

## Another Face of Puritan Islam: Muhammadiyah and Radicalism among the Youth



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**ABSTRACT:** The relationship of Muhammadiyah and radicalism has been both exaggerated or denied by a number of observers and Muhammadiyah's inner circles respectively. In the lights of these two opposing views, this research seeks to investigate connections, possible links, and types of relationships between Muhammadiyah and radicalism among the youth in Indonesia. It assesses and compares Muhammadiyah's religious doctrines with those of radical Islam's. The paper confirms certain intersections between Muhammadiyah and radical Islam doctrines. Based on the case of radical Islamic movements in Lamongan, East Java, this research finds that the radical doctrinal intersections do not automatically transform into radicalism in Muhammadiyah milieu, but they developed and advanced outside Muhammadiyah. This relationship is referred to as "elementary relationship". When the radical potential developed, those radicalised activists subsequently separated from Muhammadiyah and left for a more radical Islamic groups. This stage is called "separation". However, when those activists have fully transformed into radicals, some of them returned to Muhammadiyah, not to rejoin the organization, but to correct Muhammadiyah's religious doctrine that they perceive as false, and at the same time persuade Muhammadiyah's youth to join radical Islamic fronts. This type of relationship is termed as "return-for-salvation". Furthermore, this paper also reveals that Muhammadiyah youth, especially those who are involving in Muhammadiyah autonomous organizations do not show radical tendency, although some of them are sympathetic to radical Islam agendas.

**KEYWORDS:** Muhammadiyah, Puritanism, Youth, Radicalism.

### INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, it is frequently take place that state apparatus were attacked by unidentified people or group of people. In this regard, identification of those who are involved in such attacks has also conveyed many other messages, including the connection of those "young terrorists" with certain groups and ideologies. *Pesantren* affiliated to modernist-puritan Islamic groups are generally the first to be accused. Nahdlatul Ulama's (NU) national chairman, Said Aqil Siradj, for instance, declared the absence of NU's *pesantren* in producing radicals, but at the same time pointed to other Islamic groups' ones. "Most of them (radicals) are from there," he concluded.<sup>1</sup> Although it was unclear to what group Siradj referred, it cannot be denied that while he accepted the fact of connectivity of certain *pesantren* with radicalism, he was attempting to secure NU's position by giving emphasis that those are other Islamic groups' *pesantren*, not NU's.

Siradj's attitude is not unique, and it has become common to connect radicalism to certain Islamic groups, including Muhammadiyah (Najib and Wahyudi 2009). In specific reference to Muhammadiyah, there are two facts that serve as the basis of this belief. Firstly, certain names involved in radical Islam's activities are allegedly connected to Muhammadiyah, although further investigations have never been conducted as to what extent those connections are. Secondly, Muhammadiyah is an Islamic movement that seeks to purify Islamic teachings from the influences of local traditions and cultures (Saleh 2001, 107); Qodir 2010, 76). This nature has led some observers thus tend to see it as a Wahhabi-like Islamic group that, as Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia, is often pointed as an important force in the formation of global jihadism (Turmudi 2004, 41; Puthena 2007, 384). One limitation with this analysis is that it neglects two overriding facts, namely: a) that Muhammadiyah is not an Islamic group with a single face; and b) that during one century of its existence, it is experiencing ideological evolution and intensely vibrant internal dynamics.

The objective of this paper is to examine the connections, possibilities and types of relationships between Muhammadiyah and Islamic radicalism among youth in Indonesia. It seeks to answer the question of whether Muhammadiyah is involved in proliferating Islamic radicalism based on the understanding of the term in current socio-political settings. Furthermore, it also aims at discovering the doctrinal affinities and ideological proximities might exist between Muhammadiyah and radicalism by assessing both parties' puritanical stances and to what extent and in what ways they influenced the faltering revival of Islamic radicalism. In

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.al-khilafah.org/2012/09/said-aqil-siradj-sebut-beberapa.html>, accessed on September 25, 2012.

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In addition, the paper will also evaluate the views of some Muhammadiyah youth activists on the topics of the nature of radicalism, the association of Muhammadiyah and radicalism, Islamic state, and formalization of *shari'a* in Indonesia.

Systematically, this paper is organized in the following ways. The first part is the introduction followed by examples of complex dynamic of radicalism in a predominantly Muhammadiyah region, based on a case study in Lamongan, East Java. The Lamongan experience of Islamic radicalism might be unique compared to Muhammadiyah in other regions, but assessing this development can suggest that the dynamics of radicalism among the youth in Muhammadiyah is non-monolithic and substantially dependent on local circumstances, social interactions and even individual motivations. The following section moves into a discussion on the nature of Muhammadiyah movement and contemporary Islamic radicalism, followed by comparisons and contrasts of both Muhammadiyah and radical Islamic groups' doctrines. The transformation from Muhammadiyah doctrines to radicalism is then analysed and constitutes the last part of the paper.

### EMERGING RADICALISM: THE LAMONGAN CASE

Lamongan, a region situated at the northern part of East Java Province, Indonesia, is well-known as one of the strongest Muhammadiyah bases. Lamongan-type Muhammadiyah is significantly influential in shaping the model and orientation of East Javanese Muhammadiyah in general. Compared to other areas, East Javanese Muhammadiyah is more puritanical and immoderate, as a result of, among other factors, the diaspora of Lamongan-born figures in Muhammadiyah leadership throughout the province. According to Syafiq Mughni, the former chairman of East Java Muhammadiyah Provincial Board (*Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah Jawa Timur*), the puritanical stance of Lamongan-origin Muhammadiyah leaders is determined by the fact that Lamongan was one of the central basis for Masyumi, on the one hand, and the fact that many of Muhammadiyah leaders studied at fundamentalist *pesantren* of Persis in Bangil, East Java (Ricklefs in Fealy and White 2008, 124). Being acknowledged as the center for the Muhammadiyah movements, however, Lamongan's image has recently changed: it is now often associated with radical Islamic movements based on the fact it is a place where three-brothers of devastating Bali bombers, Amrozi, Mukhlas and Ali Imron, were born and raised. When police captured Amrozi, one key perpetrator of Bali bombing, shortly after the Bali blast in 2002, it was hard to believe that a villager living in a very remote, peaceful and religious area of Lamongan was involving in terrorist acts such as Bali bombing. Nevertheless, it is a fact that nobody can deny, and the arrest was only a beginning for more dramatic episodes of radical Islamic movements in Indonesia, in general; and in Lamongan, in particular. Furthermore, it has created numerous puzzling questions. Some of them might have been resolved, but many are still unanswered.

