

RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND HEALTH RADICALIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN MALAYSIA AND PUBLIC ORDER

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ABSTRACT

Radicalisation is an evolving phenomenon worldwide. It is also multidimensional. The article seeks to explore three forms of radicalization in Malaysia, namely religious, political and health. It argues that while the first two form of radicalization that is religious and political radicalization remains, while a new form of radicalization based on health issue comes to the fore in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, promoting the narrative of anti-vaccination and it weaves together with conspiracy theory narratives, End of Times, calling for preparation for the emergence of messiah. This article argues that although health radicalization is initially non-security matters, it has the potential to undermine the national security and public order, for it generates distrust and undermines the authorities' effort to combat the pandemic in Malaysia. As precaution, preventive and intervention initiatives are needed to curb the spread of radicalization at its potential level before it turns to an actual threat to the nation.

Keywords: radicalization, national security, public order, violent extremism, terrorism, health radicalization, political radicalization, religious radicalization, COVID-19, pandemic.

1. INTRODUCTION

The article explores the radicalization phenomenon in Malaysia connected to politics, religion, and health. The first two types of radicalization, the religious and political radicalization, are commonly discussed and widely researched. However, health radicalization seems to be an emerging phenomenon in the world in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's

aggressive vaccination policy. Health radicalization is a process of embracing radical views about health issues and policy with the incorporation of conspiracy theories, narratives of the end of the times, and messiah within its discourse. Although health radicalization is a new phenomenon, it has unyielding followers and has gained traction within six months. This is observable in narratives propagated widely through social media platforms, particularly Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Telegram, and WhatsApp, including Instagram and TikTok. Among the followers were professionals, including those from the legal and medical fraternity. This article seeks to assess their narratives compared to political and religious radicalization and the extent of threats it might pose to national security, public order, and health security. This article is divided into four sections. First, it defines the concept of radicalization based on the Malaysian context, including dimensions, phases, and indicators. Second, it explores the tripartite radicalization, that is, religious, political, and health. Third, it seeks to assess to what extent these forms of radicalization may cause threats to national security, public order, and health security in Malaysia. Fourth, it proposes some recommendations for managing these challenges.

2. CONCEPTUALIZING RADICALIZATION

Some might argue that the absence of a universally accepted definition of radicalization would pose a challenge to scholars and practice to determine the conceptual parameters of the term. Gunaratna's lack of that universally agreed definition serves as 'an opportunity than challenge' (Gunaratna, 2011) because it gives the state some flexibility to define it based on the local context (El-Muhammady, 2020). Every state faces a different set of problem or challenges that requires customization. The radicalization problem in Malaysia, for instance, is different from radicalization in the Middle East in terms of the ecosystem, driving factors, motivation, and actors. In Malaysia, three central points of reference are employed to determine what constitutes extremism, radicalization, and terrorism:

First, a legal provision such as embodied in the Penal Code (130) (Terrorism), Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012, Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) 2015, Special Measure Against Terrorism in Foreign Countries Act (SMATA) 2015, and various other related legal provision. In addition, fatwa or religious edict issued by the state religious departments related to specific groups or sects are also referred to in considering radicalization and extremism.

Second, religious approach, mainly based on the mainstream teachings of Ahli Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, Asha'arite school of thought (theology), and Shafi'i school of thought (fiqh), and al-Ghazali's approach (ethics and metaphysics). Normally, this point of reference is employed to decide on cases that involve Muslim-based militancy and extremism. It may not be relevant in determining issues involving non-Muslims.

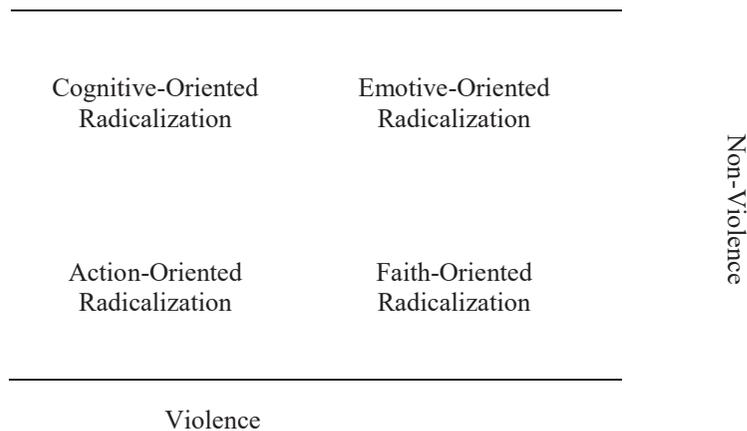
The third point of reference is the universal values and norms adopted by the international community, such as justice, freedom, human rights, and so forth, as embodied in the Human Declaration of Human Rights and other United Nations documents.

