists who claimed to be Muslims. Since then, condemnation of Islam as a violent religion has continued via various negative propaganda campaigns conducted by many parties, especially in the West (Pal, 2011, p. 1). This has been further supported by many research projects concerning the Islamic teaching of peace and how it relates Islam with violence rather than nonviolence. Interestingly, this research was not only conducted by Orientalists but also carried out by Muslim scholars. Abu Nimer says, "Many Muslims lack a comprehensive Islamic knowledge and hermeneutics relevant to non-violent conflict transformation through its peaceful teachings" (p. 133).

The discussion of the nonviolence aspect in Islamic peacebuilding is not an easy topic; in fact, the Qur'ān mentions or allows Muslims to fight, which means there is space to use violence in solving a conflict. However, using a non-violent approach to resolve conflicts is certainly achievable. The researcher thinks that non-violence can be a significant vehicle in Islamic peace building, which can show the peaceful face of Islam.

The Understanding of Peace (*Eirēnē*) in the New Testament

The term peace in the New Testament is derived from a Greek verb εἰρηνεύω (*eirēneúō*), which means to reconcile, live in peace, be at peace outwardly and inwardly, and keep the peace (p. 227). As a noun, this term comes from εἴρήνε (*eirēnē*), which denotes peace, harmony and order, and corresponds to the Hebrew *shālôm*, which means welfare and health. In addition, *eirēnē* is used as an essential characteristic of the messianic kingdom (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 227).

Furthermore, in Greek constructs, *eirēnē* is primarily utilised to explain a state, not a relationship or attitude. A positive expression of *eirēnē* could refer to a peaceful state, whereas a negative one could refer to the absence of hostility (Kittel & Friedrich, 1985, p. 184). In addition, this term is used to convey a number of different expressions such as greetings, the feeling of rest, reconciliation with God, peace with one another, peace of soul and eschatological salvation (Kittel & Friedrich, 1985, pp. 186-187). Collin Brown, an American Bible scholar, says that in profane Greek, "*eirēnē*" denotes the antithesis of war or the condition resulting from a cessation of war. Peace is the state of law and order which gives rise to the blessings of prosperity" (1976, p. 776).

In the synoptic Gospels, the term *eirēnē* occurs 19 times, 4 times in Matthew, once in Mark, and 14 times in Luke. Matthew 10: 11-13 is used when Jesus (PBUH) says, "Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you."

An interesting passage about peace (*eirēnē*) can be found in Mark 5: 34. Following the healing of the woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, Jesus (PBUH) said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." A priest would usually speak this phrase after a cleansing ceremony in which appropriate offerings and sacrifices would be offered (Kernaghan, 2007, p. 111). In this context, Jesus (PBUH) demonstrates himself to be God's agent who mediates the peace of God to those who are troubled.

The Gospel of Luke in chapter 2: 8-14 talks about an angel who appeared to some shepherds to announce the coming of the Messiah. In verse 14, the angel emphasises the good news by saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests." Albert Barnes, an American Theologian, says that this passage is the fulfilment of Isaiah 9: 6 which mentions the prince of peace that is coming to reconcile the world to God. Moreover, the prince of peace (the Messiah) will make peace between human beings and God because humankind is at enmity with itself and, also at war against God (Barnes, 1949, p. 704). Thus, the term *eirēnē* in Luke 2: 14 is used to depict reconciliation between humans and between God and humans.

Another picture of *eirēnē* in the New Testament is illustrated in Romans 2: 9-10, "There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." The meaning of peace (*eirēnē*) in this passage is a condition of perfect well-being created by God as a blessing for the righteous, namely everyone who does good (Moo, 1996, p. 139).

Reconciliation with God is another depiction of *eirēnē* given in the epistle to the Romans. This peace is a result of justification by faith as stated in Romans 5:1, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Another portrayal of peace in the New Testament can be seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews chapter 13: 20, where the phrase God of peace, is used. This term is used as part of the closing of this letter to explain the wholeness of blessing (Gordon, 2008, p. 101). This also indicates that God is the source of peace, which gives happiness, a peaceful mind, health and prosperity, and even has the initiative to reconcile humans with Himself, so that human beings have the hope of heaven (Barnes, 1949, p. 4448).

In the Epistle of James, the term *eirēnē* (peace) takes on a nuanced meaning, particularly in its connection to wisdom and righteousness. It says, "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness" (James 3:17-18, New International Version). This verse suggests that heavenly wisdom should be understood in the context of moral virtues and practical goodness (Laws, 1980, p. 163).

Peaceful Life Between Muslims and Christians in *Desa Kertajaya* and Its Analysis from the Biblical and Qur'anic Perspectives

Desa Kertajaya is a village in Cianjur Regency of West Java, approximately 60 kilometres from the city of Bandung, the capital of West Java. The researcher used this village as a case study for a number of reasons. Firstly, Muslims and Christians live together peacefully together in this village without any conflict caused by religious issues, thereby providing a good picture of the understanding of peace in a Sundanese community. Secondly, whilst the Regency of Cianjur is one of many regencies in Indonesia that applies Islamic law (*sharia Islam*), the Christians in *Desa Kertajaya* are not bound by this law's implementation, unlike those in other places. Thirdly, *Christians built Desa Kertajaya*, but Muslims have been allowed to live there without any conditions. Fourthly, Muslims and Christians do not proselytise each other, though they live in the same area.

The data for this research were gathered through participant observation and two types of interviews: semi-structured and unstructured. The researcher utilised the information to develop some themes and analysed the relationship between the themes involving thirteen Sundanese from *Desa Kertajaya*. A semi-structured interview

comprising five questions as a guide was conducted. The questions were:

1. What does peace mean to you as a Sundanese or as a Muslim/Christian?
2. What factors support the harmonious life in this community?
3. Do you think that the life in this village is peaceful? Please explain the reason for your answer.
4. How is the understanding of peace taught and where is this teaching mostly conducted, at home or the mosque/church?
5. If there is a conflict between residents, which solution do you use, a kinship or religious approach?

Eleven of the selected interviewees were village natives. While eleven of them still reside in the village, two have relocated to Bandung. The remaining two interviewees originally came from other cities but have lived in this village for more than five years; one moved to this village more than twenty years ago. The purpose of the researcher obtaining information from the "outsiders" was to compare the social and anthropological environment of this village with that of the area where they originated. Similarly, the researcher interviewed two people from this village who already moved to other areas to compare the situation in the place with their new environment. In addition, the respondents were of different ages, gender, occupations, and religions. The goal of the researcher in interviewing people of different ages, genders, occupations, and religions was to understand how peace is perceived by people in the village from various viewpoints.

Background of *Desa Kertajaya (Office of Desa Kertajaya, 2015).*

Desa Kertajaya, which is located in the district of Ciranjang and the Regency of Cianjur, has a population of 8,795 inhabitants who occupy 27 *kampung* (sub-villages). While 30% of the inhabitants of *Desa Kertajaya* are Christians, 70% are Muslims. Although the number of Christians in the entire village is only 30%, in *kampung* Palalangon which has a population of about 1,480 inhabitants, the number of Christians is almost 100%. In other words, 56% of Christians in *Desa Kertajaya* live in one *kampung*, Palalangon.

In general, the livelihood of the residents of *Desa Kertajaya* comes from either rice farming or fish farming. There are, however, some residents who work as teachers, industrial workers, and construction workers. The classification of the total population by age is as follows: those under five years number 640, those of school age (5 to 19) number 2,250 and those of productive age (20 to 55) number 5,340. Women make up 48% of this last figure. As they do not work outside of their home, the productive population of this village is only about 2,775. The rest of the population, who are 55 years or above, numbers 565.

History of Christianity in *Desa Kertajaya*

In this section, the researcher discusses the history of Christianity in *Desa Kertajaya*. As mentioned above, Islam is the religion embraced by most of the residents. Furthermore, the Regency of Cianjur is one of the regencies that apply Islamic law, which signifies that Islam is better known and more widespread in this regency. Therefore, the presence of Christianity is a unique aspect of this village.