Since the family where Amrozi and his brothers grew up is the follower of Muhammadiyah (Reslawati; Amrozi 2009), the discourse of Islamic radicalism in Lamongan cannot be separated from this organization. Consequently, speculations begin to circulate on what contribution Muhammadiyah has paid in forming their radicalism. Educationally, Amrozi spent some years studied at *Madrasah Aliyah* (Islamic Senior High School) Muhammadiyah Karangasem in Paciran, although he did not complete the education and left for Malaysia soon after his drop-out from the school.<sup>2</sup> The same situation happened to Ali Imron. In his memoir, Imron wrote that he attended Muhammadiyah Secondary School (SMP) at Karangasem, but then moved to *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* Muhammadiyah in Payaman, Lamongan. Initially, he wanted to pursue Islamic knowledge at al-Mukmin Boarding School, Ngruki, Solo. However, due to financial constraint that his parent faced, he finally went to *Madrasah Aliyah* Muhammadiyah in Paciran which located some kilometres from his village (Imron 2004).

After six years drama of arrest, court trial and detainment, Amrozi and Mukhlas were finally sentenced to death. Ali Imron, on the other hand, entitled to life-imprisonment as a result of his cooperative attitude during the process of court trial and, more substantially, his significant mental and ideological transformation. Imron acknowledged that what he had committed was a monumental mistake and confessed his regret repeatedly (Imron 2004). Amrozi and Mukhlas, in contrast, insisted that the bombing is right from the *shari'a* point of view since it was a form of *jihād*.<sup>3</sup> The capital punishment was finally imposed on November 9, 2008 in a remote place of Nusakambangan Island, Central Java. The authority then sent the bodies of these siblings to their family and they were buried in the village of Tenggulun, Lamongan. Interestingly, the effect that the execution has brought might surprise many people.

Personally, I am of the opinion that the execution would bring positive impacts on the eradication of radical aspiration among the youth. In fact, I am not the only one who holds such an opinion. Some members of Muhammadiyah Youth Movement (*Pemuda Muhammadiyah*) in Blimbing, Lamongan, for example, were also optimistic about the efficacy of the execution for eradicating the seeds of radicalism among Muslim youth in Lamongan, especially Muhammadiyah young generation. At least, it

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<sup>2</sup> Reslawati, "Dinamika..."

<sup>3</sup> For example, this video is interesting to watch in order to understand the Bali bombers' principle of *jihād*.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nsl1IJ\\_tuqQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nsl1IJ_tuqQ)

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can be seen as an evidence that involving in terrorism and radical acts by the name of Islam is socially costly.<sup>4</sup> However, this conviction was suddenly challenged. The fact is, rather than creating a wary-effect for the younger generation in the region, Amrozi and his brother Mukhlas were widely admired and praised as holy martyrs by many locals<sup>5</sup> including some Muhammadiyah leaders, although in general, their attitudes towards the execution are diverse. A local Muhammadiyah leader in Brondong, Lamongan, for instance, expressed his admiration to Amrozi after joining enormous mass crowd attending his burial. "He was a real *syahid* (martyr). It is a big loss for those who missed this moment," said the leader.<sup>6</sup> It is not an exaggeration, therefore, to conclude that the execution has ignited the new spirit of *jihad* among local youth in north Lamongan, especially the subdistrict of Paciran and Brondong.

As have been mentioned earlier, radicalism is almost always connected to Islamic boarding schools. In this regard, the Bali bombing has brought *Pondok Pesantren al-Islam*, an Islamic boarding school in the village of Tenggulun, Lamongan, into the fame. Although according to a research, police has failed to establish a conclusion of the boarding school's involvement in radicalism (Turmudi and Sihbudi 2005), it still plays prominent roles in consolidating more solid radical outlook of Islam in north Lamongan. In order to understand this claim, it is indispensable to scrutinize several striking developments currently taking place in other villages in the northern part of Lamongan.

For example, in the village of Sedayulawas, indications of the increasing popularity of radical Islamic tendency cannot be denied. Has long been known as a village where Muhammadiyah is the single Islamic force dominates all sectors of life in the village, recently it witnessed an unprecedented emergence of radical tendency. This new trend cannot be separated from the founding of a *pesantren*, known as a branch of *Pesantren al-Islam*, Tenggulun, Lamongan, called *Pesantren al-Ikhlash*. This boarding school is under the leadership of Dipo Kusumo, originally from Jakarta, who has close relationships with Ali Imron and his group. Ustadz Dipo, as people usually address him, was imprisoned for about three years under the charge of helping Ali Imron to hide and escape from the police as well as to store some ammunition (Imron 2004, 138; Soenarko 2006, 112). He studied at *Pesantren al-Mukmin* Ngruki and was a teacher at *Pesantren al-Islam* before the founding of *Pondok Pesantren al-Ikhlash* in Sedayulawas and assuming its leadership.

It is inevitable that the presence of *Pesantren al-Ikhlash* has changed the landscape of religious life in the village of Sedayulawas and the subdistrict of Brondong. Following *al-Ikhlash* founding, it is now common to see women in black *burqa* in the streets of Sedayulawas, Brondong and surrounding villages. In the previous decades, many people would not imagine this scene will take place in this region due to its strong Muhammadiyah domination. In the future, the likeliness of other women, especially from the youth, to follow this path is considerably high. Surely, this is only a superficial indication that cannot be judged as such. However, a more substantial change followed this indication. Many young people who most of them studied under Muhammadiyah educational institution previously, are now transforming into more "Islamised" outlook and dare to challenge local Muhammadiyah authorities and question the validity of certain religious stances that have long been established as Muhammadiyah's religious doctrines.<sup>7</sup>

Other than Kusumo, another leading figure of the *Pesantren al-Ikhlash* worth-mentioning is Hamim Thohari who is allegedly play indirect role in the Bali bombing which resulted in his two years imprisonment (Imron 2004; Polri 2004, 170). Thohari is not originally from Sedayulawas. He was born and raised in a small hamlet around one kilometre from *Pesantren al-Ikhlash* called Mencorek, which since 1970s has also been dominated by modernist ideology. In his young ages, he was a leader of a local Muhammadiyah adolescence association as well as an organization of Muslim youth associated with a local mosque. Nothing was different with young Thohari. After getting married to a Sedayulawas woman, in order to finance his family, he sold his skill as a carpenter and did not maintain any connection with Muhammadiyah circles since then. Almost nobody was aware of Thohari's ideological transformation, until the police finally arrested him.