Based on the references mentioned earlier, radicalization can be defined as the process of adopting extremist ideology or belief and translating them into violent action or terrorism as defined by Malaysian laws. It refers to the process of learning, inculcating, and deepening an extremist ideology or narratives cognitively, affectively, and spiritually until it becomes part of their conviction (El-Muhammady, 2020). At this point, that radicalization alone does not lead to terrorism (Sageman, 2017). It is a process that involves cognitive justification, emotional acceptance and is supported by a religious basis or specific political ideology. Then, it reaches the final stage that is action manifesting in the form of violence. In this regard, the Danish authorities offer a broader definition of radicalization, which they refer to as a process, by which a person to an increasing extent accepts the use of undemocratic or violent means, including terrorism, in an attempt to reach a specific political objective (Gimmerli, 2015). Here, we must differentiate between

violent radicalization – committing the act of violence based on ideas and non-violent radicalization - having a radical thought without violent acts. Non-violent radicalization manifests in three forms: cognitive-oriented radicalization, emotive-oriented radicalization, and faith/ideological-oriented radicalization. In contrast, action-oriented radicalization is considered the most lethal type of radicalization because it generates violence

Diagram 1.1 shows four quadrants of radicalization and Table 1 shows the detailed description of four quadrants of radicalization and their narratives.

Diagram 1. Radicalization quadrants



Source: Adapted from: El-Muhammady, A. Radicalization Model Learning from Malaysian Militant-Extremist in Rohan Gunaratna and Sabariah Hussin, Terrorist Deradicalization in a Global Context: Success, Failure and Continuity. London: Routledge, 2020.

Table 1. Dimension, description and narratives of radicalization

Dimension	Description	Narratives	
<i>cognitive-oriented</i>	The use of rational justification for the acceptance of violence. It occurs at the mental level, and it may or may not be translated into violence.	"We can use violence against those who are committing violence against us."	
<i>emotive-oriented</i>	The use of vigorous justification to justify acceptance and tolerance to violence, e.g., sympathy, anger, revenge, humiliation, sense to 'get even.' It occurs at the emotional level, and it may or may not be translated into violence.	"I feel sympathy towards the oppressed," "revenge is the best way to tell the oppressors to stop messing up with us."	Non-violence
<i>faith-oriented</i>	The use of religious or ideological justification to accept violence. It occurs at the faith/ideological level, and it may or may not be translated into violence.	"I believe in martyrdom ." "We have political right to get our own country."	
<i>action-oriented</i>	The use of action to commit violence, the act of terrorism. The cumulative effects of one of the elements stated earlier: cognitive, dynamic, and faith generate violence.	"We need to act, not talking."	Violence

Source: Adapted from: El-Muhammady, A. *Radicalization Model Learning from Malaysian Militant-Extremist* in Rohan Gunaratna and Sabariah Hussin, *Terrorist Deradicalization in a Global Context: Success, Failure and Continuity*. London: Routledge, 2020.

The separation of violent and non-violent radicalization may pose legal repercussions because some might pose the question 'can we prosecute someone simply because of his or her radical belief or engaged in non-violent radicalization?'. However, it is essential to note that despite the non-violent nature of radicalization, such as in the case of cognitive, emotive, and faith-oriented radicalization, the terrorism laws in Malaysia are punitive because those who engaged in the first three radicalization still can be prosecuted using various terrorism laws such as Security Offences (Special Measures) Act (SOSMA) 2012, Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) 2015 and

Penal Code (Terrorism) 130. Such laws are enforced as a preventive mechanism to curb extremism and radicalization due to their potential threats to national security. Before 2012, the Internal Security Act (ISA) 1960 was used to tackle terrorism, including communist insurgency, in the 1960s to 1990s. The law has effectively curbed radicalization and religious and political extremism (Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, 2016). Terrorism laws in Malaysia, especially after the repeal of ISA, are essentially punitive despite their emphasis on rehabilitation. Some civil society groups, such as Lawyers for Liberty (LFL) in Malaysia, accused it of 'draconian laws' (Malaysia Now, September 25, 2021). For instance, possession of books, videos, audio, images, and anything related to terrorism is prosecutable and may face imprisonment of up to seven years. Donation to terrorist causes and pledging allegiance (bay'ah) to the terrorist organization can be imprisoned not less than seven years and not exceeding thirty years according to the Penal Code 130N and 130E. (See Table 2). These offenses are non-bailable cases, which means the suspects under investigation will remain under police custody before and during the trial. Table 2 shows terrorism offenses in Malaysia, the laws applicable for the crimes based on Penal Code 130b-130r, AMLATFA, and punishments imposed on defendants.

