

RADICAL ISLAMISM AS A MODE OF PRODUCTION¹

Masdar Hilmy

Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya, Indonesia
E-mail: masdar.hilmy@uinsby.ac.id

Abstract: This article attempts to provide a breakthrough which I call mode of production theory. This theory will be employed to analyze the contemporary phenomenon of radical Islamism. The mode of production theory is meant to bridge the two clashing theoretical paradigms in social sciences and humanities, i.e., Weberian and Marxian. Despite its bridging nature, the paper argues that the two cannot be merged within one single thread. This is because each paradigm has its own epistemological basis which is irreconcilable to one another. Mostly adapted from Marx's theory, the current theory of the mode of production covers five interrelated aspects, namely social, political, economic, cultural, and symbolic structures. If Marx's mode of production theory heavily relies on a material and economic basis, the theory used in this paper accommodates cultural and symbolic structures that are Weberian in nature. Although the two paradigms can operate together, the strength of structure (Marxian) overpowers the strength of culture (Weberian). This paper further argues that such cultural-based aspects as ideology, norms, and values play as mobilizing factors under a big schematic dominant structure in the rise and development of the radical Islamist groups.

Keywords: Radical Islamism, mode of production, culturalism, structuralism.

Introduction

The research on the theme above is driven by two conflicting paradigms in social sciences in explaining the issue of radical Islamism. The two paradigms seem to stand firmly in each position and play a zero-sum-game role: Weberian and Marxian paradigms. It

¹ This article is a translated and revised version of the working paper delivered in the writer's inaugural professorship held by Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 6 April 2016.

is the two paradigms that lately color the black-and-white picture of social sciences and humanities, with special reference to the Islamic radicalism studies. The battle of the two paradigms is often depicted as an irreconcilable mixture of water and oil. The two paradigms have also shaped the long repertoire of the study of radical Islamism. On the one hand, there is a bunch of scientists who employ and trust the Weberian paradigm as their theoretical framework in explaining the reality of radical Islamism. This school of thought is represented by scientists who put their emphasis on the assumption that ideology forms the major backbone of Islamic radicalism study. For Weberian scientists, ideology serves as the major explanation to all issues related to radical Islamism compared to non-ideology factors such as economy, politics and the like.

At the opposite end, however, a contender to the Weberian paradigm has to be taken into a serious account: Marxian paradigm. This paradigm can be regarded as an antithesis to the Weberian paradigm. Borrowing Daniel Bell's words, the role of ideology has ended in this postmodern age.² The era of ideology has ended as soon as the cold war between socialism and capitalism has ended. Supposedly, the ideology has a role in explaining the social phenomenon. Nevertheless, the role is only peripheral and subordinated under the structural analysis of historical materialism. To this school of thought, anything in terms of socio-political transformation starts from structural issues such as social dislocation, economic deprivation, political oppression, and the like. Amidst those structural issues, ideology sneaks up into the theoretical configuration of analysis. Without such structures, the Marxian argues that ideology plays no significant role.

It is within such a theoretical contest that an alternative middle-way theory is necessary in order to go beyond zero-sum-game theoretical battle. In terms of how such a middle-way theory is workable, this paper seeks to analyze the reality of Islamic radicalism from the perspective of production mode theory. It is, however, noteworthy that this theory is not a fusion of the two. Rather, it is a kind of theoretical framework that can accommodate the two paradigms in each position and both can "marry" in a particular meeting point. By arguing so, it does not mean that they can be

² Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1962).

merged into a single thread since each has its own epistemological basis. They can complement each other that at a particular point it can make a theoretical contribution to the study of radical Islamism.

Two Paradigms, Two (Conflicting) Narratives

Throughout their history, social sciences and humanities owe to the two lasting dominant theoretical paradigms: Weberian paradigm and Marxian one. The Weberian paradigm is attributed to its: Max Weber (1864-1920). This scholar has hit the landscape of social sciences since he published his magnum opus, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904).³ His theoretical construct was built upon the strength of ideas as well as ideology in building and transforming society. His axiom is: social change or transformation without idea or ideology is impossible.⁴ The core of social change is idea. Outside of humans' idea such as historical materialism comes later on. In other words, it is humans' brains that can change the world and not vice-versa. The idea serves as ordinate, and anything outside of the idea is its subordinate.

In light of the social sciences, Weber has inspired a great deal of scientists in developing his theoretical paradigm. Weber's students and followers have developed the core of human ideas in such a way that it turns out to be ideology, value, and culture. In Weberian sense, it is popularly known into such a "culture does matter."⁵ Culture has its central position in every human civilization. In this context, culture is treated autonomously compared to other aspects. On the same boat of the Weberian paradigm are those social scientists treat ideology within its position equivalent to culture. They assume that ideology and culture have an equally important position in the landscape of human civilization. This assumption is based on the argument that both ideology and culture are rooted in human's minds that leads to awareness and conception of everything.

Such a treatment of Weberian scientists to ideology and culture can lead to special treatment alike to value in human life as an intrinsic aspect. Even though the value is regarded as something

³ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2002).

⁴ Robert J. Holton and Bryan S. Turner, *Max Weber on Economy and Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 21-46.