Unsurprisingly, Thohari's capture was shocking news, and many people were puzzling the origin of Thohari's radical stance. After his release from prison, he is back to *Pesantren al-Ikhlash* and is now becoming much more active and enthusiastic in spreading radical ideology, especially among the youth. As the case with Amrozi's execution, radical activists' imprisonment seems to fail in deradicalizing them. Contrarily, it can even be seen as a moment where the strengthening and consolidation of radical sentiment took place (ICG 2007). Radicals connected to *Pesantren al-Ikhlash* are extremely aggressive in persuading the youth to follow their pathways. However, the responses from the youth are diverse. Many of them decided to join the radical call due the

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<sup>4</sup> Discussion with a group of Muhammadiyah Youth Movements (Pemuda Muhammadiyah), Paciran Branch, in Paciran Lamongan, 18 November 2008. Among prominent members of this organization are, among others, Nukman Suhadi, Wariono, Saiful Ulum, Burhanuddin, and Farikhul Anam.

<sup>5</sup> Praise and admiration to Amrozi and Muklas as martyr can be found in many websites. Among those are: <http://usaha-kita86.blogspot.sg/2012/03/peristiwa-saat-pemakaman-amrozi-csgaib.html>, accessed on 25 September 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Personal communication with a local Muhammadiyah leader. The leader minds to be named.

<sup>7</sup> Based on personal observation in the Village of Sedayulawas and Hamlet of Mencorek in Brondong, Lamongan.

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identity crisis and disappointment to local Muhammadiyah leaders' attitude. However, many of them critically questioned the call and see the radical call as promoted by Dipo, Thohari and his group does not make any sense.<sup>8</sup>

Other than the village of Sedayulawas in subdistrict of Brondong and the village of Tenggulun in subdistrict of Solokuro, neighbouring villages of Blimbing and Paciran (both are administratively under subdistrict of Paciran) are also witnessing similar trend with different actors. The subdistrict of Paciran is currently experiencing an unprecedented development, namely the presence of *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI) or Islamic Defender Front in the villages of Blimbing and Paciran. As FPI in any other places, FPI in these two places is also notorious for its violent approach against the *munkar* (vices).<sup>9</sup> Established in July 2005, FPI in the subdistrict Paciran claims to have five hundred to one thousand followers. In his article, Chaider Bamualim of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, presents an interview with FPI Leader Habib Rizieq Syihab, stating that members of FPI do not have any connection with members of any other organisations such as Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam (Bamualim 2011, 272).

However, in the Lamongan experience, this claim is not the case. As north Lamongan is a predominantly Muhammadiyah region, it is inevitable that most FPI members are associated with this group. More importantly, the former vice commander of FPI is a prominent activist of Muhammadiyah in Paciran and holds several significant posts within the organization. Similarly, in the village of Blimbing, the current FPI leader is a person who in 2005-2007 was a chairman of *Pemuda Muhammadiyah*. Although he was part of Muhammadiyah, after joining FPI he is often involved in tensions with Muhammadiyah members over certain issues and principles.<sup>10</sup>

### POSSIBLE INTERSECTIONS

On the basis of this case study, it is essential to investigate how such new penchants appear in a predominantly Muhammadiyah region. One possible approach is by comparing Muhammadiyah's religious doctrines and those of radical Islam groups' in order to examine the connections might exist between the two. However, before moving into comparison and contrast, dealing with definition of radicalism and making clear the meaning of radicalism this article refers to is fundamental.

As any other controversial terms, Islamic radicalism is highly contested. It is frequently confused with other labels such as Islamic fundamentalism, Islamic revivalism, militant Islam, Islamism, and Islamism. Unsurprisingly, radicalism can also have diverse meanings such as extremism, revolutionary acts, and utopia (McLaughlin 2012, 9-10). Similarly, association of radicalism with different contexts such as the left, liberalism and socialism is also common. "But since the term is relative, any fundamental criticism of or assault on existing practices can reasonably be termed radical" (Smelser and Baltes [eds], 2001, 12723).

In relation to fundamentalism, radicalism cannot be distinguished from it in a clear-cut limit. One scholar defines fundamentalism as a combination of political and religious radicalism. It "constitutes a distinct, specific, modern social movement and ideology promulgating adherence to a strict and intense interpretation of a scripture or holy text" (Turner [ed] 2006, 220). This definition underlines a radical element of fundamentalism. Moreover, Islamic fundamentalism is also "political-religious movement which explicitly rejects all forms of secularization and which aspires to social order whose 'fundament' is Islamic law" (Hafez 2010, 3). Similarly, radical Islam is also described as "irrational zealots inspired by a warped interpretation of Islam that transmogrifies edicts of peace into demands for violence" (Wiktorowicz 2005). Considering this varied understanding of the term, what I refer to as radical Islam groups in this paper are those who use religious reasons for political purposes, adhere to strict meanings of the scripture, politically assertive, utopian and exclusive in thinking, aspiring for formalisation of Islamic law and the founding of an Islamic state (Hilmy 2010; Eliras 2004).

Regarding Muhammadiyah, the foremost of its entire religious stance is its puritanical and reformist inclination. In this relation, if the socio-religious backdrop at the time of Muhammadiyah's founding is taken into account, four contexts can be identified. Those are: firstly, the syncretic practices and the lack of reasons in understanding religious doctrines among Javanese in particular and Indonesian Muslims in general. Secondly, the fact that the Muslim world experienced stagnation of thought that is often technically called as the shut of *ijtihad* gate. Thirdly, as a consequence, this led to an acute fanaticism among followers of certain schools of law (*mazhab*). Lastly, political backdrop of Dutch colony in Indonesia. Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, responded to these challenges through several proposals such as rationalization of religious doctrines and practices, *tajdid* or the purification of Islamic teaching from un-Islamic elements, the call for *ijtihad*, back to the Qur'an and Sunnah, and competition or adaptation.