Nowadays, most of the Christians in this village, except for some elders of churches or those villagers who are 60 years old and above, do not know about the history of Christianity in their area. Due to this phenomenon, the researcher obtained the information through an interview with Chandra, the chief elder of *Gereja Kristen Pasundan Palalangon* (Pasundan Christian Church of Palalangon). Chandra said that Christianity in Palalangon and *Desa Kertajaya* began in 1901 when B. M. Alkema, a missionary who worked under *Nederlandsche Zendings Vereeniging*/ NZV (Netherland Missions Society), built a village for Christians who were under persecution.

As per the official records of *Gereja Kristen Pasundan*, Alkema was sent by NZV to relocate the Sundanese Christians who were scattered across Batavia and Tanah Pasundan due to persecution, intimidation, and even murder. Accompanied by seven Sundanese Christians, Alkema requested the Regent of Cianjur to provide them with land for the oppressed Sundanese Christians. Although the Regent permitted them to construct a new village in the Regency of Cianjur, it was a challenging and tiresome task to locate a suitable place for their mission. Eventually, they discovered a flat ground in a forest after crossing the rivers of Citarum and Cisokan, which they believed was ideal for farming and

settlement. Alkema then inserted his stick into the ground and declared, "I assign this place to be the settlement for the Sundanese Christians."

With financial assistance from NZV amounting to as much as 1,200 Gulden, they cleared a forest and created grassland. Seven Christians, including B.M. Alkema, brought their families to the new village. After being established there for over a year, they decided to build a simple place of worship. On August 17, 1902, B.M. Alkema conducted the first Sunday service, and the new village and congregation was named Palalangon, which means "high shelter". Eventually, NZV supervised this Christian community for more than thirty years. In 1934, the congregations under the supervision of NZV in West Java established a new independent church called *Gereja Kristen Pasundan* (Pasundan Christian Church). After five generations, Christianity in Palalangon has spread to other *Kampungs* (sub-villages) and even to other *desas* (villages). *Gereja Kristen Pasundan* is not the only assembly in *Kampung* Palalangon and *Desa Kertajaya*. There are other churches, such as the New Apostolic Church and Renewal Bethel Church.

Several important factors of peaceful life in *Desa Kertajaya* are significant to discuss, namely, religious tolerance, trust, and love for each other, togetherness, *kekeluargaan* (kinship), respect and applying Sundanese custom, and the government's role in building peace.

Religious Tolerance

During interviews with several respondents, the researcher noted an interesting topic mentioned by almost all interviewees, both Muslims and Christians, that was tolerance. The interviewees said that tolerance is one of the main aspects that have led to a harmonious life in *Desa Kertajaya*.

Muhammad Khaeruddin, the chief of *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (Indonesia Ulema Council) of *Desa Kertajaya*, said that the tolerant attitude towards Christians in this area has existed since long ago (personal interview, April 2015). Furthermore, he mentioned that his grandfather said that Christians and Muslims have been living and socialising in *Desa Kertajaya* since the Dutch era. A conversion from Islam to Christianity, on the one hand, and from Christianity to Islam, on the other hand, is not a strange situation, though there are some procedures for the conversion. Ferry Chandra, the chief elder of *Gereja*

Kristen Pasundan, supported Khaeruddin's opinion. Chandra said that tolerance is a unique feature of *Desa Kertajaya*. He noted that it is rare to find such an exemplary display of tolerance in other villages (personal interview, April 2015).

Khaeruddin and Chandra were not simply boasting about their village's qualities. Hadyanto, who was an outsider or a re-settler, agreed with them. According to him, the people of *Desa Kertajaya* have a high level of religious tolerance, unlike other places. He compared this situation with his hometown, the big city of Bandung, which is the capital of the West Java province. He suggested that since Bandung is inhabited by people from different religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, its people should have exhibited more tolerance. Hadyanto explained that he felt marginalised in Bandung because he was a Christian. In contrast, he observed that he was well accepted by both Christians and Muslims in *Desa Kertajaya*. Therefore, Hadyanto argued that religious tolerance in *Desa Kertajaya* should be promoted as an excellent example for other places.

Dwi Ivani and Trisna Dewi are two women who were born and raised in *Desa Kertajaya*, but they have been living in the Bandung area for over twenty years. They both share similar observations to those of Hadyanto. They have noticed that the environments in Bandung and *Desa Kertajaya* are vastly different, especially regarding religious tolerance. According to them, people in Bandung tend to be more exclusive, forming separate religious and sporting communities, among others. That is why they find it more pleasant to return to their village every weekend to experience the blessing environment they cannot always enjoy in Bandung (personal interview, April 2015).

The researcher investigated where the respondents learned about religious tolerance. The assumption was that they got that teaching from their families or religious institutions. Surprisingly, the respondents indicated that they mostly pick it up from their families, although it was also sometimes mentioned in sermons at both mosques and churches. The teaching was simple: everyone in his or her village is a brother or sister. This principle has been passed down from generation to generation for over a hundred years.

The village displays an admirable level of religious tolerance, which is evident in several ways. Firstly, during the Islamic festival

(Eid al-Fitr), Christians visit and bring food to their Muslim neighbours, saving them the trouble of cooking that day. In return, Muslims guard churches and Christian homes while Christians celebrate Christmas in their churches. Moreover, there are no restrictions on greeting each other during religious festivals, unlike in different parts of Indonesia. Both communities are encouraged to exchange greetings during their respective religious holidays. However, it is observed that some Muslims tend to avoid non-Muslim festival greetings, such as "Merry Christmas" to Christians.

The researcher considers that interaction between children and parents plays an important role. Parents provide informal education at home, and implementing the instruction has become an established part of life or a part of the culture in the village to maintain peaceful coexistence. So, one means of preserving the culture is to apply the culture and this is certainly kept and promoted by people in *Desa Kertajaya* and the wider Sundanese community. Even though the term religious tolerance is not explicitly stated in the Bible or the Qur'ān, the Scriptures teach this concept anyway. Additionally, freedom in all aspects, including the notion of political and religious freedom in the modern era, also influences a person's perspective in accepting the existence of other people to live together in a peaceful community (Perez Zagorin, 2013, p. 3).

Trust and Love Each Other

Two significant values emerged during the researcher's investigations in *Desa Kertajaya*: Trust and Love. In this context, love refers to more than just the romantic relationship between spouses. It also encompasses personal connections between friends and siblings.

Yuliarsih explains that there was a group of Muslims from other areas, and they were members of an Islamic organisation who came to bring people in *Desa Kertajaya* into religious conflict by spreading a rumour that Muslims in that village would destroy a church. The community responded by expelling them and reporting them to the police. People trusted their fellow villagers more so than outsiders, especially those who came to bring hostility. In other words, the love among fellow residents defeated the hatred planted by outsiders. This love is like an inheritance from their ancestors, handed down from generation to generation (personal interview, April 2015).

Another case comes from Karlina. She is a Christian and a teacher in an elementary school. To be a Christian and a teacher in *Desa Kertajaya* is not a big problem, but the interesting issue is that her husband is a Muslim. According to the Indonesian Marriage Law, Chapter 2 Article 1, a marriage is legal if it is carried out according to the law of the religion of the bride and the bridegroom. In the case of Karlina, she converted to Islam only to be married. Her marriage was conducted under Islamic law, in agreement with her family and her husband's family. So, while her marriage is legal in terms of state law, it could be seen as illegal by other Muslims living in different places because she continues to be a practising Christian. Karlina's family is not the only inter-religious family in *Desa Kertajaya*. Other families have the same situation (personal interview, April 2015).