⁵ See, for instance, Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington (eds.), *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

constructible, it has a central position in every human civilization. They argue that values created by a human being as taken for granted, and it has to do with the way human exists. In the Weberian perspective, value means existentialism. The existence of social order in society is therefore cannot be separated from social and cultural values as its backbone. It is such values that in turn shape the cultural identity of a particular community, be they in a positive sense or negative or pejorative one. For instance, the Japanese people are known for their work ethos, self-discipline, and respect for their traditions. Or the German people who are known as respectful of science and technology, the White Anglo-Saxon as the ancestral root for the United States of America's power, etc.⁶

Discussing the Weberian paradigm is inextricably linked to big names that contribute to the making of cultural anthropology, namely Clifford Geertz. This name has been one of the most persistent and vigorous students of Weber. It can be argued that Geertz is an icon for this paradigm. In social sciences, there is a great deal of big names equivalent to Geertz such as Talcott Parsons, an early student of Weber.⁷ It is through his hands that Weber was introduced to the world of social sciences. There are of course some other big names such as Victor Turner, Bryan S. Turner, Robert N Bellah, and so on. But among the students of Weber, it is in the hands of Geertz that the Weberian paradigm has developed so far into a separate hybrid discipline called cultural anthropology.⁸

Geertz's repertoire in social sciences had started when he undertook his ethnographic research in Pare in the 1950s. His dissertation on the religious variation of the Javanese Muslims has accompanied him as a respected scholar in social sciences and humanities. His dissertation was published and referred to by later generations of scholars: *The Religion of Java*—translated into Indonesian language by Aswab Mahasin into *Abangan, Santri, Priyayi dalam Masyarakat Jawa*.⁹ That book is not Geertz's last work in developing social sciences by means of the Weberian paradigm. His

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We?: America's Great Debate* (New York: Free Press, 2005).

⁷ Weber's work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904), was translated into English by Talcott Parsons in 1930.

⁸ Talal Asad, "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz", *Man*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (June 1983), 237-259.

⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

other book—consisting of an anthology of his articles published in several academic journals—which gives him a lot of academic credit is *The Interpretation of Cultures*.¹⁰ In that book, he espoused one of his monumental theories of “model of” and “model for” to describe the reciprocity lines of society’s understanding with the sacred texts on religion. The relation pattern between reality and the text is reciprocal that is interdependent to one another. For Geertz, religious understanding represents the “model of” the sacred texts, and the sacred texts represent the “model for” religious understanding of the society.¹¹

In a wider spectrum of social sciences, the Weberian paradigm is responsible for the birth of interpretive sociology. This framework refers to the epistemological framework that employs a subjective interpretation of a scholar on social facts. According to such a framework, there is no such thing as objective interpretation due to the fact that scientific articulation cannot be separated from the subjectivity of a scientist. Pioneered by Weber and further developed by Geertz, this paradigm relies on the strength of the subjective imagination of a scientist in describing a particular social phenomenon. What matters more in the social sciences research project is how to reveal hidden meaning under the surface social structure. According to Geertz, meaning constitutes the essence (*noumena*) behind the social phenomenon.¹² A particular research project is considered to have failed when a researcher can only describe what is happening at the surface structure of the social phenomenon, and not the *neumena*. It is such a theoretical framework that is called by Geertz as a “thick description”.¹³

At the opposite spectrum of the Weberian paradigm is its antithesis: Marxian paradigm. This paradigm is attributed to its widely reputable founder and pioneer, Karl Marx (1818-83). He represents one of the 19th-century most influential giant thinkers, especially after the publication of his magnum opus together with his colleague Friedrich Engels (1820-95): *Das Capital*. Despite the fact that Marx espouses his popular statement that “religion is opium of the society,” the theoretical paradigm he developed has also shaped the theoretical

¹⁰ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

¹¹ Ibid., 93-96.

¹² Clifford Geertz, *After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1995).

¹³ Geertz, *The Interpretation*, 3-30.

discourse on religion and society. One of the fundamental aspects of Marxian paradigm is its emphasis on more material aspects in human life than such other aspects as ideology or ideas.¹⁴ The Marxian paradigm has stipulated a well-accepted adage in social sciences and humanities among social scientists referring to the significance of Marxian paradigm as follows: “material income matters more than an idea”. The term “income” refers to the material dimension of human life, while the term “idea” refers to the ideological dimension of human life.

The Weberian paradigm has received serious contenders since the 1980s with the birth of—borrowing John Anderson—“new orthodoxy” that puts its heavy emphasis on structural analysis instead of a cultural one.¹⁵ The refutation of the “structuralists” to the “culturalists” is based on the two basic arguments as follows: *first*, the Weberian school of thought puts its heavy emphasis on such aspects as value, culture, ideology, instead of the structure. In the opinion of the structuralists, those aspects play their peripheral role, while the more dominant aspect rests at the strength of structure that enables agents to play roles in undertaking social transformation. *Second*, the Weberian followers necessitate that value, culture, and ideology as an intrinsically closed entity.¹⁶ With such an argument, it means that value, culture, and ideology are not subject to change. However, those three come and go in each turn. They have undergone a constant and continuous change. On the other hand, structure exists and buttresses the existence of value, ideology, and culture, without which there is no such thing as value, ideology, and culture.

In its simplest form, Marx can be regarded as a scientist that emphasizes economy factor over the other others in the formation of society.¹⁷ The correlation of economy and other social institutions such as arts, religion, and law manifestly appears in the model of structure and superstructure. In such a configuration, the economy becomes an underlying structure. Whereas anything outside of

¹⁴ Seth D. Kunin, *Religion: The Modern Theories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 6.

¹⁵ John Anderson, “Does God Matter, and If So Whose God? Religion and Democratization,” *Democratization*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (August 2004), 192.

¹⁶ Mansoor Moaddel, “The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 28 (2002), 370-374.

¹⁷ Gilbert Achcar, “Religion and Politics Today from A Marxian Perspective,” *Socialist Register* (2008), 55-76.

economy can be regarded as superstructure is constantly forged and shaped by the structure of economy. Therefore, understanding and interpreting religion cannot be separated from the context of economy. In a Marxian theoretical construct, religion is lived by a huge and hegemonic underlying structure: the economy.

The Marxian paradigm has in turn inspired the birth of social sciences theories with more emphasis on structure as an underpinning factor. Such theories as rational choice theory, opportunity structures, and political-economy are among those Marxian inspired theories. Popularized by Laurence Iannaccone, the rational choice theory emphasizes more on loss-benefit calculation in social actions.¹⁸ In his opinion, every action has its own rationality so that no such action as without rationality. The rational choice theory analogizes religious life and society with the market, in which transaction and negotiation between buyers and sellers take place. The keyword of rational choice theory is this: benefit. What is meant by benefit in this context does refer to not only material benefit but also non-material as well as a symbolic one.