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<sup>8</sup> Personal communication with Falahi Mubarak, member of Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah, the Hamlet of Mencorek, Brondong, Lamongan.

<sup>9</sup> <http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2008/06/24/16323741/fpi.lamongan.beraksi.kembali>, <http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2008/08/12/058130531/Dua-Anggota-FPI-Lamongan-Jadi-Tersangka>, accessed on 26 September 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Nukman Suhadi, chairman of Pemuda Muhammadiyah, in Blimbing, Lamongan, 9 October 2012.

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### *Religious Understanding*

In dealing with the lack of reasoning in understanding Islam, Dahlan proposed a new way of interpreting religious doctrines that harmoniously combined reason, text and context. The harmony was one of the most fundamental keys in Muhammadiyah's endurance, although recently this harmony has been seriously debated by Muhammadiyah internal circles (Zulian 2007). In terms of social life, Dahlan faced the challenges of modernisation, on the one hand, and traditionalism and Javaism (*Jawaisme*), on the other. Dahlan responded modernism with the launching of educational reforms (Kuntowijoyo 2000), while traditionalism and *Jawaisme* challenges were tackled through purification of Islamic teachings that have been corrupted by local cultures and traditions. This is manifested in an anti-syncretism doctrine which seeks to fight against *takhayul* (myth), *bid'ah* (heresy), and *churafat* (syncretism). However, this doctrine has brought a serious consequence, since from this doctrine accusation of Muhammadiyah as the enemy of local traditions and cultures originates (Chamim and Baidhawiy 2003; Sutiyono 2010).

Furthermore, it is from this fact that frequent association of Muhammadiyah with Wahhabism appears. As have been widely known, Wahhabi puritanical stance has made this movement notorious as the destroyer of sites and cultural symbols regarded as sources of *shirk* and potential polluter of *tawhid* (Bas 2004, 20). Wahhabism rejects the concept of Saints and prohibits Muslim from visiting their tombs (Glassé and Smith 2002). In this respect, Muhammadiyah's purification is similar to Wahhabism. However, pointing Muhammadiyah as merely another face of Wahhabism in Indonesia might be misleading. I believe that Wahhabi movement can be understood in two broad terms: ideological or faith and political. In this respect, Muhammadiyah took its inspiration from Wahhabism in ideological or faith aspects but, not in the political realm.

Although some observers often relate radicalism to Wahhabism, not all scholars are in agreement regarding the contribution that Wahhabism has paid on Islamic radicalism or global jihadism. Natana J DeLong-Bas offers a dissenting view:

“Global jihadism continued to provide ideological and religious inspiration, but each society had its own specific issues that had to be addressed. The common points were the goals of overthrowing existing infidel government via armed jihad and creating Islamic states to take their places. *It was this global vision, not the missionary activities of Saudi Wahhabis, that resulted in civil wars and armed insurrections...*” (emphasis is mine) (Bas 2004, 268).

Therefore, the connection of Muhammadiyah in term of ideology and faith does not automatically lead Muhammadiyah to be politically radical.

In contrast to Muhammadiyah, radical Islam adopts exclusive thinking and utopian ideas. However, they share similar attitudes towards local cultures and traditions (McLaughlin 2012, 9-10). As a manifestation of their exclusiveness, radical Islam groups see Islam as the only path and “Islamic system” as the most legitimate and authentic. As comprehensive way of life, Islam is an alternative system for ideologies, states and the economy. The exclusivism of radical Islam could also be linked to a tendency to regard other Muslims who adhere to other orientations of Islam as invalid or un-Islamic. This tendency is known as *takfir*. Abul A'la al-Mawdudi, one of the most influential radical Islam figures, views the struggle between Islamic and un-Islamic forces will eventually be resulted in the creation of Islamic state that will bring radical revolution within Muslim societies (Nasr in Rahmena 2005, 105-106). Many believe that the inspiration of radicalism is not coming from Wahhabi but more recent radical ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb and al-Mawdudi (Musallam 2005; Calvert 2010).

By relying upon utopia, in pursuing their goal, radicals “...describes not any particular set of aspirations and aversions, but a distance between what exists and what desired...”<sup>11</sup> For example, the notion of Islamic golden age is central to modern-radical Islam groups, although this is not an entirely novel notion (Ayoob 2008, 3). According to Karl Mannheim, utopian thinking occurs when people have a tendency to think out of reality or engaged in the construction of false realities. In other words, what exists in somebody's mind does not correspond with realities. In Mannheim's formulation: “A state of mind is utopian when it is incongruous with the state of reality within which it occurs.” In this context, Mannheim took realities as a determining factor in identifying whether certain mentalities and orientations can be labelled as “utopia” or not. He set a limit: “Only those orientations transcending reality will be referred to by us as utopian which, when they pass over into conduct, tend to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time” (Mannheim 1991, 52).

### *Interpretation of the Scripture*

Based on the belief in the importance of *ijtihad* and the use of reason in understanding religion, Muhammadiyah adopts *ijtihad* and *ittiba*<sup>12</sup> as its two most fundamental elements as *tajdid* (reform) movement.<sup>13</sup> In tandem with this, Dahlan addressed the

<sup>11</sup> See *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 12723.

<sup>12</sup> *Ittiba* is conscious following of one or more imams' teachings. Different from *taklid* that means imitative conformism, *ittiba* requires understanding of reason behind certain imams' teaching.

<sup>13</sup> However, there is a belief that Muhammadiyah never formally claimed itself as *tajdid* movement. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that in the earlier period (1912-1988), the *tajdid* formulation was never clearly stated in Muhammadiyah's official document. Instead, Muhammadiyah argues that *tajdid* is inherent to the nature of Islam. The conception of *tajdid* was later formulated at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Tarjih Council's National Congress in Malang (1989). According to this formulation, *tajdid* is described as *pembaharuan* (purification) and *modernisasi* (modernization). Purification is an attempt to preserve Islamic teaching from deviant and infidel

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problem of *taklid* by echoing the credo of *kembali kepada al-Qur'an and Sunnah* (back to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*), which declares Muhammadiyah's ideological autonomy from any Islamic schools of law and its insistence to refer all problems directly to these two primary sources. Again, this doctrine is parallel to that of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (Bas 2004, 229). In general, there are three modes of interpretation of the Qur'an adopted by Muslims, namely: literalist or textualist approach, semi-literalist or semi-textualist approach, and contextualist or progressive approach (Saeed 2006, 3-4).