Table 2. Offences, applicable law and punishment

Offences	Applicable Laws	Punishment
Possession of images, video, audio, flags Possession of books, reading materials	Penal Code 130JB (a) and (b)	Imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years, fine, and forfeiture of property/assets
donation (terrorism financing)	Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001.	15 years' imprisonment, fine
	Penal Code 130N. Also related section: 130P, 130Q, 130R	Imprisonment for a term of not less than seven (7) years but not exceeding 30 years.
Travelling to support	Penal Code 130JA	Maximum

terrorism		imprisonment 30 years, fine.
Recruitment <i>Bai'ah</i> (pledge of allegiance) to the terrorist group	Penal Code 130E Penal Code 130J(1)(a)(b)	Maximum imprisonment 30 years, fines, forfeiture of property/assets
Support and promotion of terrorist ideology	Penal Code 130J(1)(a)(b)	forfeiture of property/assets
Committing terrorist acts	Penal Code 130C	Imprisonment for a term seven years, and not exceeding 30 years, fines, forfeiture of property/assets

Source: Adapted from El-Muhammady, A. *Malaysia: Balancing National Development, National Security and Cybersecurity Policy* in Scott N. Romaniuk and Mary Manijikian, *Routledge Companion to Global Cyber-Security Strategy*, London: Routledge, 2021.

Despite criticism, Malaysia continues to enforce preventive laws until today. During its brief administration, the Pakatan Harapan government (2018-2020) promised to amend the terrorism laws, particularly SOSMA (News Straits Times, November 66, 2019). The initiative came to an end after its collapse in February 2020.

RADICALIZATION PROCESS

The radicalization process is the stage prior to the individual taking violent actions. There are various theories that explain radicalization. These theories vary according to context. More precisely, the pathway of radicalization varies according to individual's gender, sex orientation, group, community, and country. In Malaysia, five stages of radicalization are identified occurred among local militants: (a) pre-radicalization (b) exposure, (c) internationalization (d) externalization and (e) actualization (El-Muhammady, 2020). Table 3 summarizes the stages of radicalization in Malaysia.

Table 3. Stages of Radicalization

Stage	Pre-radicalization	Exposure	Internalization	Externalization	Actualization
<i>Description</i>	person's life before the exposure and contact with radical ideas, person, and experience	the first contact and exposure to the radical/extremist views, person, and experience	Deepening process about radical or extremist ideas. It may strengthen the level of belief from mere followers to recruiters.	Externalizing inputs are acquired in the internalization stage.	The action is made based on the conviction generated in the cognitive, emotional, and faith-oriented narratives.
<i>Indicators/situation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family upbringing • Educational background • Association • Reading material • Childhood experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure via social media, friends, recruiter, family members. • Self-learning/self-radicalized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing deep interest in radical materials • Collecting extremist materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing extremist material online/offline. • Engagement at social media platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing the act of violence in the name of an ideology. • Pledging allegiance

Source: Adapted from El-Muhammady, A. *Radicalization Model Learning from Malaysian Militant-Extremist* in Rohan Gunaratna and Sabariah Hussin, *Terrorist Deradicalization in a Global Context: Success, Failure and Continuity*. London: Routledge, 2020.

Based on the Table 3, radicalization takes time to grow and nurture to reach the final stage of actualization or the act. It is unlikely for a person to wake up and become a terrorist (Gunaratna, 2020). Usually, it takes time, a particular process and pathway from pre-radicalization to actualization (Moghaddam, 2005). In my view, the understanding of pre-radicalization stage is vital to understand why specific individuals choose to support terrorism or are sympathetic to their struggle. Pre-radicalization provides an insight into the person's family upbringing, educational background, social environment, economic status, close associates, and childhood experience that shaped a person's worldview and value system in adulthood. In various interactions with former detainees, the detainees' childhood experience and upbringing are often being discussed and explored in addition to the later exposure that triggers

interest or 'tick' to radicalization. Lack of parental attention, sense of belongingness, strong family institutions developed individuals with a lack of confidence and self-worth (Institute for Youth Research Malaysia, 2017). In other words, it produces an individual who has specific vulnerability and lack of psychological needs such as attention, love, inner strength, confidence, and strong identity.