It is more than just an enduring battle of Weberian versus Marxian or culture versus structure. This article argues that each of them has its own strengths and weaknesses. They are indeed irreconcilable to one another. Both cannot be merged with one single theoretical entity to justify a particular phenomenon. It does not mean, however, that both paradigms cannot be employed under a big scale of theoretical configuration. It is within such a configuration that the third paradigm, the so-called “Neo-Marxian,” through which the production mode theory is derived, is worth mentioning in an attempt to create a breakthrough in order to overcome such a theoretical cul-de-sac.

Radical Islamism in the Perspective of Production Mode Theory

In search of the theoretical middle-path in understanding radical Islamism, this article seeks to employ a Marxian-influenced school of thought called “mode of production” theory. It must be acknowledged from the outset that the mode of production theory

¹⁸ Laurence R. Iannaccone, “Voodoo Economics? Reviewing the Rational Choice Approach to Religion,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (1995), 77.

has been often employed by Marxian scientists in explaining social phenomena.¹⁹ This theoretical framework is meant to go beyond the Marxian all-materially oriented social actions such as the rational choice theory or political economy theory.²⁰ Those two theories are too Marxian in the sense that they tend to result in materially-oriented motifs in the analysis of any social action. The theory of production mode also wishes to avoid the Weberian analysis that gives exaggerated treatment on cultural analysis. The level of complexity of social phenomenon—with special reference to radical Islamism—needs an alternative theoretical framework that can complement both the Weberian and Marxian paradigms.

In relation to radical Islamism, there have been some initial undertakings in employing the Marxian paradigm. What Napoleoni has done, for instance, reflects the employment of Marxian paradigm in analyzing radical Islamism.²¹ Her works, nevertheless, do not explain how the ideology of jihadist movement works at the grass-roots level. The lack of ideological analysis in her works is understandable due to the fact that she employs only the Marxian perspective in looking at the reality of radical Islamism, while at the same time she undermines the ideological analysis. In general, the Marxian scientists tend to argue that the causes of radical Islamism have to do only with the social and economic gap inflicting the Muslims. As has been explained elsewhere, the radical Islamism movement has been driven in large part by the political economy issues.²² They argue that the ideology of radical Islamism per se would not be powerful enough in driving the movement of the jihadists in carrying out their “*amalyah*” acts (martyrdom or suicide bombings).²³

¹⁹ Jairus Banaji, *Theory as History: Essays on Modes of Production and Exploitation* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 45-50.

²⁰ See, for instance, R.J. Hernstein, “Rational Choice Theory: Necessary but Not Sufficient,” *American Psychologist*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (March 1990), 356-367; See also, Michael Hechter and Satoshi Kanazawa, “Sociological Rational Choice Theory,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 23 (1997), 191-214.

²¹ See, Loretta Napoleoni, *Modern Jihad: Tracing the Dollars behind the Terror Networks* (London: Pluto Press, 2003). See also, Loretta Napoleoni, “The New Economy of Terror: How Terrorism is Financed,” *Forum on Crime and Society*, Vol. 4, Nos. 1 and 2 (Desember 2004), 31-48.

²² Roxanne L. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

²³ Roxanne L. Euben, “Killing (for) Politics: Jihad, Martyrdom, and Political Action,” *Political Theory*, Vol. 30/No. 1 (February 2002), 4-35.

What is at stake for the Marxian paradigm behind the reality of radical Islamism is the structural issues such as poverty, *Gini-ratio*, injustice, global politics, and so forth.²⁴ Such a Marxian analysis of radical Islamism, however, tends to undermine the power of minds and ideas in shaping and nurturing the ideology of Islamism. Apart from the fact that the structural causes are obvious behind the existence of radical Islamism, one cannot undermine the power of ideology in winning the minds and hearts of new recruits of jihadist movement. The Marxian scientists of course cannot deny the fact that there are well-educated terrorists such as Dr. Azhari or wealthy ones such as Osama bin Laden. Both of them do not have any problem at all in terms of structural issues such as poverty and economic deprivation. They also cannot undermine the role of Maman Abdurrahman, Imam Samudra, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, and the like whose radical ideology can be contagious to others. The Marxian finally cannot underestimate how radical doctrines have served as a theological axis from which regeneration and recruitment among young terrorists have been taking place. All of the new recruits are at first mesmerized and trapped in deadly radical doctrines of the terrorists such as jihad (holy war), *istishhad* (martyrdom), *hijrah* (emigration), *amr ma'ruf nahi munkar* (commanding good and forbidding wrong), *al-wala' wa al-barra'* (loyalty and disengagement), *bay'at* (oath of allegiance), and so on.²⁵

One indeed sees the economic and political reasons behind the reality of radical Islam and terrorism. These reasons, however, are not the only reason why someone can change his/her belief in radicalism and terrorism. There must be a kind of theological mixture between ideology and material motif that can make someone radical. As to how much each contributes to the making of radical Islamism remains a big question for scholars to answer. The point is that ideology has never been alone in making radical Islamism; external factors such as economic motif has equally played an equally important role as well. It must be admitted that, based on the testimony of those who have migrated from Indonesia to Syria to help their fellow Jihadists of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), the economic motif has served as an important factor. It was reported

²⁴ Achcar, "Religion and Politics Today", 55-76.

²⁵ See, for instance, Brynjar Lia, "Doctrines for Jihadi Terrorist Training," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 20 (2008), 518-542.

that a lot of combatants are promised to be paid regularly by the authority of ISIS in American dollar.²⁶

On the contrary, the Weberian analysis tends to emphasize the strength of ideology and normative doctrines behind the radical Islamism.²⁷ In the landscape of social sciences, such an analysis is referred to as culturalism.²⁸ According to Weberian scientists, the roots of Islamic movement can be traced to normative norms and doctrines which are assumed to drive the ideological resistance to whatever perceived as un-Islamic. Thus, these scientists look at religious causes over the existence of political and economic structures. In every phenomenon of radicalism and terrorism, it is ideological narratives that are more dominant instead of structural analysis. As a result, the Weberian and cultural analysis tends to reduce the structure of social, economic, and political and social.