The first approach interprets Qur'an as its literal meaning suggests and insists "the meaning of Qur'an is fixed and universal". For literalists, there is no room for elements of modernity to be incorporated into interpretation of the Qur'an. This nature slightly distinguishes the first from the second that is not entirely hostile to modernity. In contrast, the third method gives emphasis on "the socio-historical context of the ethico-legal content of the Qur'an" (Saeed 2006, 3). Using this category, the credo of 'back to Qur'an and *Sunnah*' approximately parallel with the second and the third orientations. The reason is that Muhammadiyah members subscribe to diverse religious orientations that form continuum of Islamic thought within this organization. Kuntowijoyo had identified this phenomenon when he asserted that Muhammadiyah's cry of 'back to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*' inherently embodies an ambiguous meaning of "limitation" and "liberation" (Kuntowijoyo 2000, xi-xx). By limitation, it suggests that Muhammadiyah is to refrain from any practices not explicitly dictated in the Qur'an and not exemplified by Prophet Mohammed. This is parallel to the first and second category. In contrast, by liberation, 'back to Qur'an and *Sunnah*' gives a greater opportunity to interpret Qur'anic formulation without fatalistic conformism to and fanatic dependence on any previous scholars' opinions. This is possible, since 'back to Qur'an and *Sunnah*' in "liberation" sense requires an adherence to principle and ethical values of Qur'an and not to its textual meaning. Kuntowijoyo believed, Dahlan practiced 'back to Qur'an and *Sunnah*' in liberation sense, while the majority of Muhammadiyah's members in the current context are practicing the credo in the limitation sense Maarif 2000, 19-20). In other words, the jargon of "back to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*" potentially leads to a scripturalist inclination.

Radical Islam groups, on the other hand, adopt textual understanding of Qur'an that can be parallelized with "limitation" sense in Muhammadiyah case. In the second category, Saeed includes radical Islam ideologues such as Sayyid Qutb and Mawlana Abul A'la al-Mawdudi.<sup>14</sup> Radical Islamic groups can be both the first or second categories. This is understandable, since radical Islamic groups are a continuum. As a result, they might share some basic traits, but could be slightly different on other respects. The second orientation constitutes the most likely possible meeting point of Muhammadiyah and radical groups, since some elements in Muhammadiyah can fall under the second model of interpretation. Theoretically, it cannot be denied that textual understanding of the text is one of the roots of radicalism. Tahir Abbas analyses, "Islamist group of Jihadi-Salafi orientation—those who possess a literal interpretation of Islam which inward-looking—are the essential driver" in radicalisation (Abbas 2007).

### *Attitude towards the West*

The next point of assessment is Muhammadiyah's attitude toward Dutch colonialism. Different from most Muslim leaders in his time, Dahlan did not take direct confrontation to the Dutch (Wahyudi 2002) that was regarded as enemy by Indonesian Muslims, in general. Rather, he took competition and adaptation approaches and treated Dutch as a partner and a source of inspiration as he did with Muhammadiyah health service (Mulkhan 2010, 1-2) and the education system. Sidel recorded this situation: "...Muhammadiyah, an association devoted to the development of modern schools, known as *madrasah*, which combined new form of religious instruction with the kind of Western-style schooling..." (Seidel 2003, 364).

Substantially, this indicates that Muhammadiyah did not encounter any fundamental problems with the adoption of Western-style modernization. As in education, "the modernist education promoted by Muhammadiyah fit well within the rubric of the Dutch 'Ethical Policy' of the early 1900s..."<sup>15</sup> This is another yardstick to measure the degree of Muhammadiyah's "involvement" in radicalism, since one of the most salient factors leading to Islamic radicalism is the feeling of being colonised by western power that culminated in the hatred to everything from the West. In other words, Muhammadiyah's attitude toward colonial power is one of the most notable contrasts that demarcate it for its radical counterparts.

In the post-independence period, nevertheless, the encounter of the West with Islam is no longer in the form of territorial colony. Rather, it manifests in the forms of influx of ideas originated from modern Western society such as democracy, pluralism, multiculturalism and secularism. Muhammadiyah's response to these challenges is non-monolithic. Regarding attitude towards democracy, for example, there are three broad categories of rejectionist, accommodationist and a position between the two (Fachrudin 2006). Although rhetorically Muhammadiyah members' attitudes towards democracy are contradictory to each other, in practical level, Muhammadiyah has implemented basic democratic values in its organizational dynamic. Syafi'i Maarif, as quoted

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influences, while modernization is aimed at interpreting, experiencing, and implementing Islamic values in social life. See Ahmad Jainuri, "Muhammadiyah dalam Dimensi Tajdid (Tinjauan Pemikiran Keagamaan)" (Muhammadiyah in Tajdid Dimension [Religious Thought Perspective]) in Maryadi and Abdullah Aly (eds), *Muhammadiyah dalam Kritik* (Criticism for Muhammadiyah) (Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2000); and "Tanfidz Keputusan Mukhtar Tarjih Muhammadiyah ke XXII" (The Codification of 22<sup>nd</sup> Muhammadiyah's Tarjih Council) *Berita Resmi Muhammadiyah*, special edition, 47-48.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

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by Saiful Mujani, asserted that one interesting sociological phenomenon in Muhammadiyah is its long-maintained democratic culture (Mujani 2007, 74-5). Muhammadiyah's non-monolithic response is also the case with religious pluralism (Zulian 2007). There are elements in Muhammadiyah, including the youth, that not only accept but also promote pluralism (Tarjih 2000), but those who reject pluralism are also active and even stronger (Hidayat [ed] 2005; Rais 2010).

In contrast, radical Islam groups are reactive and hostile towards everything seen as "corrosively secular, materialist, or deviationist forces" and anything western (Fealy 2004, 105). Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) strongly rejects democracy on the basis that this system is un-Islamic (2007, 51-60). In democracy people are the holders of sovereignty. In HTI's view, on the other hand, it is God who is the absolute holder of the sovereignty and *shari'ah* is the law that encodes this sovereignty (Yunanto 2003, 73). Based on this belief, by the time of the general election in 2009, HTI issued a *fatwa* circulated through its printed publication that election is forbidden (*haram*). Similarly, the FPI leader, Habib Rizieq also adopts this view. He points the comprehensiveness of Islam that makes it superior over democracy. By this claim, attributing Islam to democracy would mean as if Islam is inferior to democracy (Zada 2002, 136). Other example is given by Ken Ward. In his interview with one of jihadi activists, it is revealed that jihadists believe "democracy and the parliamentary elections due in April 2004 were idolatrous".<sup>16</sup> Hostile attitudes towards democracy are also inherent in other radical Islam groups such as Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, Laskar Jihad, NII, Jamaah Islamiyah or Forum Komunikasi Ahlusunah wa al-Jamaah (Fealy 2004, 104-121).