During an interview, a researcher asked Karlina, who is a Christian, about why she decided to marry a Muslim, especially considering that it could lead to trouble outside of their village, *Desa Kertajaya*. Karlina explained that she had known her husband since childhood, and their families had a good relationship for a long time. She stated that marrying someone you know well is preferable to marrying a stranger. Additionally, marrying someone from a different religion is part of their village's culture. Hence, she does not feel she and her husband spoil their tradition. On the contrary, she thinks they preserved the love culture cherished for generations.

The community holds the practice of love and trust higher than religious and state laws. In other words, culture is more respected rather than the law. The researcher argues that the law in that community is secondary to the culture because people do not mind inter-religious marriage; in fact, they honour the commitment of these people to their respective religions.

In the researcher's opinion, this issue is influenced strongly by Sundanese culture because Muslim and Christian communities generally cannot accept inter-religious marriages. Another argument supporting this inclusive approach is found in the Manuscript of *Sanghyang Siksakandang Karesian*, whose teachings were adhered to by the Sundanese in the past. Even though the existence of inclusivism is recognised in Islam and Christianity, in today's society, it is not generally held by Muslims and Christians. However, beyond the

context of marriage, the Bible encourages people to love one another. The second greatest commandment after loving your God, as stated in Mark 12: 29, is "Love your neighbour as yourself." Unlike the Bible, which commands people explicitly to love others, the Qur'ān does not mention loving others directly. Instead, the Qur'ān encourages believers to make peace with other believers since they are brothers, as mentioned in Surah al- Hujurāt (49) 10.

In conclusion, the community practices love and trust, often taking precedence over religious and state laws. In other words, culture is more respected rather than the law. The researcher argues that the law in that community is secondary to the culture because people do not mind inter-religious marriage. They honour the commitment of these people to their respective religions. The influence of Christianity seems quite strong in the community of *Desa Kertajaya*. They instil a sense that love has more power than law. They apply what is written in Romans 13: 8, "Let no doubt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt of love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled he law."

Togetherness

Religious differences in a society can lead to disunity and often impede advancement in many aspects of life. For example, if there is a Muslim who wants to build a mosque or Islamic school in a majority Christian area, most likely, he will face some difficulties or may not even be allowed to construct the mosque. This situation, however, is not to be found in *Desa Kertajaya*. Ismail Sholeh, a schoolteacher, and the foundation he works with were permitted to establish an Islamic school and even a mosque, which is located about 50 meters from a church in the majority-Christian *Kampung* of Palalangon. The Christians think that Palalangon is not land for Christians only but also for Muslims. So, the peaceful life in *Desa Kertajaya* is marked by the presence of togetherness.

Mintareja Yunus, the senior pastor of *Gereja* Bethel Pembaharuan Indonesia (Indonesian Renewal Bethel Church), shared that he was deeply impressed by the sense of togetherness in his village. He explained that during the district football competition in Ciranjang, *Desa Kertajaya* sent a unique team because its members came from two different religions. This extraordinary collaboration was further exemplified by the diverse supporters from both religions who rallied behind the team,

offering encouragement in various forms, including prayer. Although the intercessions were different, the togetherness shown by the people of *Desa*Kertajaya was remarkable as they demonstrated the ability to pray together in various ways for the same purpose (personal interview, April 2015).

The people in this village are very close-knit and use this closeness to deal with potential conflicts due to outsiders. Yuliarsih had previously mentioned how the residents came together to tackle a situation where an outsider tried to create a religious conflict between Muslims and Christians by spreading a rumour in the village. Hadyanto also shared his experience, where the residents, regardless of religion, joined hands to expel people who tried to bring conflict to their community. The rumour did not affect them, and they remained united in their efforts to maintain peace in their community.

The concept of togetherness exists in the Qur'ān, al-ʿImrān (3): 103, and in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 1: 10, amongst other verses. In reality, this concept is encouraged to be applied only to those of the same religious identity. On the contrary, this idea is found in the history of King Purnavarman, who involved people in extensive excavation work to cause the River Candrabhaga to drain into the sea (Ekadjati, 2005, p. 51). The people who worked together under Purnavarman's rule were from different social statuses and professions. Thus, the concept of togetherness applied in *Desa Kertajaya* is more influenced by tradition rather than religious teachings.

Kekeluargaan (Kinship)

The situation of *Desa Kertajaya* is secure in the sense there is no significant conflict relating to religious issues. If there is a problem among the residents, it is usually only a minor issue that can be easily solved. Their way of solving problems is via the attitude of kinship, which means that the people trying to help, plus those involved in the conflict, consider each other as family. Ade Hasan, one of the community leaders in *Desa Kertajaya*, said that he considers the community members under his supervision as a big family, which means he can easily help his neighbours who conflict with each other in the same way he reconciles his children who are in disagreement (personal interview, April 2015).

Dewi felt that she could not find a sense of kinship in the place where she lives now, like in her village. It is fascinating for her that people in her community, even though they are different in one aspect, namely religion, are united as one family to develop the community in many ways. Sunaryo Rahma, a retired teacher and senior citizen in the community, had the same feeling. Rahma said that his house is often used by the Muslim and Christian youth of the village as a gathering place. Furthermore, he explained that they gather together as a family and consider him their foster parent. They cook and eat together in the house without fearing that the food and kitchenware in his house are *haram* (forbidden).

The perception that the community is a big family is not directly related to the concept of peace in the Bible, but it is one of the valuable teachings of Jesus (PBUH). He says in Mark 3: 33-35 that his mother, brothers, and sisters are those who do God's will. In other words, he explains that the "real family" is the family of God. Equally, the Qur'ān teaches in al- Hujurāt (49): 10 that the believers are brothers. Nevertheless, the understanding of community as a family in the Sundanese community of *Desa Kertajaya* is insignificantly different from the Qur'ānic and Biblical perspectives. The Qur'ānic and Biblical perspectives describe a community of believers, or in other words, a family of those who come from the same beliefs, but in the Sundanese community of *Desa Kertajaya*, even inhabitants who hold different beliefs are regarded as family.

Respecting and Applying Sundanese Custom

In Indonesia, the Sundanese are known generally as meek people. The modesty of the Sundanese can be seen in various forms of etiquette, such as the way of speaking, eating, treating older people, and so on. In many places in Indonesia in general, and amongst the Sundanese specifically, there are some differences between Muslim and Christian etiquette, especially in speaking and dressing. For example, the Muslims call God as Allah, and the Christians use the term *Tuhan* (the Lord). Even though the Christians also use the word Allah in some cases, their pronunciation is different from that of the Muslims.

In *Desa Kertajaya*, Muslims and Christians implement many aspects of Sundanese customs accordingly. They use the same term for God, which is *Gusti* (the Lord in Sundanese), and some Christians

even use Arabic expressions that are considered Islamic terms, such as *insha* Allah (God willing). Besides this, they wear the same kind of Sundanese-style clothing. The researcher noticed very few Muslim women wearing head coverings in that village.

Interestingly, the Sundanese culture in the *Desa Kertajaya* community is not limited to their clothing and language but also extended to their farming practices. Rudikin, one of the community leaders, mentioned that the Sundanese cultivation method considers factors such as the position of the stars, wind direction, and the timing for planting rice, all based on ancestral instructions (personal interview, April 2015). However, it is worth noting that Christian communities in other parts of Indonesia, including other Sunda principalities, do not usually incorporate local customs. They believe Christianity represents a distinct culture and that local practices may conflict with Biblical teachings (Ward, 2005, p. 21).

Cornelius, a retired soldier, mentioned that the practice of *Gotong royong,* where the community gathers to accomplish a task, is still applied by the people in *Desa Kertajaya*. This mutual communal aid is rarely practised nowadays in other places. In *Desa Kertajaya*, *Gotong royong* is conducted by both Christians and Muslims to complete a wide range of tasks such as building houses for the poor people, constructing roads for mutual benefit, cleaning up the environment together, and so on. This practice is one aspect that unites the people in this village and is one of the reasons they live together peacefully (personal interview, April 2015).