In a more specific manner, the Weberian analysis tends to draw a line between the ideology of radical Islamism and the normative norms written in the sacred texts. In this context, the sacred texts are treated as sacred corpus from which spells of radicalism and violent extremism emanate. In Islam, the sacred texts are represented by the Qur'an and Hadith, the pristine sources that guide and inspire the awareness of Muslims in their thinking and action. It is within such a scheme that Geertz's theoretical construct of "model of" and "model for" is applicable to describe the reciprocal line between Muslims and their sacred texts. While the Qur'an and Hadith serve as the "model for" Muslims, the social practices are the "model of" both sacred texts.²⁹ Therefore, the Weberian school of thought does not take extrinsic aspects of religion such as politics, economy, and other structural aspects into serious account in analyzing the reality of radical Islamism.

²⁶ Based on the information given by ex-ISIS combatant, everyone under ISIS authority will be guaranteed regular wages of US\$ 1,000 per month. See, Febri Ramdani, *300 Hari di Bumi Syam: Perjalanan seorang mantan pengikut ISIS* (Jakarta: Milenia, 2020), 133.

²⁷ See, for instance, Shmuel Bar, "The Religious Sources of Islamic Terrorism," *Policy Review*, 125 (Jun/Jul 2004), 27-37. See, also, William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Aug., 1987), 307-335.

²⁸ See, Fares Al-Braizat, "Muslims and Democracy; An Empirical Critique of Fukuyama's Culturalist Approach," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 43, No. 3-5 (2002), 269-299.

²⁹ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 93.

Based on the description above, it is not an exaggeration that both paradigms are like an irreconcilable mixture of water and oil. For those who believe in purity, the reason why both paradigms are irreconcilable is that each has its own narratives at the level of paradigm. The use of both at once can result in “epistemological complication.”³⁰ Such a theoretical dead-end is, of course, not an ideal condition in explaining the reality of radical Islamism. Despite their irreconcilability, both paradigms can be placed under a big scheme of theoretical configuration that can make each element works at integrative rhythm. It is within this context that the theory of production model is created in order to fill the gap left by the two paradigms.

Before delving into the mode of production theory in more detail, there are some notes to be taken into account. *First*, this theory is not intended to combine the two different theoretical constructs above. This article basically agrees with the irreconcilability of the two into one mold of chemistry. This inability does not necessarily mean that the two are not able to meet at one point. The term “meet” must be differentiated from the term to “combine.” While the first refers to the encounter of the two different entities, the latter necessitates the fusion between the two different entities into one single thread, until the points of difference cannot be recognized anymore.

Second, even though the two elements can meet, there is one dominant element over the other, namely the element of structure under which all sub-elements of theories are organized, including the element of ideology or culture. If broken down into details, the position of structure overpowers the position of ideology and culture, not vice-versa. This scheme is understandable because ideology plays its role as a mass-mobilizing factor which is socially constructed by the elites of the society in order to incite mass sentiment. In this context, the mass at the grass-roots level obeys the ideology of radical Islamism constructed by the elites. Thus, the fundamental element that drives the configuration of radical Islamism is the power of structure.

³⁰ R. Stephen Warner, “The Methodology of Marx’s Comparative Analysis of Modes of Production,” in Ivan Vallier (ed.), *Comparative Methods in Sociology: Essays on Trends and Applications* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1973), 62.

Schematic Structure of Mode of Production Theory

It is must be acknowledged from the outset that the mode of production theory is adapted from Karl Marx.³¹ What differs from Marx's mode of production theory is that this article covers the following five aspects: economy, politics, social, culture, and symbolic. This article argues that the phenomenon of radical Islamism comprises a multifaceted and complex reality, each of which interdepends on the other and is tied to one another. Therefore, reducing the human relationship into a materially oriented matter is an academic reductionism. There are other dimensions beyond the materialistic matter such as a symbolic contest, cultural domination, ideological resistance, the contests of meaning, and the like. All of these dimensions shape into one big theoretical configuration that mobilizes and create social phenomenon under an integrated mode of production scheme.

As a part of production mode, the society of religion tends to go forward a steady equilibrium. Borrowing Iannaccone, "The combined actions of religious consumers and religious producers form a religious market that, like other markets, tends toward a steady-state equilibrium."³² The combination of consumers and producers of religion forms a religious market that, like other types of market, tends to go into a constant and established equilibrium. Such an equilibrium in turn creates the establishment of status-quo. Each element in it forms in supporting one another in facing any external threats that can endanger the mutual existence of the producers and consumers of religion. In case such an equilibrium is threatened, there arises resistance in order to protect all stakeholders in the market. It is within such a context that the reality of radical Islamism has come to the fore as a part of reaction to the existing disequilibrium.

By arguing so, it does not mean that religious condition can be simplified as a market that moves towards a state of equilibrium.³³ When the state of equilibrium is endangered by external threats, there arises a critical situation where resistance from below is possible to counterattack those threats. The resistance can manifest itself in the

³¹ For further details on Karl Marx's production mode theory, see, G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 79-84. See, also, Michael Evans, *Karl Marx* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 2004), 66-72.

³² Iannaccone, "Voodoo Economics?", 77.

