The Reasons Which Attract People to Involve in Religious Violence

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Max Abrahms has examined the lack of the strategic model as a lens to analysis terrorism. This model consist of three basic assumptions: (1) *"Terrorists have consistent and stable political goals"*, (2) *"Terrorists evaluate their political options"*, and (3) *"Terrorism offers a superior political return"*. Abrahms exposes that this model with its core assumptions is inadequate or even failed to grasp the real realm of terrorism. At least there are seven puzzles he can present to support his argument. Those seven puzzles includes (1) *"coercive ineffectiveness"*, (2) *"terrorism as the first resort"*, (3) *"reflexive uncompromising terrorists"*, (4) *"protean political platforms"*, (5) *"anonymous attacks"*, (6) *"terrorist fratricide"*, and (7) *"never-ending terrorism"*. In sum, different from the strategic model's standpoint, he concludes that terrorism is engaged prevalently by social solidarity maximizers rather than by political maximizers. People involve into terrorism mainly to obtain social solidarity and not its political or ideological goals. For this reason, he argues that counterterrorism strategies should be redesigned less emphasized on divestment of terrorism's political utility but more on its social utility. The later, according to Abrahms, can be taken in two ways, firstly, by splitting between organization members, and secondly, decreasing potential supply among 'fragile' populations for joining terrorism.

R. Scott Appleby defines fundamentalism as *"a specifiable pattern of religious militancy by which self-styled true believers attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular structures and processes"*. It does not necessarily that fundamentalism evokes violence and intolerance. But, Appleby finds convincingly that fundamentalism has religious exclusive orientation which may drive them to engage extremist violence. Across diversity among fundamentalist movements in the past or in the recent times he identifies common features characterizing what can be really called fundamentalism. Firstly, fundamentalism emerges as a response or reaction to secular influences that considered harmful for religious purity. The line is then drawn to demarcate between insiders and outsiders. Legitimatized by *"selective retrieval of the sacred past"*, provided by charismatic or authoritarian leaders, the outsiders or the others are portrayed as the false, impure, and infidel. Here, on reason of *"emergency"*, exceptions including the use of extremist violence may be taken by the true to purify human beings and their life under the light of religious truth. It seems that *"exceptionalism"* is used to justify the fundamentalist's intention *"to build a comprehensive religious alternative to secularism"*.

Muhammad Iqbal Ahnaf, through his study of Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), comes to conclusion that Muslim fundamentalist groups have systematically constructed the image of the other (Non-Muslim) as enemy. The mode of this construction is similar to what has been identified by

Appleby above. It moves from ideologization, demonization, the claim of inevitable clash with the others, and imagination of the coming victory of Islam. All these are based on the superiority of Islam as the only true religion. Interestingly, this image does not necessarily provoke problems or confrontations in their daily relationships with the others (the enemy). This kind of relationship can be described as *"symbolic violence"* in term of Pierre Bourdieu or *"rhetoric violence"* in term of De Lauretis.

Based on the three articles summarized in the previous paragraphs, I can say that violence may occur with or without religious reasons. Even violence that seems to be religious violence may occur with or without religious reasons. The reasons to engage violence may rise from the womb of social depression, economical deprivation, or political oppression. These make violence seen as a discursive reality. Here, I agree with Abrahms when he says that the heart of terrorism, secular or religious, lying on the pursuit of social benefits not of political ones. I see it can be used also to describe the phenomena of Hizbullah that wins loyalty of Lebanese impoverished people because its ability in performing contextual roles among them. But, however, it is too naïve if religious reason considered out of violence. Appleby shows to us that religious reason playing actively as the core of fundamentalist violence. The actors of violence in many cases are inspired and motivated deeply by and rooted in their religious faith. Appleby also indicates that religious violence may be carried out through mature preparations and definite goals. This finding consequently supports the strategic model's thesis that undermined by Abrahms.

Along with the fact that religious violence may be taken to obtain certain political or social ends, I keep a trust that religious interpretation still having vital influence to drive people engage violence. Religious interpretation gives epistemological basis which upon this fundamentalists legitimize their violence. Without religious references certain violence is hardly to be called religious violence. Even Ahnaf provides living examples, MMI and HTI in Indonesian context, that fundamentalist paradigm does not necessarily mean inciting violence. But, once again, in term of Bourdieu or Lauretis, that is violence as well.

Reading Materials:

Abrahms, Max. "What Terrorists Really Want: Terorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy" in *International Security,* Vo. 32, No. 4 (Spring 2008), pp. 78-105.

Ahnaf, Muhammad Iqbal. *The Image of the Other as Enemy: Radical Discourse in Indonesia* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2006).

Appleby, R. Scott. "Violence as a Sacred Duty: Patterns of Religious Extremism" in *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, Reconciliation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), pp. 81-120.