Respecting and applying Sundanese customs is another weighty part of building a harmonious life in this village. This practice aligns with Sundanese culture as well as perspectives from the Qur'ān and the Bible. However, respecting and applying Sundanese culture particularly is not necessarily accepted by Qur'ānic and Biblical views because not all traditions of an ethnic group are at peace with either the Qur'ān or the Bible.

Government's Role in Building Peace

The system of government in *Desa Kertajaya* is the same as in other places in Indonesia. The lowest level of government is called *Rukun Tetangga*, usually shortened to *RT*. One *Rukun Tetangga* usually

consists of thirty to fifty houses and is led by a *Ketua RT* (Chief of the *RT*). The next level above *RT* is *Rukun Warga* (*RW*), led by a *Ketua RW* (chief of the *RW*). One RW is usually made up of ten to fifty RTs. A higher level above RW is *Desa* or *Kelurahan,* ruled by a *Kepala Desa or Lurah* (Head of *the Desa*). There are three other successive levels of government: *Kecamatan* (Sub-district), *Kabupaten* or *Kota* (District or Regency), and Province. According to the Minister of Home Affairs, *Rukun Tetangga* and *Rukun Warga* are not officially part of government administration. However, they are guided by the administration to assist the government in dealing with the everyday matters of its citizens.

In the interviews conducted by the researcher, 2 *Ketua RT*, 2 *Ketua RW*, and a *Kepala Desa* were among the selected respondents. Excluding these five leaders, all of the other interviewees said that all components of government, from *Ketua RT* up to *Kepala Desa,* significantly contribute to the peaceful life in this village. For example, they revealed that those *Ketua RTs* and *RWs* who are Christians do not treat Christians more favourably than Muslims. Similarly, Muslim leaders do not see Christians as inferior citizens. They consider both Christians and Muslims to be on the same level, as fellow citizens of the Republic of Indonesia, who have the same rights and obligations.

Kepala Desa (Chief of Desa) Sunandar, a Muslim, attracts a lot of praise from the community, especially from the Christians, because of his commitment to the community. He is viewed as a unifying figure who promotes harmonious living within the village. Some Christians are impressed because he goes to churches every Christmas Day to encourage them to be good Christians and to worship God. Despite religious objections from some, Sunandar is bravely making a stand, doing something commonly considered by other leaders in majority Muslim villages as something they would never do or something too difficult to do. Anyway, the Muslim residents of *Desa Kertajaya* support Sunandar's efforts to attend church services, seeing it as a means to strengthen village unity and peace (personal interview, April 2015). The government plays a crucial role in fostering a peaceful life in Desa Kertajaya, from the local level (RT) to the head of the Desa. Without their involvement, the life of the people in *Desa Kertajaya* would possibly be similar to that of other villages in Sundanese lands or elsewhere in Indonesia. In Sundanese history, the success of a kingdom and the role

of a king who actively established his kingdom as a peaceful kingdom had a significant role in building a harmonious life.

Conclusion

In the community of *Desa Kertajaya*, where Muslims and Christians coexist, the concepts of peace from both Qur'ānic and Biblical perspectives can be applied together. The idea of peace in Sundanese culture is intricately linked to values found in both the Qur'an and the Bible, such as love, togetherness, non-violence, submission to God, respect for elders, and tolerance. However, the peaceful life in this village seems to be more influenced by Sundanese culture, although there are some interrelated aspects of harmony from the Qur'ān and the Bible. The tranquil lifestyle in *Desa Kertajaya* can serve as a model for other villages in Sundanese regions. Furthermore, this village can also be an example in terms of how to apply and preserve harmony based on a cultural approach. The sense of commonality, relatedness and relevance with another religious tradition is a necessary pre-condition for a deeper understanding for living together in peace. This sense of solidarity held by religion and culture among the people of *Desa Kertajaya* can be referenced, and be used as an example to encourage and facilitate harmonious relations between Muslim and Christian communities in other places, especially where there is conflict.

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Pathways of Individual Radicalisation: The Profiles of Malaysian Muslim Violent Extremist (Ve) Detainees and Ex-Detainees 2013-2020

Nur Adillah Omar[*]
Danial Mohd Yusof[**]

Abstract: Since 2014, the Islamic State (IS) has remained the biggest threat to Malaysia's national peace and security. According to statistics by the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), as of 2018, 328 youths have been arrested in Malaysia for terrorism-related offenses (E8, 2018). Hence, there is a dire need for an empirical study to identify the pathways of individual radicalisation in Malaysia for Muslim VE offenders between 2013 and 2020. The methodology adopted for this research is a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach uses content analysis to analyse books, court cases (MLJ), newspapers, articles in journals and DABIQ magazine. To achieve the aims of this study, the deduction of these theories involves three combined approaches: 1) Hogg, Terry, and Adelman's social identity pathways, encompassing factors such as gender, age, marital status, and residency; 2) Gerwehr, Daly, and Borum's group recruitment pathways, focusing on group expertise and group role; and 3) El-Muhammady's framework of individual pathways, which include cognitive-oriented radicalisation, emotive-oriented radicalisation, faith-oriented radicalisation, and action-oriented radicalisation. These varied theories collectively contribute to the construction of the multi-context theories of pathways of individual radicalisation in Malaysia. In brief, this new understanding will aid in shaping strategic Malaysian Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) interventions to prevent the recurrence

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[*] PhD Candidate at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), IIUM. Email: nuradillahomarrazak@gmail.com
[**] Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and Madani Studies, AHAS-KIRKHS, IIUM. Email: danialmy@iium.edu.my

of incidents like the recent Ulu Tiram attack in 2024. By addressing the specific individual, demographic, group recruitment, and belief system drivers identified in this study, these interventions can more effectively mitigate radicalisation risks and enhance Malaysia's security and resilience against extremism.

Keywords: profiling, individual radicalisation, pathways, Islamic State (IS).

Abstrak: Sejak tahun 2014, Islamic State (IS) merupakan ancaman terbesar kepada keamanan dan keselamatan Malaysia. Menurut statistik Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM), sehingga tahun 2018, sebanyak 328 belia telah ditangkap di Malaysia di bawah akta kesalahan terorisme (E8, 2018). Oleh itu, kajian emperik ini adalah bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti profil radikalisasi individu Muslim di Malaysia antara 2013 sehingga 2020. Metodologi yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah kualitatif, iaitu menggunakan analisis kandungan bagi menganalisis buku, kes mahkamah (MLJ), akhbar, artikel dalam jurnal, dan majalah *DABIQ*. Bagi mencapai objektif, kajian ini telah menggunakan teori deduksi yang mengabungkan tiga teori iaitu (1) laluan identiti sosial oleh Hogg, Terry, dan Adelman, merangkumi jantina, umur, status perkahwinan, dan tempat tinggal; (2) laluan rekrutmen kumpulan oleh Gerwehr, Daly, dan Borum, merangkumi kepakaran dan peranan dalam kumpulan; dan (3) rangka kerja laluan individu oleh El-Muhammady, merangkumi radikalisasi berorientasikan kognitif, emosi, kepercayaan, dan tindakan. Gabungan daripada ketiga-tiga teori ini telah menyumbang kepada pembinaan teori pelbagai konteks laluan radikalisasi individu di Malaysia. Secara ringkasnya, dapatan kajian ini akan menghasilkan Pencegahan dan Menangani Ekstremisme Keganasan (P/CVE) yang strategik bagi mencegah perulangan insiden serangan Ulu Tiram yang terjadi pada tahun 2024. Dengan menangani permasalahan spesifik yang dikenal pasti dalam kajian ini iaitu individu, demografi, rekrutmen kumpulan, dan sistem kepercayaan, pencegahan ini dapat mengurangkan risiko radikalisasi dengan lebih berkesan serta meningkatkan keselamatan dan ketahanan Malaysia terhadap ekstremisme.