³³ Ibid., 77.

form of a radical ideology or violent acts. What is meant by external threats are derived from structural turbulences such as economic disparity and deprivation, social dislocation, political oppression, perceived injustice, global politics, and so on. In this context, those external threats are not religion itself. Rather, external threats do not come from religion. Normatively speaking all religions teach peace and discourage warfare.³⁴ In this context, radical Islamism does not exist in a vacuum without any sociological explanation. It is simply nonsense if believers from two different religions wage war without any sociological cause due to their religious difference. Religious conflicts and violence have come into existence as a result of a disturbance in the equilibrium of the social structure. Thus, what is more dominant in such a condition is the structural condition, which drives Muslims to craft their system of resistance through ideology. As a result, there arises the ideology of radical Islamism and violent jihadism.

In a schematic structure, the theory of production mode consists of the following five elements: social, economic, politics, culture, and symbolic. Those elements are mobilized by a big structure that creates interdependence with one another. Thus, this theory is a revised version of the same theory posited by Karl Marx which is material in nature. The explanation of each element is as follows.

1). Sociological Structure

Sociologically speaking, society comprises multilayers of social classes.³⁵ The society can be divided into at least two or more social layers based on particular social classification such as in-come category or cultural one. Each social class tends to adopt in-group solidarity so that social interaction is characterized by inward-looking vision. They are usually clustered under the same social group which is bounded by some similar social characteristics. Society is made up of several social clusters and they are dynamized by perpetual social contests which result in social equilibrium. Once the social equilibrium is intruded by an outsider, for instance, there will be social turbulences among the members of society. One of the immediate

³⁴ See, for instance, Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam: Theory and Practice* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2003).

³⁵ For further details on social class and class struggle, see, Anthony Giddens and David Held (eds.), *Classes, Power, and Conflict: Classical and Contemporary Debates* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982).

impacts of the turbulence is resistance or social unrest from particular members of the society protesting the injustice of social deprivation they might have undergone. In short, social turbulence can undermine social equilibrium. When social equilibrium is undermined—by either internal factors or external ones—social unrest or resistance can serve as a breeding ground for the rise and development of the ideology and movement of radical Islamism.

In terms of the religious community, our society consists of diverse clusters according to the particular backgrounds; some are tied based on social grouping and some are based on cultural affiliation. Each cluster tends to create its own social enclave with inward-looking religious understanding. The more religious clusters are found in society, the more variations in religious understanding would be.³⁶ The pattern of membership in each cluster or social enclave follows the principle of religious clientelism in which most of the group members tend to rely on their group elites to determine which religious understanding they would subscribe to.³⁷ The religious understanding held by the group members serves as a code of conduct that ties in-group solidarity. Once the code of conduct is shaken or disturbed by the intrusion of external entities, there will be an act of resistance to defend their code of conduct. As a part of establishing the internal code of conduct, their group elites feel obliged to customize the religious understanding of all members of the group. Once there is a dispute or disagreement over the particular religious issue from one particular member of the group, it is often that he or she would leave the group.

The equilibrium of the religious community has also been represented by the membership of particular clusters or enclaves. The general rule regarding the membership of the religious community is that the more membership is the better. The swell in number in terms of membership means a lot in building superiority among different religious clusters. On the contrary, the decrease in number in terms of membership means the waning power of religious clusters. Therefore, most religious clusters tend to concern an ideal membership claim among the Muslim community in general. The huge number in

³⁶ Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 188.

³⁷ Emanuel Sivan, “The Enclave Culture,” in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.), *Fundamentalisms Comprehended* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 11-68.

membership claims will give the elites of religious clusters high profile that, in turn, ensures the sustainability of those clusters among the Muslim community.³⁸

Among the circle of radical Islamism, the pattern of membership is a little bit different from the Muslim commoners. The swell in membership number does not comprise the priority of their objective since they are fully aware of their position as being a minority and, in some cases, clandestine. Unlike the majority of religious community whose objective is to swell its membership, what the radical Islamists concern is how to be solid and strong amidst their minority position. In other words, realizing their minority position, in general they do not care about the number of memberships in their group. What they care more is how they can defeat the enemies of God which are bigger in number with their minority power. In regards to the concept of enemies, they have two definitions of God's enemies; far enemies and near enemies.³⁹ While the first can be designated to those non-Muslim majority countries such as the US and its allies that are perceived to undermine Islam from outside, the latter is defined as their fellow Muslims who act in favor of far enemies.⁴⁰

In targeting the near enemies, the radical Islamists point to their fellow moderate as well as non-practicing Muslims as their main target of Islamization. Even though the moderate and non-practicing Muslims are already born as Muslims, the radical Islamists do not reckon their Islamicity as authentic and therefore they feel obliged to re-Islamize them. The Muslim organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah are regarded by the radical Islamists as a heretic because the earlier are considered to have practiced contaminated version of Islam. The slogan "Islam Nusantara" by NU or "Islam Berkemajuan" as articulated by Muhammadiyah is classified as

³⁸ Compare with membership and recruitment pattern in a radical organization in the UK, Al-Muhajiroun. In this organization, the recruitment pattern is carried out in a rational manner based on religious arguments. See, Quintan Wiktorowics and Karl Kaltenthaler, "The Rationality of Radical Islam," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 121, No. 2 (Summer, 2006), 295-319.

³⁹ Syaifudin Zuhri, "The Changing Paradigm of Indonesian Jihadist Movements: From *al-'Adūwā al-Qarīb* to *al-'Adūwā al-Bā'id*," *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 04/No. 02 (December 2010), 240-267.

⁴⁰ Guido Stenberg and Isabelle Werinfels, "Between the 'Near' and 'Far' Enemy: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 12/No. 3 (November 2007), 407-413.

corrupted Islam and contradicts the notion of “Islam *kāffah*” as they propagate. As a result, the disagreement in religious understanding between the moderate and radical Islamism creates a social contest in the society that results in further social dislocation and, to some degree, social exclusion on the radical Islamists by the moderate Muslims and the rest of Muslim society in general.