### *Islamisation of Society, Islamic State and Global Ummah*

Lastly, comparing Muhammadiyah and radical Islam groups can be achieved by analysing the degree of assertiveness in enforcing Islamic morality in the public sphere. While Muhammadiyah takes moderate position in Islamizing society, radical Islam groups are aggressive and extreme. Issue of *shari'a* formalisation is an evident example. For instance, during the last decade some bylaws are imposed to restrict women activities for *shari'a* reason. Indonesian National Commission for Women identified there has been at least 154 bylaws that put women in discriminative position. Among those is the obligation to wear the veil for all women in several parts of Indonesia such as in Bangkalan, Madura; and obligation of wearing a headscarf for civil servants in Bulukumba, Sulawesi. While any other regions such as Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Banten, Gorontalo, Central Java, East Java, Lampung, South Borneo, and North Sumatra have applied rules or bylaws that are potentially discriminatory against women.<sup>17</sup>

In a lesser extent, radical Islam's assertiveness also manifests in the form of sexual segregation in attending schools or religious classes, lectures or other public functions. Furthermore, the assertiveness of radical Islamic groups in public life is also evident from their strong demand for a stricter Islamic observance almost in all aspects of life. Such idea as Islamic economy can be attributed to this trend. According to Timur Kuran, the idea and practice of Islamic economy cannot be separated from revivalist tendency of Mawlana Abul A'la al-Mawdudi (Kuran 2004; Kuran in Marty and Appleby 1993, 302-341).

Although Islamic morality enforcement is necessary, it can basically be perceived as an intermediary goal towards the founding of an Islamic state which is the ultimate goal of any radical Islam groups. This doctrine is best described in term of *din wa dawlah*, a doctrine that Islam deals with not only religious matters but also sets the rule on how to run states. In this light, the separation of *din* (religion) and *dawlah* (state) is inconceivable. They are convinced that only with the establishment of an Islamic state, an "Islamic system" can be implemented. In the other version, the aspiration towards an Islamic state also followed by a tendency to unite Muslims around the world as one *umma* (Mutalib 1990; Roy 2006; Means 2009). By understanding this context, therefore, it can be easily understood why resistance towards Israeli occupation in Palestine and support to the Palestinian struggle over their independence widely circulated among revivalist Muslims in almost all parts of Muslim land.

Muhammadiyah young generation, on the other hand, are principally in agreement in responding the issue of Palestine. Afan Alfian, the former leader of *Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah* (hereafter will be referred to as IPM) in Lamongan, and Norma Sari, leader of the Central Board of Nasyiatul 'Aisyiyah (Muhammadiyah's Women Youth Section, hereafter will be referred to as NA) both assert that, as Muslims, solidarity to Palestine should be shown. However, both Alfian and Sari strongly reject physical involvement to support the war in Palestine.<sup>18</sup> Other activist such as Ali Muthohirin, the chairman of *Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah* (hereafter will be referred to as IMM) contends that solidarity to Palestine is not merely based on shared identity as Muslims, but on humanitarian solidarity. In a relatively dissenting formulation, Danik Eka, the leader of Central Board of IRM, argues that since the support that America granted to Israel is political, the Muslim world has also support Israel politically.<sup>19</sup>

Regarding Islamisation of society, Muhammadiyah does not struggle for formalisation of *shari'ah* or support the founding of an Islamic state. Syafi'i Maarif, the former leader of Muhammadiyah views Indonesian state philosophy, *Pancasila*, as has been adequately accommodative to Islamic values (Maarif 2010, 173). Current Muhammadiyah chairman, Din Syamsuddin, holds the

<sup>16</sup> Ken Ward, "Indonesian Terrorism: From Jihad to Dakwah?" in Greg Fealy and Sally White (eds), *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008), 218.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2010/01/29/063222253/Komnas-Perempuan-Desak-154-Perda-Diskriminatif-Dibatalkan>, accessed on 25 September 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Afan Alfian, 23 October 2012; and Norma Sari W, 9 November 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Danik Eka R, 3 November 2012.

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same principle by arguing that, for Indonesians, *Pancasila* is a final state foundation. However, regarding the growing trend of Islamic morality enforcement in the public sphere, a number of Muhammadiyah young activists show diverse tendencies, although some of them follow their senior counterparts' position. Ahmad Rasyidi, the chairman of IPM East Java Province, sees no urgency to found an Islamic state or formalise *shari'a*. He is convinced that Indonesia is already an "Islamic" state, since its state foundation, *Pancasila*, is deeply rooted in the Qur'an. As an evidence, Rasyidi explains that the first principle of *Pancasila* is derived from Surah al-Baqarah verse 255, the second is in accord to Surah al-Nisa' verse 135, the third principle took its inspiration from Surah Ali Imran verse 103, the fourth principle is mentioned in Surah al-Syura verse 38, the fifth is in Surah al-Nahl verse 90.<sup>20</sup> In a slightly different formulation, Arif Rahmawan, chairman of IMM Malang Chapter and Fauzi Ishlah of IMM Yogyakarta, share Rasyidi's view. Rahmawan accepts the incorporation of Islamic values into public policies, but he notes that due to multireligious and multicultural nature of Indonesia, bringing Islamic values into real life is much more relevant rather than formalising them.<sup>21</sup> Fauzi Ishlah, on the other hand, questions the conviction that *shari'ah* formalisation would be the solution for Indonesian multidimension problems. In Ishlah's words, Islamic symbols and jargon would not solve anything.<sup>22</sup>