The exposure stage shows the state of individuals when they experience the first and subsequent contact with radical ideas, person, or experience. It is important to note that it is common for a person to be exposed to extremist-radical messages regularly. All of us are exposed to that kind of message from time to time (interview with former detainee, 2020). However, it takes a specific individual to accept and embrace those radical ideas and proceed further to commit violence. It is unlikely for an individual with a robust identity, strong value system, and support system to feel comfortable accepting violent methods and ways of life. In my observation, three possible scenarios may occur when an individual is exposed to a radical message,

(a) intense and immediate rejection and disapproval, knowing that it is against the mainstream values that they are part of. In this case, the radicalization process ends at this point. It is also known as abortive radicalization.

(b) Immediate approval and endorsement believe that it is acceptable for a person to commit violence for self-defense. It is morally and religiously justifiable to commit the act of violence. The person proceeds further to the next stage, i.e., the internalization stage.

(c) Confused, ambivalent, and unable to decide immediately after the exposure. However, this state is temporary or transitory, for they would make a final decision whether or not to accept or reject the notion of violence.

The internalization stage is a learning and deepening process about radical ideas. Usually, it is a self-indoctrination process facilitated by a recruiter and support group. At this point, the role of social media platforms is vital for facilitating the process, for it provides conducive space for secured interaction, sharing, and bonding. Specific indicators are showing the person is undergoing

internalization process such as increased interest in radical materials, collecting and reading extremist materials online and offline, contacting like-minded individuals to seek more inputs, expanding networking with likeminded individuals online or offline, more overt changes in terms of information and sharing during a conversation, expressing interest in traveling to conflict zones, express sympathy and support to specific groups related to militancy.

The internalization and externalization stage sometimes occurred simultaneously. When individuals have learned so much, they tend to externalize the inputs and share them with others. In this context, externalization refers explicitly to the 'act of sharing' with others what they have learned and internalized. This act of sharing manifests in social media posting, encouraging others to support, subscribe to their narratives and be part of the in-group against the out-group. Therefore, the main purpose of externalization is to gain sympathy or support, at least if not joining the group completely. A simple act such as 'Like' and 'Share' on their Facebook postings is sufficient to show the sign of support and endorsement of their narratives.

The actualization stage is the most lethal due to the actual act of violence. To some, showing the front of support, even endorsement donation is not enough. They must act on it, meaning, to translate the ideas into concrete action. Thus, acts of violence such as bombing, suicide missions, stabbing, and shooting innocent targets are the cumulative effect of violent radicalization that incubates before the actual act manifests.

3.THREE FORMS OF RADICALIZATION: RELIGIOUS, POLITICS AND HEALTH

First, this paper explains the concept of radicalization in religion, politics, and health. Then, discussion will focus on radicalization's orientation, narratives, drivers, manifestation, and threats to national security. Religious radicalization is extensively discussed in voluminous literature and research. Hashmi (2016) suggests that religion is often at the center of one's radicalization or radical ideas. Some scholars define religious radicalization as a process by which

a person or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo, or contradicts or undermines contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice' (Wilner and Dubouloz, 2010). Other scholars define it as 'an increase in or reinforcing extremism in individuals' thinking, sentiments, or behavior and groups of individuals' (Mandel, 2010). Alex Schmid quoted Baehr to define religious radicalization as, 'the concept radicalization defines an individual process, which external actors influence, causes socialization during which internalization and adoption of ideas-radicalization-place are supported and advanced in every form. [Armed] with these socializations, the person-internalization brings about a radical change of the social order. If the ideas and views represent an extremist ideology, they even seek to achieve their goals by means of violence' (Schmid, 2013). In short, we can say that religious radicalization can be understood as using religious justification to commit violence against others. It is important to note that religion is ontologically non-violent—religion essentializes the inner and external peace, harmony, and peaceful coexistence with humanity. However, admittedly under certain circumstances, a religion such as Islam may call for war as stated in the Qur'an. It is done as an act of self-defense, but not to cause disorder and destruction on earth. It is considered a sin to kill the innocent and cause destruction in society, the environment, and nature. However, it is equally important to acknowledge that extremism as an ideology and extremism as a group or individuals exist in all religions. They created division from within, and faction or 'school of thought' departed from the mainstream (al-Baghdadi, 1988). The existence of extremists who advocate extremist ideology is not a new phenomenon in the Muslim world. The emergence of Kharijites or Khawarij during the era of Uthman and Ali in the post-Prophetic era was a genesis of extremism in the Muslim world (Watt, 1968).