Kata kunci: pemprofilan, radikalisasi individu, laluan, Negara Islam (IS).

Introduction

The emergence of Muslim VE groups has significantly impacted the global, regional, national, and local (Malaysian) contexts. Since the 2013 establishment of Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi's Islamic State or IS,

the number of Malaysian citizens joining Muslim VE groups has been rising yearly till 2020. The worrying numbers have propelled this research to hence examine the demographic pathways of Malaysian youth who have been arrested for terrorism-related offences associated with Muslim VE groups. Through this examination, the research seeks to identify pathways of individual radicalisation of Malaysian youth between 2013 to 2020.

As of the beginning of 2018, 328 youths in Malaysia have been apprehended for terrorism-related offenses (E8, 2018). These figures evince the fact that Muslim VE groups in Malaysia are focusing their recruitment efforts on the youth demographic. The fact that the youth comprise an estimated 10 million of Malaysia's 31.7 million population is concerning, given that they constitute the majority (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020). As a result, Malaysia's security is anticipated to remain vulnerable to Muslim VE threats so long as the youth, being the country's largest demographic, are not properly cautioned.

In addition, it was estimated that there were 102 Malaysians in Syria between 2013-2018: 37 of them have died in Syria, 11 have returned to Malaysia, and 54 are still in Syria (Berita Benar, 2018). These remaining 54 are of pressing concern for both the government and society, as there is high probability that, upon their return, these returnees will bring with them radical ideologies and behaviour. This was proven when Malaysia suffered its first, and thus far only, IS-sanctioned attack on 28 June 2016 in Movida Club, Puchong. Evidently, one of the assailants had prior military training and residence in Syria (Bernama, 2017).

Hence, in reaction to the Movida club attack, the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) have implemented various measures to address the issue at hand. These measures include the implementation of a white paper for the Prevention of Crime Act 1959 (POCA), the Internal Security Act 1960 (ISA), the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act 2001 (AMLATFA), the Security Offences (Special Measures Act) 2012 (SOSMA), and the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015 (POTA). Likewise, the National Fatwa Council of Malaysia have banned Muslim VE groups and their affiliations for promoting misleading ideologies (Arbaiyah & Zarina, 2020). It is also worth noting that the RMP have

gained valuable experience in dealing with communist insurgencies such as Malayan Communist Party (MCP). These initiatives have helped the government prevent 19 terrorist plots in Malaysia between 2013 to 2017. As a result, Malaysia's position on the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2019 has improved significantly—in contrast, 74 out of 138 countries fell four levels lower in comparison with last year's index (Global Terrorism Index, 2019).

However, recent events, such as the Ulu Tiram attack in May 2024, underscore the persistent and latent nature of the violent extremism (VE) threat in Malaysia. Despite the relative lull in major incidents since the Movida Club attack in 2016, this event highlights that the risk has not been entirely eradicated but rather exists in a dormant state, capable of re-emerging under conducive circumstances. Notably, the Ulu Tiram attack sheds light on the critical role of familial influence in the radicalisation process, revealing how deeply entrenched ideologies can be perpetuated within family structures.

The dynamics within families, particularly those with existing radical affiliations or sympathies, can serve as a powerful vector for transmitting extremist ideologies. This intergenerational transmission not only sustains extremist mindsets but also amplifies the challenge of addressing VE at its roots. Such findings call for a more nuanced understanding of the role of social and familial networks in the radicalisation continuum, emphasizing the need for tailored intervention programs that address these micro-level dynamics while fostering resilience within vulnerable communities.

All in all, this research's exploration of pathways of individual radicalisation of Malaysian youth between 2013 to 2020 by addressing various contexts such as social identity theory, recruitment theory, and belief system theory, they provide a more complete perspective, enabling a deeper comprehension of the driving forces behind their radicalisation.

Literature Review

Numerous studies, including those in the fields of psychology, sociology, and criminal justice, have reached a consensus regarding

the significance of profiling. This is due to its ability to determine the extensive pathways of profilers based on the radicalisation process they have identified. Consequently, rehabilitation modules and PCVE programmes for Malaysian youth can be developed in tandem with profiles of Muslim VE detainees in Malaysia.

A range of profiling methods can be categorised according to organizational, racial, gender, age (Sahito, Zaman & Slany, 2013), and socioeconomic (Denoeux & Carter, 2009) aspects, as well as pathological (Sahito, Zaman & Slany, 2013), mathematical, psychological, clinical, criminal, geographical, and investigative psychology (Silke, 2015). Furthermore, group profiling (Sahito, Zaman & Slany, 2013) (Denoeux & Carter, 2009) can assist in identifying specific patterns of radicalisation among individuals (Russell and Miller, 1977) (Hazelwood et al., I995), thereby providing insights into the perpetrator's actions at the crime scene (Silke, 2015) through crowd detection (Dean, 2014). Profiling can also provide "useful interview strategies" for individuals suspected of being terrorists, in addition to limiting the scope of intelligence and investigation. The utilization of various profiling techniques has led to the identification of complex and interrelated paths of individual radicalisation.

Profiling is without a doubt the most effective method of law enforcement to combat terrorism, as it increases the rate of successful police investigations and decreases the societal incidence of profiling-related offences (Dean, 2014). Hence, this study proposes that countering the ideological and tactical goals of Muslim VE groups requires comprehending the theories and practises of profiling, with relation to terrorism-related activities and behaviours.

In general, offender profiles have facilitated police investigations through the emphasis on profilers' variables (Silke, 2015). This is consistent with the findings of British police investigators, for whom profiling has improved confidence in their own assessments of the case by 51.6%, and enhanced their understanding of the offence and offender by 60.9% (Silke, 2015). A "pre-rad life" can be identified through knowledge of the pathways of individual radicalisation; this involves identifying the characteristics of an individual's background; pinpointing the transition point; identifying factors that facilitate the transition; and identifying potential enablers and support systems. On the

basis of their consequent outcomes being the prediction and mitigation of the prevalence of terrorist attacks, effective PCVE programs and rehabilitation modules can be developed in accordance with the profile pathways of individual radicalisation, as stated by El-Muhammady (2020) and Jensen (2016).

The result of utilising the diverse profiling methodologies has revealed a consistent terrorist mindset and the psychological motivators (Stewart, 2016) underlying the diverse pathways to individual radicalisation. Factors such as age, personality, work history, family history, social life, and criminal record (Silke, 2015) corroborate the findings of the 2017 United Nations report and the Nation Action Plan reports from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Kosovo, Maldives, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United States, and United Kingdom—they detail several shared significant factors behind the radicalisation of Muslim extremists in each country, including: a firm ideological belief system; involvement in youth groups; a predominantly male demographic; low socio-economic status and educational attainment; unemployment; psychological and emotional vulnerability; inclination towards *jihād* oriented activities; marriage to militants; limited understanding of Islamic teachings; experiences of broken family structures; radicalisation through social media platforms; and influence from family and friends. Existing research further indicate commonalities in the profiles of Muslim extremists who belong to a minority Muslim group, covering traits such as: a history of having endured conflict in their country of origin; membership in a marginalised group; living in a polarised society; subjection to socioeconomic segregation; and racism from the local community. Despite the slight differences in results, the literature review indicates the following factors of the majority of profilers remaining unchanged: being members of youth organisations; hailing from a generally privileged middle-class background; possessing a good educational background; and self-employment. Thus, comprehensive research on the profiling of Muslim VE youth groups is essential for identifying the root causes of problems.