Interestingly, sympathetic and supportive views towards formalisation of *shari'a* are also present among Muhammadiyah youth. Wijayanti, the leader of NA in Malang, asserts that in order Islamic law to take effects in society, formalisation is the only way.<sup>23</sup> In a similar tone, Wasis Prananto, chairman of IMM Chapter Ponorogo, shows his principle support to the formalisation of *shari'a*. At the same time, nevertheless, Prananto offers a quite liberal view. In his opinion, if *shari'a* and Islamic law should be formalised, the same rights has also to be granted to other religious groups.<sup>24</sup> More interestingly, within the same organization, Muhammadiyah youth also show different tendencies. While Wijayanti of NA Malang shows her support to formalization of *shari'a*, Norma Sari of Central Board of NA, Jakarta, adopts contradictory views. In her conviction, Islamic political system is a result of innovation and nothing sacred about it. In a case of pluralistic Indonesia, she believes that formulating a law that is based on living values within society is inevitable. In the light of this principle, she acknowledges that Islam is one of significant forces in Indonesian society, and for this reason, incorporation of Islamic values in society is also unavoidable. However, this does not necessarily mean that *shari'a* should be formalised.<sup>25</sup>

### RADICAL SHIFT

It is obvious from the above discussion that Muhammadiyah principally shares certain views with radical Islam groups. These intersections, however, are not directly shifted into radical actions as in Muhammadiyah case those doctrinal intersections are unable to overthrow the moderateness that still serves as the mainstream of this organization, although the existence of radical elements or those who are sympathetic to radical Islam's agendas should not be overlooked. Greg Fealy identifies the possibility of radical ideas to resonate among moderate Islam groups is high. While he acknowledges that certain Muhammadiyah's scholars such as Syafii Maarif, Amin Abdullah, and Munir Mul Khan are advocates of tolerance, the existence of sections in Muhammadiyah that are sympathetic to radical ideas should not be denied (Fealy 2004, 105).

Considering the doctrinal affinities as discussed earlier, the phenomenon identified by Fealy is not surprising. For the lack of a better term, I will call this doctrinal intersection as "elementary relationship" of Muhammadiyah and radical Islam. In other words, certain Muhammadiyah doctrines constitute the basic forces for several radical activists. Nevertheless, the process of maturation and fertilization of radical seeds taking place outside Muhammadiyah. Some Muhammadiyah young activists believe in this pattern. Ali Muthohirin of IMM East Java Province, for instance, does not reject the conclusion. However, he emphasizes that the formation of terrorist mentality did not take place within Muhammadiyah milieu, but in any other places.<sup>26</sup>

Likewise, Djihadul Mubarak, the chairman of Central Board of IMM in Jakarta, views the association as something usual, since factually some terror perpetrators have relation to Muhammadiyah. Nevertheless, Mubarak warns that it would be a careless generalisation to connect terrorism and radicalism to Muhammadiyah institutionally.<sup>27</sup> While shares similar point of views with Muthohirin and Mubarak, Arif Rahmawan of IMM Malang, proposes different analysis. In his examination, the doctrinal proximities of Muhammadiyah and radical Islam groups is nothing but the method Muhammadiyah takes to respect other organizations subscribing to different ideologies. As Mubarak, Rahmawan expresses his disagreement to any attempts to connect Muhammadiyah, as an organization, to Islamic radicalism.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Ahmad Rasyidi, 26 September 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Arif Rahmawan, 27 September 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Fauzi Ishlah, 16 October 2012.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Wijayanti, 11 October 2012

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Wasis Prananto, 29 September 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Norma Sari W, 9 November 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Ali Muthohirin, 13 October 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Djihadul Mubarak, 30 September 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Arif Rahmawan, 27 September 2012.

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In contrast, other Muhammadiyah youth activists mind to the conclusion. Wasis Prananto of IMM Ponorogo, sees the association of Muhammadiyah with radicalism as a merely political scenario, as a result of Muhammadiyah's critical attitudes towards the state, lately.<sup>29</sup> Such a rejection is also evident from the statement of Afan Alfian the former leader of IPM in Lamongan, and Nukman Suhadi, who is currently serving as the chairman of Pemuda Muhammadiyah in Blimbing, Lamongan. Both agree that association of Muhammadiyah with radicalism is part of attempts to denigrate Muhammadiyah's image.<sup>30</sup> In a bolder phrase, Rasyidi of IPM East Java Province even qualifies the association of Muhammadiyah and radicalism as a "*fitnah*". He asserts that the factors that trigger radicalism are multiple, including the thought-illness of the terrorists; tendency to confuse the truth from the false (*kebatilan*), wrong method in studying religion (*manhaj al-talaqqi*), and interpreting the text in highly strict manner without adequate understanding of other branches of Islamic knowledge. Based on this, Rasyidi disagrees with the views that radicals perpetrated their violence based on Islamic teachings and in the name of Islam. Interestingly, among these arguments, there is also a nihilist view adopted by Wijayanti of NA Malang, who believes that terrorism never exist. Terrorism, Wijayanti points out, is the accusation of the West to Islam. In fact, America is the real terrorist, concludes Wijayanti.<sup>31</sup>

Interestingly, apart from these two contradictory positions, there is also a neutral position as adopted by Fauzi Ishlah of IMM Yogyakarta and Danik Eka R of Central Board of IRM, Jakarta. Ishlah, for instance, acknowledges that he possesses insufficient information regarding Muhammadiyah youth's involvement in terrorism, and based on this he refuses to make any judgement. However, he does not reject any possibility of this involvement, since everybody can adopt radicalism, especially those who are experiencing alienation, be it socially, economically, or politically.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Eka believes that anybody, especially young people, are all susceptible of being radicals due to their unstable stage of life.<sup>33</sup>

In order to understand this kind of relationship more clearly, it would be helpful presenting and analyzing Ali Imron's confession. In his memoir, he wrote:

...in the end of 1990... coincidentally my friends who resided in Pondok Pesantren Karang Asem organized a discussion, and I decided to participate. In the discussion, some *ustadz* were present who told us about the condition of Muslims around the globe including Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, the discussion was also followed by a screening of a video on the struggle of Muslims in some places, such as jihad activities in Palestine and Afghanistan.

From this point, my spirit was encouraged for better changes. I wanted to be more serious in worshipping (*ibadah*) and seeking for knowledge. I also had an obsession to take part in struggles in defence of Islam and Muslims from the perversity of their enemies as it happened in Palestine and Afghanistan (Imron 2004, 4).