It is the social dislocation and exclusion on the radical Islamists by the majority moderate Muslims that further invites resistance from the radicals. In the next development, the resistance of the radicals creates retaliation from the moderate Muslims in a dialectical process to oppose their fellow radicals. In the sociological context, such a social dialectics has resulted in social gap characterized by prejudices among the two different social groups that deteriorate the social bonding in the society. On the other hand, this social dialectic has strengthened social bridging or inner-group solidarity within each group.⁴¹ The persistence of each position between the two can intensify the social prejudices and misunderstanding between the two. In a condition where each group persists on its own standing, the social gap will increase. In an extreme situation, the resistance can lead to violent extremism perpetrated by radical Islamists.

2). Economic Structure

Analyzing radical Islamism from the perspective of production mode is inextricably linked to the efficacy of Marxian approaches to social phenomena. It has to be admitted from the outset that the Marxian approach sees the economy as the determinant factor in the development of radical Islamism. The inseparability of economic factors from any social movement follows the sledgehammer law of economy: supply and demand.⁴² Where there is a supply the demand will follow. The two sides form a vicious circle that creates interdependence among each of them and that can accumulate into the law of eternity between the two. The interdependence between the two creates a social equilibrium in society. Once the interdependence is disturbed, there will be social resistance and unrest among the particular member of the society.

⁴¹ For further details on the idea of “bonding” and “bridging,” see, Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York and London: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2000), 23.

⁴² Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, “The Problem with Human Capital Theory—A Marxian Critique,” *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (Mei 1975), 74-82.

As to how the theory of production mode works in terms of the rise of radical Islamism has to do with the marginalization of economic distribution to the radical Islamists.⁴³ Different treatment to the radical Islamists can block economic channeling into the radical Islamist group. A various type of economic deprivation will arise as a result of marginalization of economy such as poverty, unemployment, and criminality. The marginalization or blockage in the economy into particular group of society can disturb the social equilibrium. Social unrest and resistance will follow as soon as marginalization of economy is applied that serves a breeding ground for the rise of radical ideology such as Islamism. The ideologues of Islamism tend to employ the existing condition to justify the ideology of radical Islamism and terrorism.

The condition of economic deprivation inflicting Muslim immigrants in some European countries can be taken as an example of how the theory of production mode is applicable in explaining the phenomenon of radical Islamism. As addressed by Jocelyne Cesari, the economic condition of Muslim immigrants in general invites cause for concern.⁴⁴ The unemployment rate among them is also high compared to unemployment in general. In the Netherlands, for instance, the unemployment rate among Moroccan immigrants reaches 31% and 24% among Turkish Muslim immigrants. In France, as reported by INED (Institut National d'Études Démographiques/The National Institute for Democratic Studies), the unemployment rate in this country among the Muslim youth immigrants is double in number compared to the unemployment among their non-Muslim counterparts.⁴⁵

The situation of economic deprivation among Muslim immigrants in the UK is even worse. The unemployment rate among Bangladeshi and Pakistani background immigrants is triple in number compared to the most marginalized minority group in the country.⁴⁶ In some big cities in the UK, almost half of the Bangladeshi background immigrants are unemployed. In 2004, the highest rate of

⁴³ Alan Richards, *Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism? Towards Explaining the Appeal of Islamic Radicals* (Washington DC: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003).

⁴⁴ Jocelyne Cesari, *Muslims in the West after 9/11: Religion, Politics and Law* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 59.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Nahid Afrose Kabir, *Young British Muslims: Identity, Culture, Politics, and the Media* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 36.

unemployment among male Muslims in the country reached 13% and female Muslim counterparts reached 18%. The problem of unemployment happens not only in working-class jobs but also in well-educated class jobs. In this context, a series of terrorist acts in the UK might have something to do with the high rate of unemployment among Muslim immigrants.

The unjust segregation policy taken by the local authority has exacerbated the economic deprivation of the Muslim immigrants in most of the European countries. The majority of them are placed in the ghetto environment with a low level of health sanitation and are highly densely populated. This policy discourages the natural interaction and integration of the Muslim immigrants into a wider web of local community and creates further disparity among them. Those conditions in turn serve as fueling material that invites resistance as well as social unrest among them. As a result, radicalism and violent extremism is about time to happen. This phenomenon, again, indicates that structure does matter in the issue of radical Islamism.

The reality experienced by a lot of Muslim immigrants above seem to justify Olivier Roy's theoretical assumption that the root of religious extremism and radicalism is not their theological understanding, but structural aspects such as socio-political and economic deprivation among them that marginalize them from public life of European citizens in general.⁴⁷ Almost all terrorism-related acts in some European countries such as France, the UK, Sweden, Germany and the like are mostly triggered by such structural factors. The way the Muslim immigrants respond to the state marginalization is through manufacturing the ideology of radical Islamism which is not difficult to do. Furthermore, the immigration process of Muslims from African, the Middle-Eastern, and South Asian countries is mostly motivated by the pathetic condition of those countries. Poverty, unemployment, conflict and all problems have driven most of them to emigrate to more wealthy European countries to seek a better life. In 1981, the PDB of those countries did not exceed US\$ 1,500.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2004), especially Chapter 8.

⁴⁸ Elias H. Tuma, *Economic and Political Change in the Middle East* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 158.

3). *Structure of Politics*

Politically speaking, most of the Middle Eastern countries are easy to flare up into conflicts as a result of existing sharp political factions. Most of them fall into the hands of despotic rulers that run their countries with authoritarian power.⁴⁹ Every difference is always perceived as threat that endangers their regimes. As a result, most of them have undergone the replacement of political regime in a short time and most often accompanied by bloodsheds. Democracy is hardly practicable in those countries. Most of the Middle Eastern countries that have undergone political turmoil are in general ruled by despotic-authoritarian such as Iraq, Libya, and Egypt.

Most of the affected people in the Middle Eastern countries chose to flee from the conflicting area to European countries in order to seek refuge. The expansion of ISIS forced millions of refugees to migrate to several European countries to find a better life. Life in Europe is considered to promise a much better life compared to life in their home countries. Their choice to migrate to European land nevertheless creates new problems both for the immigrants and the designated countries. Therefore, the European countries do not have one single response to the waves of immigrants. Whereas there are some countries that are willing to accommodate the immigrants, some others are not.