With regard to the emergence of Muslim VE groups in Malaysia, El- Muhammady, Wan Ruzailan, and Muhammad Azimuddin's analysis (2019) of existing research literature on the subject matter identifies external factors influencing their emergence, such as conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and the 2011 Arab Spring; along with internal or

domestic issues, such as the Sunni-Shiʿī conflict, group conflicts, and individual circumstances. Their analysis also reveals the subsequent radicalisation among the Malaysian Muslim youth to be motivated by sympathy towards war-torn countries, the intersection of religion and politics, ideological factors, and personal or psychological issues, which align with previous research conducted by Mohd Khairul Naim and Muhamad Syafriz (2020), as well as Che Mohd Aziz (2016).

From a psychological standpoint, Samsilah, Roslam, & Shahanim Yahya (2019) reveal the low levels of sociability, high levels of neuroticism-anxiety, and impulsive sensation-seeking defining the profiles of youth detainees in Malaysia. Additionally, these individuals engage in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques, which involve the deletion, distortion, and generalisation of information they receive (Hanina Halimatun Saadiah & Kapten (B) Sudirman, 2019). Samuel Thomas Koruth (2018) further identifies a variety of factors that influence Malaysian youth to adopt radical ideologies, including interest in religious ideology, peer relationships, and media and internet portrayals of injustices suffered by Muslims.

Studies concerned with improving the perception and understanding of radicalisation, extremism, and terrorism among Malaysian youths detail a number of traits associated with radicalised youth, including: low self-esteem; high narcissism; high cognitive distortion; high aggression; deviation from Islamic teachings; strong inclination towards impulsive sensation-seeking; emotional vulnerability; and a desire for change. These further clarify the inordinate attachments that the youth develop with groups like IS, explained via the four processes of: early exposure via social media; the pledging of allegiance (*bay'ah*) through false information and propaganda; identity formation through training; and subsequent action through armed conflict.

Wilkins and Brown (2009) characterise terrorists as "uncommon" criminals—usually travellers or immigrants, defined by a complex blend of ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds; who excel in evasion and disguise; and hold their religion, nationality, and politics in serious regard. Sahito et al. (2013), referencing Wilkins and Brown, highlight that terrorist profiling reveals proclivities toward revenge, religious and social suppression, conformity, displaced anger onto others, internal guilt, aspirations of toughness and bravery, and attraction to promises

of rewards in the afterlife. These factors, making up the general spectrum of suspected terrorists, greatly assist in the recognition of the individuality of each suspect and their distinct personality traits or psychopathology. It is expected that further analysis of the data and information gleaned from such profiling would preempt escalatory action (Ramond, 2019).

The dissemination of VE ideologies through social media platforms, according to research published by IYRES (2017), constitutes a major cause of youth radicalisation. Sources including Facebook (50.4%), television (49.8%), newspapers (46%), YouTube (35%), blogs (22.8%), Twitter (12.9%), Instagram (9.2%), and other mediums (8.4%) such as sermons, lectures, and published material in magazines or books promoting extreme beliefs, such as *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*—not to mention influence by extremist family members— provide a channel through which the target demographic is exposed to radical figures. Complementing an earlier study conducted by IYRES (2015), this exposure amplifies the prior awareness that a significant proportion of these individuals would already have regarding groups like IS. Specifically, the majority of them (62%) acknowledged IS as an extremist group, while a smaller percentage identified them as an Islamic movement (22%); as mere political propaganda (14%); or simply categorised them under other labels (2%). Therefore, increased overall engagement is crucial to effectively prevent and eliminate these exposures before they take root as causes of terrorism.

All in all, individual profiling aims to assess an individual's potential inclination towards espionage, sabotage, government subversion, terrorist activities, or other actions that threaten national security (Siggins, 2002). Therefore, constructing profiles of individual radicalists in Malaysia becomes essential, as it aids in comprehending radicalisation and violent extremism within the Malaysian context (Malek al Zewairi et al, 2017). Acknowledging that there is no single profile, a multi-causal perspective hence allows for the categorisation of individuals into several groups with a certain degree of accuracy, guiding investigations in the right direction.

Research Methodology

Qualitative methodology was employed to investigate the pathways of individual radicalisation in Malaysia. The qualitative approach

was utilised together with extensive library research consisting of content analysis of various sources, including books, Malaysian Law Journals (MLJ), Country Reports on Terrorism (CRT), journal articles, newspapers, and websites, providing valuable insights into the contextual and discursive aspects of radicalisation. This approach facilitated identification of the peculiarities of specific radicalisation pathways and contributed to the development of multi-context theories. This was achieved through acquiring primary viewpoints from crucial players including detainees, ex-detainees, family members, acquaintances, experts, practitioners, and government agencies. The qualitative methods of non-governmental organisations, including surveys and interviews, also played a contributing role.

Multi-Context Theories of Youth Radicalisation in Malaysia

The study employed a qualitative research approach to examine the pathways of 42 youth profiles of former and current Malaysian Muslim VE detainees over a period of seven years, from 2013 to 2020. The primary objective of the research was to identify the individual pathways in Malaysia, which revolve around three primary pathways: demographic, group recruitment, and belief system. Demographic pathways encompass variables such as gender, age, marital status, and residency. Group recruitment pathways involve variables related to group expertise and group role. Lastly, belief system pathways encompass cognitive-oriented radicalisation, emotive-oriented radicalisation, faith-oriented radicalisation, and action-oriented radicalisation.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework employed in this research encompasses three distinct theories, which are social identity, recruitment, and belief system. These three distinct theories serve as the foundational basis for understanding the pathways of youth radicalisation in the Malaysian context. This approach entailed studying the profiles of former and current detainees associated with Muslim VE groups from 2013 to 2020. By utilising this method, a set of demographics, group recruitment, and belief system variables were obtained for each profile. This detailed data allowed for a nuanced analysis of the radicalisation process among Malaysian youth.
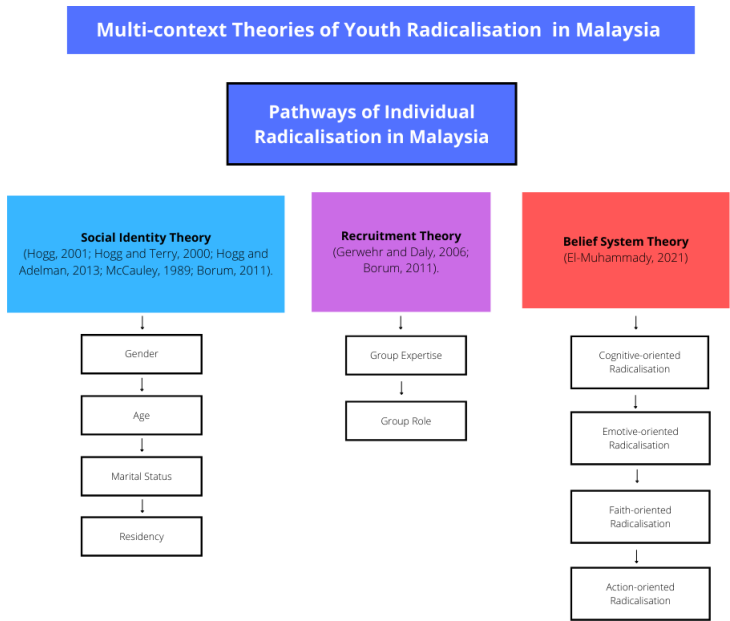
Figure 1: Multi-context Theories of Youth Radicalisation in Malaysia

Figure 1 depicts the pathways of individual radicalisation in Malaysia, utilised in formulating the multi-context theories of individual radicalisation in the country. The deduction of these theories involves three combined approaches:

1. Social Identity Theory

   This section pertains to Hogg, Terry, and Adelman's social identity theory, which delves into individual demographics, encompassing factors like gender, age, marital status and residency (Hogg, 2001; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hogg and Adelman, 2013; McCauley, 1989; Borum, 2011).

2. Recruitment Theory

   Formulated by Gerwehr, Daly, and Borum, it places emphasis on the recruitment styles within profiles. From this framework, several variables can be deduced, including one's designated expertise and roles within the group (Gerwehr and Daly, 2006; Borum, 2011).