This turning point has led Imron to contact his brother Ali Ghufron or Mukhlas who resided and run a pesantren in Malaysia. It was Ali Ghufron who paved the way for Ali Imron's *jihad* training in Afghanistan, and it was Afghanistan training that turned Imron's radicalism seeds into fruition. Therefore, it can be concluded that Imron's real radical turn did not occur in Muhammadiyah school of Karangasem, but through the encounter with his brother and Afghanistan trainings, although coincidentally the Muhammadiyah school has planted the seeds. Amrozi's case was also similar to this pattern. Afan Alfian, the former leader of IPM in Lamongan who has family connections with Amrozi, Mukhlas and Imron, shares his witness. He informs, the formation of their radical ideology was through involvement in wars and *jihad* training in such places as Afghanistan and Moro. Muhammadiyah, Alfian believes, never been directly involved in the formation of radical ideology.<sup>34</sup>

Regarding the "elementary relationship" mentioned earlier, it can be claimed that when those elementary ingredients of radicalism are twisted into a more solid and advanced ideological fabric; those activists, ideologically and organizationally, separated from Muhammadiyah. The disagreement occurred between Bali bomber-siblings with their older brother Khozin, who is a Muhammadiyah member, is an obvious evident of the separation. Khozin acknowledged that he principally disagreed with his brothers' involvement in the Bali bombing for several reasons. Firstly, in principle, Mukhlas frequently expressed his opposition to Khozin's involvement in Muhammadiyah, since the former viewed that it is useless. However, Khozin insisted that being part of Muhammadiyah is beneficial, especially in order to strengthen the network for the sake of *dakwah* (proselytization). Secondly, Khozin and his family not only disagreed but also blamed the involvement of his three siblings in Bali blast. However, he and his family finally could accept their decision on the basis that in attempts to find the truth, people can take different and even contradictory path. Lastly, it is appealing to reveal that Khozin and his family doubted quality of Amrozi's religiosity, and that he committed bombing in the name of Islam, since in his family members' view, Amrozi was a new learner of Islam (Turmudi and Sihbudi 2005, 150). This fact confirms theoretical formulation that radicals usually experience "cognitive opening" and "religious seeking" before joining radical groups.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Wasis Prananto, 29 September 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Afan Alfian, 23 October 2012 and Nukman Suhadi, 5 November 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Wijayanti, 11 October 2012

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Fauzi Ishlah, 16 October 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Danik Eka R, 3 November 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Afan Alfian, 23 October 2012.

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Interestingly, in the case of separation, when those who left Muhammadiyah for radical movements, have turned into established radical activists, they often see Muhammadiyah as a new object for *dakwah*. In the case of Sedayulawas village, it is evident that Thohari was part of Muhammadiyah before his radical turn. Nevertheless, after his release from the jail, he actively approaches Muhammadiyah youth and persuades them to follow his radical pathway. As have been indicated earlier, the responses to such an invitation are diverse. In general two types of response are common, namely those who accept the invitation and those who remain active in Muhammadiyah. Again, for the lack of a better term, I would term this phenomenon as “return-for-salvation”, that those who were formerly part of Muhammadiyah and separated, and now become radical, feel that they are called to save Muhammadiyah from elements they perceive as un-Islamic or bring Muhammadiyah to the true Islam.<sup>35</sup> In many cases, they manifest this call by openly challenging Muhammadiyah leaders or debating them over certain practices or interpretation of Islam.

It can be asserted that the followers of the first type are usually those who experience, to borrow Quintan Wiktorowicz’s term, the “cognitive opening”. In Wiktorowicz’s analysis, there are three reasons to join radical groups, those are identity crisis, cognitive openings and experience with religious seeking.<sup>36</sup> (Wiktorowicz 2005, 85-101). In the Lamongan case, although these three factors play determinant roles, another decisive cause should not be overseen, namely the feeling of alienation spread among the youth as the result of the exclusiveness tendency showed by the majority of Muhammadiyah local leaders.<sup>37</sup> This exclusiveness that led them to draw a demarcating line between Muhammadiyah and non-Muhammadiyah. Inevitably, it worsened the relationship between Muhammadiyah leaders and some youth elements whether those who are formally members of Muhammadiyah or those who were sympathetic to Muhammadiyah.

Unfortunately, most Muhammadiyah local leaders in the village of Sedayulawas and subdistrict of Brondong in general, seem to maintain this exclusiveness and rather than persuasively approach young generation who are experiencing cognitive openings and religious seeking, they tend to see them in cynical ways. If this situation persists, in the long run, Muhammadiyah will not be able to attract followers from the young generation. Alternatively, young generation will switch their preference to join radical groups that are currently at the beginning phase of their ascendance in north Lamongan. Moreover, radical Islam groups are usually aggressive in facilitating cognitive openings of youth through public demonstration and individual outreach (Wiktorowicz 2005, 92-3).

## CONCLUSION

The paper has demonstrated, argued for and posited the case of complex dynamics of relationships between Muhammadiyah and radical Islamism. To sum up, several points are essential to be underlined. First, many observers see Muhammadiyah, as puritan Islamic movement, as having connection with radical Islam groups without further elaboration on the extent and forms of the connection, and do not base this thesis on rigorous research. The accusation is mostly based on the fact that some radical Islam activists are connected to Muhammadiyah, for example, they were educated in Muhammadiyah schools, boarding schools or were Muhammadiyah youth activists. Second, this research found that the connection of Muhammadiyah and radical Islam groups are on doctrinal level. This doctrinal level serves as ingredients for radical mind. However, the turning into real radicalism did not nurture in Muhammadiyah milieu. I called this level of relationship as “elementary relationship”. However, the maturation of radical ingredient takes place outside Muhammadiyah as Amrozi’s and Ali Imron’s cases have proven. When they achieved maturation level, those activists will no longer regard themselves as parts of Muhammadiyah and opted to separate from Muhammadiyah.

Third, in the next stage, those who have been totally radicalised, often come back to Muhammadiyah, not to rejoin this organization, but with a claim to save Muhammadiyah from elements they perceive as un-Islamic. I termed this stage “return for salvation”. Those returning “saviour” targeting youth who are experiencing an identity crisis and cognitive openings for religious seeking on which radical Islam groups can provide facilities. On the other hand, Muhammadiyah local leaders continue to preserve their exclusiveness and often apply deterministic approach in dealing with other groups especially young generation, which in turn have facilitated radical turn of the young generation. @

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