Elie Kedourie blamed the political culture as the main cause of the absence of democratic tradition in most Middle Eastern countries.⁵⁰ More specifically, the absence of democratic tradition is due to the dominance of the so-called “father-figure culture” in their entire public life; streets, markets, offices, schools, hospitals, religious circles, and so on.⁵¹ This political culture on the one hand has eroded all healthy democratic traditions such as egalitarianism, equality before the law, religious tolerance, human rights, and the like. On the other hand, this political culture has strengthened the clientelism pattern in the power-relation among the socio-political elites in those countries.

⁴⁹ Freed Zakariya, “Islam, Democracy, and Constitutional Liberalism,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 119, No. 1 (2004), 6.

⁵⁰ Elie Kedourie, *Politics in the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1992), 6.

⁵¹ Zakariya, “Islam”, 7.

Waves of the “Arab Springs” have blown a wind of hope for democratization the Middle Eastern countries.⁵² The waves of “Arab Spring” knocked out the countries one by one, such as Tunisia, Iraq, Libya, Egypt, and so forth. On the transition to democracy, however, the situation has worsened by the appearance of despotic figures on the power stage. Such a transition has benefitted the power-seekers such as ISIS by taking over the vacuum of power. In social sciences and humanities, the durability of despotic non-democratic tradition is called “Arab exceptionalism,” namely the sociological unlikelihood for the making of democratic tradition in the Middle East.⁵³

Totally different from what is happening to most Arab countries, Indonesia has a more fluid and accommodative political structure with strong civil society organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU.⁵⁴ Indonesia also has an open public sphere in which freedom of expression and participation is guaranteed by the law. This country also has freedom for the press as the fifth pillar of democracy. Most of the time, social unrest and protests have been dealt with by the state in a relatively good manner. As a result, political resilience can be channeled through a democratic mechanism regularly carried out in the country. Indeed, Indonesia has resistance from radical Islamists. They argue that the country adopted the secular non-Islamic political system as they call it *ṭagħbiż*. This assumption, nevertheless, takes only a minority portion of Indonesian Muslims, including a little minority of the radical Islamists.

The act of retaliation of Indonesian Jihadists through a series of violent terrorist acts are mostly driven by the constellation of global politics to which they refer as an unjust treatment to their fellow Muslims abroad. The terrorists mostly target objects that carry Western symbols or interests such as cafes, night clubs, embassies, and the like. Over the past two decades, however, there has been a shifting trend in the conception of terrorists on what constitutes “enemy” from “far enemy” (*al-‘Adūnū al-Ba‘id*) such as Western countries and institutions to “near enemy” (*al-Adūnū al-Qarīb*) such as

⁵² For further information on the waves of democratization and the Arab Spring, see, Philip N. Howard and Muzammil M. Hussain, *Democracy's Forth Wave? Digital Media and the Arab Spring* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁵³ Alfred Stepan and Graeme B. Robertson, “Arab, not Muslim, Exceptionalism,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (2004), 140-146.

⁵⁴ Azyumardi Azra, *Indonesia, Islam, and Democracy: Dynamics in a Global Context* (Jakarta: Equinox, 2006), 60-64.

police and government.⁵⁵ In the terrorists' minds, it is those enemies—be they far or near—that have caused the predicament of Muslims all over the world and they feel obliged to defend their fellow Muslims from any political oppression wherever they are. Therefore, it is understandable that the terrorist acts in Indonesia do not necessarily have anything to do with domestic or local politics; rather, the causes for their acts are far away in other parts of the world.

4). Cultural Structure

The next structure is culture. It must be admitted from the outset that cultural analysis has become the major characteristics of Weberian paradigm. The analysis of production mode tends to see the cultural conflicts between the radical Islamists and the rest of the society. As to why the radical Islamists have launched their resistance to the West is due mainly to the fact that the globalization is perceived to have threatened Islamic cultural values as the backbone of Muslim identity. They have contributed to the making of the so-called “culturalism” or “essentialism” in social sciences.⁵⁶ In the view of Thariq Ali, the clash between the two opposing sides can be called as the clash of fundamentalisms, not the clash of religions.⁵⁷

In the conception of cultural-essentialism, the radical Islamists strongly believe their inimicality of the two cultures: Islam and the West. Both are believed to clash each other in a clash of civilization as asserted by Samuel P. Huntington.⁵⁸ It means that both of them are in conflict with one another due to irreconcilable nature contained in each. The radical Islamists share the cultural-essentialist assumption on the inimicality of Islam and the West. In addition, they assert that the Western community is fallen to terrible moral degradation due to sinful acts such as drinking alcoholic, non-marital free sexual

⁵⁵ This assumption, however, contradicts what Syaifudin Zuhri has observed that the conception of enemy follows the contrary: from the near enemies to far enemies. See, Zuhri, “The Changing Paradigm”, 241.

⁵⁶ Masdar Hilmy, *Islamism and Democracy in Indonesia: Piety and Pragmatism* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2010), 19.

⁵⁷ Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads, and Modernity* (London and New York: Verso, 2002). Emmanuel Sivan has also discussed the clash within Islam, especially between liberalism and fundamentalism. Emmanuel Sivan, “The Clash within Islam,” *Survival*, Vol. 45, Issue 1 (2003), 25-44.

⁵⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

activities, and the like. It is those things that are strictly forbidden in Islam; they further argue.