3. Belief System Theory

   El-Muhammady's belief system theory is centred around different facets of radicalisation, including cognitive-oriented radicalisation,

emotive-oriented radicalisation, faith-oriented radicalisation, and action-oriented radicalisation.

These varied theories collectively contribute to the construction of multi-context theories that explain individual youth radicalisation in Malaysia

Findings and Discussion

Based on the 42 identified pathways, the profiles constituted both male and female individuals aged between 15 and 30 years old; encompassing both single and married marital statuses; and residence in the states of Selangor, Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah, Perak, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, Pahang, Penang, Perlis, Sabah, and Johor. They exhibited a wide range of expertise, including recruiters, weapon experts, strategists, suicide bombers, executors, social media experts, and money-laundering facilitators. These individuals assumed roles as leaders, followers, and loosely associated members, and adhered to cognitive-oriented, emotive-oriented, faith-oriented, and action-oriented radicalisation inclinations.

Demographic Pathways

Table 1: Demographic Pathways Findings

Item	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	34	81%
	Female	8	19%
Age	17	1	2.38%
	19	4	9.52%
	20	2	4.76%
	21	1	2.38%
	22	4	9.52%
	23	3	7.14%
	24	2	4.76%
	25	2	4.76%
	26	4	52%
	27	7	16.67%
	28	1	2.38%
	29	4	9.52%
	30	5	11.90%

Marital Status	Married	6	14.3%
	Single	33	78.6%
	Unknown	3	7.1%
Residency	Selangor	11	26.2%
	Terengganu	5	11.9%
	Kelantan	4	5%
	Perak	4	5%
	Kedah	4	5%
	Kuala Lumpur	3	7.1%
	Melaka	2	4.8%
	Pahang	1	2.4%
	Penang	1	2.4%
	Perlis	1	2.4%
	Sabah	1	2.4%
	Johor	1	2.4%

Note: The age group in this data was based on the Societies and Youth Development Act (Amendment) 2019 (ACT 668) and ranged from 15 to 30 years old. On a side note, the ages of the detainees in the Figure above were taken on their first day of joining ISIS, which was considered as the day they took bay'ah, or at the date of exposure.

Group Recruitment Findings

Table 2: Group Recruitment Findings

Item	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Group Expertise	Weapon Expert	3	7.1%
	Suicide Bomber	8	19%
	Recruiter	6	14.3%
	Executor	10	23.8%
	Strategist	1	2.4%
	Terrorism Financing	2	4.8%
	No Expertise	12	28.6%
Group Role	Leader	6	14.3%
	Follower	30	71.4%
	Loose Associate	6	14.3%

Table 2 shows that 23.8% (10) of the profiles were involved in executing acts of terrorism, followed by 19% (8) who were suicide bombers, 14.3% (6) who were recruiters, 7.1% (3) who were weapon experts, and 4.8% (2) involved in terrorism financing. Additionally, 2.4% (1) were strategists, and the roles of 28.6% (12) were unknown.

In terms of group roles, 71.4% (30) of the profiles were followers, while 14.3% (6) were leaders, and another 14.3% (6) were classified as loose associates.

Belief System Theory Findings

Table 3: Belief System Theory Findings

Item	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Belief System Theory	Cognitive-oriented Radicalisation	4	9.5%
	Emotive-oriented Radicalisation	6	14.3%
	Faith-oriented Radicalisation	7	16.7%
	Action-oriented Radicalisation	25	59.5%

In Table 3, the majority of these profiles can be categorised under the classification of action-oriented radicalisation, accounting for 59.5% (25). This is followed by faith-oriented radicalisation at 16.7% (7), emotive-oriented radicalisation at 14.3% (6), and cognitive-oriented radicalisation at 9.5% (4).

Discussion

Demographic Pathways

The male profiles, predominantly exhibiting traits associated with masculinity, often sought to portray a hero-like persona, emphasizing dominance and viewing themselves as protectors of the Muslim VE group's ideology. They validated their beliefs through assertive and aggressive actions, driven by a need to prove their strength. They were also prone to risk-taking behavior, with their *syahid* life goals centered around engaging in *hijrah*, *jihād*, and achieving (martyrdom) in war-torn

countries. These masculine tendencies appear to stem from childhood trauma, including experiences of narcissism, low self-esteem, parental neglect, and distant relationships with their families and friends.

This pattern aligns with El-Muhammady (2023), who suggests that narcissism can lead individuals to strive for heroism to compensate for low self-esteem, seeking admiration through *jihād* as a source of pride (Taarnby, 2003), lacking empathy towards others, and feeling humiliated when not receiving the desired attention, a symptom of childhood emotional and psychological damage. In a terrorist context, this trait can be particularly dangerous, leading to aggressive or violent reactions in support of socio-political or religious causes (Hamden, Raymond, 2019). In contrast, the females in the identified profiles primarily joined Muslim VE groups due to *jihād al-nikāh*, which is often linked to facilitating their husbands' involvement.

The single-status individuals are often highly susceptible to recruitment due to their increased availability, limited responsibilities, and tendencies towards anti-social behavior, low self-esteem, and a lack of attachment. These traits often lead them to have ample free time, the majority of which is spent alone. Consequently, to seek validation and fill up their time, they become involved with Muslim VE groups.

In contrast, the profiled married individuals, particularly wives, were emotionally sensitive, with a high level of sympathy. Motivated by their relationship with the *mujāhidīn*, they would often marry them or follow their husbands in *hijrah* and *jihād* in Syria. Functioning primarily as caregivers to their husbands and families, they were willing to bring all their children to Syria in fulfilling their duties as wives and mothers.

The specific geographical or residential locations within the states of Selangor, Terengganu, Kelantan, Perak and Kedah also influenced their radicalisation process. This is due to their high rates of population growth, followed by the establishment of *sekolah pondok* and *madrasah*, and their remoteness or strategic position, particularly as they bordered Thailand, Myanmar, and Indonesia.

Group Recruitment

Group Expertise

Both executors and suicide bombers are responsible for orchestrating attacks or engaging in warfare; those profiled have carried out attacks

both within Malaysia and conflict-ridden countries like Syria and Iraq. Both groups exhibit specific traits in common, such as the desire for martyrdom, heroism, narcissism, and impulsive aggression—all justified under the banner of "purifying sins."

Recruiters, meanwhile, portray traits distinct from these two groups, such as being charismatic, good listeners, and "exemplifying" Islamic figures in their behavior. These traits are essential as they recruit new members, often from amongst their friends, families, and wives, ensuring success while they engage in propaganda of establishing the Islamic caliphate and helping the marginalised Muslims of Syria and Iraq to disseminate IS ideology using social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, and YouTube, as well as through *usrah* circles. After recruitment, executors will begin making use of the new members to arrange plans for terrorist acts—usually done by firstly facilitating travel by contacting the person-in-charge in Syria or Türkiye, and providing military training to the *mujāhidīn*.

Harboring the same traits of heroism and impulsive aggression as the executor and suicide bomber, strategists play the crucial role of facilitating travel for Malaysian militants to Syria and Iraq, often through Türkiye. The brief stop in Türkiye is common practice for Muslim VE groups, mainly to reduce the likelihood of detection by authorities. These individuals often choose to continue their journey using personal vehicles, enabling numerous Muslim VE groups to infiltrate Syria and Iraq without raising the suspicion of higher authorities.

The weapons experts are highly valued for their technological proficiency, and also desire martyrdom just as much as the executor and the suicide bomber. Two cases in particular—where one weapons expert was apprehended while attempting to smuggle arms intended for use by Muslim VE groups in Malaysia, and another was found to be in illegal possession of two homemade shotguns and corresponding ammunition—serve as compelling evidence of their radical inclinations. The heavy punishment, per Malaysian law, incurred by such crimes— whereby the unlawful possession of firearms is a criminal offense, and those found guilty of such acts may face imprisonment—does not exactly deter them from committing the crime. Apart from their expertise, they are especially valued for their involvement in aiding the money-laundering activities of Syrian extremists.