Looked in a nutshell, all of the cultural arguments seem to be plausible. When scrutinized more closely, however, all presumably cultural conflicts are not the case. They serve as a mobilizing factor, instead. The radical Islamists of course concerned with the cultural differences. Nevertheless, they can tolerate all differences they are facing as long as they are not persecuted or marginalized in the public sphere. It must be admitted that in some Western countries, Muslims are experiencing a series of difficulties in adapting themselves to the liberal lifestyle of the local community. It does not mean nonetheless that those differences are the main cause of the rise of radical Islamism in the West. What is the major cause nonetheless for the rise of radical Islamism is the policy of economic deprivation, social dislocation, marginalization, and segregation that separates Muslim livelihood from the life of the rest.⁵⁹ Thus, while the cultural differences operate only at the peripheral level, the major cause for the rise of radical Islamism in the West refers to all types of structural causes such as economic and political deprivation experienced by Muslims.

5). *Symbolic Structure*

The symbolic structure operates based on symbolic codes that represent the identity of radical Islamism. Within their inner-circle, symbols are treated equally important as essence or substance, because they are embedded within the structure of culture as explained above.⁶⁰ Whatever perceived by the Islamists about their value or belief system will emanate symbolic quality which is treated equally important as the essence of their belief. The symbolic quality is in turn responsible in the process of identity transformation among the Islamists which is manifested, among others, in their code of conduct, dress-code, physical appearance, the way they speak, the way they interact, the way they behave in general and so forth.⁶¹

So much so important the position of symbols in the Islamists' minds, they draw a firmed line of demarcation separating them from

⁵⁹ See, for instance, Elizabeth D. Huttman, et. al (eds.), *Urban Housing: Segregation of Minorities in Western Europe and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

⁶⁰ Brian S. Farmer, *Understanding Radical Islam: Medieval Ideology in the Twenty-First Century* (New York and Washington: Peter Lang, 2008), 28.

⁶¹ Ibid., 30.

the rest of corrupted society. Borrowing Emmanuel Sivan, the Islamists build what they call as the “wall of virtues” based on the moral values they hold tightly in order for them not to be contaminated by un-Islamic values surrounding them.⁶² For them, all people outside of their group are considered a heretic. The “wall of virtues” is built because they employ a Manichean way of thinking consisting of binary opposition: good versus bad, pious versus sinful, heavenly guided versus gone astray, and so on. In this context, there is no such thing as a grey area according to the standardized piety. For them, the truth comprises only one version, namely what they have believed and held.⁶³

Every symbolic element is believed by the Islamists to convey messages, meaning, and truth. The “martyrs” who explode themselves—to which Imam Samudra refers as “*istimata*,” meaning literally seeking for death—are symbolized as “*pengantin*” (bride and groom).⁶⁴ The Islamists believed that their death would take them into paradise and they will be accompanied by angels. For them, their death is not meaningless death; their death equals to martyrdom. They refer to the self-explosion acts as “*amalīyah*,” meaning literally working, not committing suicide. In their opinion, committing suicide remains forbidden, while *amalīyah* acts are strongly recommended in Islam.⁶⁵

Theoretically speaking, the symbolic structure follows what Pierre Bourdieu’s espoused about his theory of symbolic power.⁶⁶ For Bourdieu, in every word or phrase lies the significance of meaning that operates at a symbolic level as a mechanism of understanding the self.⁶⁷ Among the radical Islamists, every word they use in daily communication is not simply a word, but it has symbolic efficacy with its transcendental meaning and message. In this case, they value Arab-derived words explicitly stated out in the sacred texts as more valuable

⁶² Sivan, “The Enclave Culture”, 17 (1-68).

⁶³ Richards, *Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism?*, 19.

⁶⁴ Masdar Hilmy, “Looking into God’s Heaven: Theological Construct of Islamic Radicalism in the Post-New Order Indonesia,” *Asian Cultural Studies*, Special Issue (2006), 19.

⁶⁵ See, for instance, Raphael Israeli, *Islamikaze: Manifestations of Islamic Martyrology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).

⁶⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991).

⁶⁷ Ibid., 38-42.

than non-Arab derived words. It is within this context that they prefer Arabic words rather than non-Arabic ones such as “*amalyah*” (working) instead of *bekerja*, “*akhi*” (brother) instead of “*sandara*,” “*abi*” (father) instead of “*ayah*” or “*bapak*,” “*ummi*” (mother) instead of “*mama*” or “*ibu*,” “*and*” (I) instead of “*saya*” or “*aku*,” “*antum*” (you) instead of “*kami*” or “*anda*” or “*kamu*,” and so on and so forth. For them, Arabic-derived words are considered more Islamic compared to non-Arabic ones.⁶⁸

Concluding Remarks

Based on the explanation above, it can be summed up that the reality of radical Islamism comprises a multifaceted and complex reality. As far as social sciences and humanities are concerned, there are two conflicting paradigms employed by scientists to analyze the complex phenomenon of radical Islamism: Weberian and Marxian paradigms. The Weberian paradigm puts heavy emphasis on the cultural aspects of radical Islamism. As a result, its analysis tends to treat cultural aspects of radical Islamism such as the sacred texts-based ideology, norms and doctrines as more superior to structural aspects such as economic, political, and social structures. As an antithesis to the Weberian paradigm, the Marxian, however, emphasizes more upon material as well as structural aspects of radical Islamism such as socio-political dislocation, economic deprivation, and the like.

As the paper has demonstrated, each paradigm has resulted in one-sided justification. This paper has argued that it is not adequate to analyze the reality of radical Islamism from one single theoretical perspective. Even though this paper also acknowledges the inimicality of the two clashing paradigms, it does not mean that the two cannot be orchestrated under a theoretical scheme. It is the mode of production theory that is intended as a bridging paradigm, as described above, as an attempt at orchestrating the two clashing paradigms. It covers five aspects as follows: social, economic, political, cultural, and symbolic structure. Even though the two paradigms can operate together, the strength of structure (Marxian) overpowers the strength of culture (Weberian). The strength of culture, such as ideology, norms, and values, play as a mobilizing

⁶⁸ Noorhaidi Hasan, *The Making of Public Islam: Piety, Democracy and Youth in Indonesian Politics* (Yogyakarta: SUKA-PRESS, 2013), 111.

factor under a big schematic dominant structure in the rise and development of radical Islamism.

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