Group Role

The leaders from amongst these roles are appointed based upon traits such as a charismatic leadership style, heroism, narcissism, recognition as an "exemplary" Muslim figure, and a notably high dedication in pursuing *jihād* and martyrdom amongst group members. These traits would prove persuasive in the recruitment and indoctrination of further members to join Muslim VE groups. Within their hierarchical structure—and also for security reasons— the number of leaders were notably less when compared to the followers.

Their followers, on the other hand, all possess the common traits of low self-esteem, less sociableness, the craving for validation and a sense of belonging, high sympathy towards Muslims in Syria, impulsive aggression, and anti-government and anti-Western tendencies. For operational purposes, their numbers are comparatively higher than leaders, which is essential for various tasks including recruitment and execution. The specific subset of women within this group would join Muslim VE groups merely for *jihād al-nikāh*, of following their husbands to Syria for martyrdom. The common traits possessed by these women include limited knowledge about IS, a high level of self-empathy, impulsive aggression, and the desire for marriage.

Belief System Theory

Cognitive-oriented Radicalisation Theory

Cognitive-oriented Radicalisation Theory describes the incipient inclinations of association with extremist groups via exposure to related paraphernalia. Most of the profiles can be classified under this theory, as they were detained in the early stages of radicalisation for their association with images, books, and flags related to Muslim VE groups, as well as postings made in IS-affiliated social media channels.

Their actions typically occur at the mental level and would not yet approach actual violence. The associations described show that these individuals are often motivated by their sympathy for Muslims in Syria who have experienced aggression, ethnic cleaning, alienation, discrimination, and marginalization. In response, their cognitive processes led them to entertain and later support the idea of performing *hijrah* and *jihād* alongside the Muslims in Syria to defend them against perceived enemies.

Emotive-oriented Radicalisation Theory

Emotive-oriented Radicalisation Theory involves the use of strong emotional justifications to rationalise the acceptance and tolerance of violence. This form of radicalisation is driven by emotions like sympathy, anger, revenge, humiliation, and the desire to "get even". Operating at the emotional level, their actions may or may not lead to actual acts of violence. As stated by El-Muhammady (2021), individuals in this category may express sentiments such as, "I feel sympathy towards the oppressed" or "Revenge is the best way to tell the oppressors to stop messing up with us".

Most of the identified were females who desired *hijrah* for *jihād al-nikāh*, motivated by an obsession towards the *mujāhidīn* and the desire to become caregivers to them as wifes and mothers. Most of the profiles attributed their quest to the need for self-belonging or a sense of life purpose. Muslim VE groups use narratives that prey upon such inclinations, promising the women empowerment and a sense of purpose through marriage (*jihād al-nikāh*) and facilitating the husband whilst in Syria.

These actions occur at the emotional level and have not yet approached actual violence. These individuals are often motivated by their love towards their husband, children, and future husband who fought in Syria to overthrow the tyrannical government and establish the Islamic caliphate. In response, their emotive processes led them to support the idea of performing *hijrah* to Syria with the husband, children and future husband for *jihād*, where they would then play the role of the wife and/or mother figure.

Faith-oriented Radicalisation Theory

Faith-oriented Radicalisation Theory involves the use of religious or ideological justifications to accept violence. This form of radicalisation operates at the level of faith and ideology, and may or may not lead to actual acts of violence. As explained by El-Muhammady, individuals in this category use their faith or ideology to justify their acceptance of violence.

These profiles believed that performing *jihād al-nikāh* by marrying the *mujāhidīn* is an indicator of the highest level of faith that women can achieve. Their actions—occurring at the faith level, and may yet

approach actual violence—are often motivated by their faith towards Allah SWT. Responding to this, they believe that obedience to the command of marriage, as part of their faith processes, would lead them to marry the *mujāhidīn* in support of the idea of *jihād al-nikāh*.

Action-oriented Radicalisation Theory

Action-oriented Radicalisation Theory entails the use of actions to commit violence, often manifesting as acts of terrorism. This form of radicalisation involves the practical implementation of one's beliefs that result in violence or terrorism. As described by El-Muhammady (2021), it is characterised by the idea that actions speak louder than words: individuals subscribing to this belief system believe in the necessity of concrete action to achieve their goals.

Those identified were detained for their involvement in roles as executor, suicide bomber, recruiter, money-laundering facilitator, and *jihād al-nikāh.* Their actions have occurred at the most dangerous level of radicalisation: acts of violence at this level can have severe consequences for both the civilian and the nation. This is because their actions endorse the use of violence as a means to achieve their objectives, the violence generated making it the most dangerous and impactful type of radicalisation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the pathways to radicalisation among Malaysian VE detainees from 2013 to 2020 reveal a complex interplay of demographic, group recruitment, and belief system factors. This study has underscored how radicalisation is rarely a product of a singular influence but often a cumulative process shaped by vulnerabilities, socio-political grievances, identity struggles, and, in some cases, persuasive recruitment tactics. The inclusion of the Ulu Tiram case provides a concrete example of these dynamics, illustrating how radical networks and extremist cells can operate within local communities, often going unnoticed until direct intervention occurs.

By profiling these detainees and examining cases like Ulu Tiram, the research highlights the nuanced ways in which familial, religious, and societal challenges, contribute to the appeal of radical ideologies. This case study offers critical insights into designing more targeted and effective Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE)

interventions in Malaysia. By focusing on early identification, community-based programs, and comprehensive rehabilitation frameworks, stakeholders can mitigate the factors driving radicalisation and support sustainable pathways for deradicalisation and reintegration. Ultimately, a multi-dimensional approach—incorporating community engagement and educational reform—is essential to addressing the root causes and pathways of radicalisation in Malaysia

Limitations and suggestions for future studies

While this study has provided valuable initial insights into the profiles of individual radicalisation in Malaysia, it also has limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed. Firstly, discrepancy in the information between Muslim media, newspapers and Western sources. This biased have affected the reliability and validity of the profiles of terrorism related offences.

Additionally, there were limitations in accessing data. The researcher was unable to access data from the Malaysian Prison Department, Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), and Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) due to confidentiality concerns. This limited access prevented confirmation of whether the profile details matched those recorded by these agencies, leading to incomplete data collection. Therefore, it is proposed that Malaysia develop its own Profile of Individual Radicalisation to gather data findings and facilitate researchers and policymakers in handling and predicting the terrorism threat in Malaysia.

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7. References should be alphabetically ordered. Some examples are given below:

Book
In-text citations:
Al-Faruqi & al-Faruqi (1986)

Reference:
Al-Faruqi, I. R., & al-Faruqi, L. L. (1986). *The cultural atlas of Islam*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Chapter in a Book
In-text:
Alias (2009)

Reference:
Alias, A. (2009). Human nature. In N. M. Noor (Ed.), *Human nature from an Islamic perspective: A guide to teaching and learning* (pp.79-117). Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press.

Journal Article
In-text:
Chapra (2002)

Reference:
Chapra, M. U. (2002). Islam and the international debt problem. *Journal of Islamic Studies, 10*, 214-232.

The Qur'ān
In-text:
(i) direct quotation, write as 30:36
(ii) indirect quotation, write as Qur'ān, 30:36

Reference:
The glorious Qur'ān. Translation and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali (1977). US: American Trust Publications.

Ḥadīth
In-text:
(i) Al-Bukhārī, 88:204 (where 88 is the book number, 204 is the ḥadīth number)
(ii) Ibn Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 1

Reference:
(i) Al-Bukhārī, M. (1981). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.
(ii) Ibn Ḥanbal, A. (1982). *Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*. Istanbul: Cagri Yayinlari.

The Bible
In-text:
Matthew 12:31-32

Reference:
The new Oxford annonated Bible. (2007). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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