Khawarij is an Arabic term that carries the meaning of those who break away from the mainstream demonstrates to us that they are departing from the mainstream teachings of Islam to form a group or movement advocating extremism. Khawarij called for rebellion against rulers and caused disunity, confusion, chaos, and

destruction among the ummah. A similar strand of thought continues to exist in a modern world today, disguising as jihadi groups yet advocating the idea of takfiri or takfirism against Muslims, calling Muslim rulers taghut and the obligation to fight using weapons to overthrow those rulers. Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State group, and Jama'ah Islamiyyah were representatives of religious radicalization, evidenced by its ideology and conduct. Some scholars labeled them as neo-Kharijites. These groups are propagating their narratives and ideology and calling others to attack their enemies - close and afar. Those individuals who are radicalized by al-Qaeda or IS group are not only experiencing cognitive, emotive, faith-oriented radicalization; it has high potential to move to action-level. This is evidenced by its various attacks against specific targets across the world.

Next is political radicalization. It is another form of radicalization in the modern world today. Political radicalization is essentially the process of embracing radical ideas driven by politics, including political events, narratives, experience, and discourse. These elements are the essential ingredient of political radicalization. Lately, there is a growing phenomenon of political radicalization such as right wings extremism in the United States and Europe. In both cases, it is partially driven by xenophobic narratives, particularly mass migration from Latin America in the U.S. and the Middle East in the case of European countries and conspiracy theories (European Commission, 2021). In the U.S. today, right wings extremism and the QAnon movement are declared as new threats to the United States. In the post-presidential election, these movements participated in the Insurrection in Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021. It is considered as an 'elevated threat in 2021' by the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (US News & World Report, 2021). The political rhetoric and narratives played out by former President Donald J. Trump also contributed to the acceleration of right wings extremism in the U.S. across the Atlantic; the Brexit narratives, despite economic justification, also contain xenophobic narratives (US News & World Report, 2021). In Malaysia, political radicalization became more evident in the post-2018 General

Election, resulting from increased racial narratives played out in the political discourse. Pakatan Harapan (PH) policy involving the appointment of non-Malay ministers in the key positions in the spirit of reform has upset the Malay voters despite cheering up the mood among the non-Malay voters. The political rhetoric, which is racially charged, seems to be quiet down a bit after the change of government to Perikatan Nasional (PN) under Former Eighth Prime Minister and later, the ninth Prime Minister.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a new form of radicalization gradually emerged to the fore. This form of radicalization centered on health-related issues and vaccination. The proponent of health radicalization also incorporates religious narratives as a legitimizing mechanism to boost the integrity of narratives, in addition to conspiracy theory and the End of Times narratives (European Union, 2021). They emerged in the form of anti-vaccination movements (or better known as 'anti-vax') against the government policy to enforce vaccination against COVID-19. Interestingly, despite its advocacy of 'conspiracy theory narratives,' this movement received strong backing from professional groups, including some people in the medical and legal fraternity. Some anti-vax infused the narratives with religious elements such as the sign of End of Times (Judgement Day), the coming to the Messiah (Mahdi) and prepared for the end of the world. They stored up foods and necessities to prepare for the coming of Dajjal and the big battle between Mahdi and Dajjal (interview with counter-terrorism officer, November 2021). By virtue of its ideology or belief system, this form of radical movement departed from the mainstream is non-violent in nature, at least for now. Thus, there are no indicators and cases involved in using violence by this movement despite its radicalism.

Based on the three forms of radicalization above, we can draw several conclusions. First, radicalization has gradation. It occurs at the cognitive, affective, ideological, and activity levels. In other words, radicalization is not necessarily violent but depends on whether or not the actors are willing to translate the radical ideas in the form of violent acts. Second, radicalization is also

multidimensional, which appears in the state of religious, political, social, and even health radicalization. It is considered radical by virtue of its departure from the mainstream and calling for changing the status quo and state-official narratives. Third, the emergence of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic triggers the emergence of a new form of radicalization in our society. Finally, the fourth point is that despite radicalization or radical ideas in our midst, the authorities need to approach the problem judiciously to avoid excessive use of force that may undermine the trust between the authorities and the public.

Table 4 summarizes the dimensions of radicalization.

Table 4. Dimensions of radicalization

Dimension of Radicalization	Political	Religious	Health
<i>Orientation</i>	political	Religious	Health
<i>Belief System/ Narratives</i>	ethnonationalism, disfavour royal institution, racial politics, xenophobia, anti-migration, promotes separatism, seeking for changing status quo.	promoting and seeking to establish Islamic State (Daulah Islamiyyah) and Caliphate (Khilafah) in the modern world; a government that implement Shari'ah laws; opposition to their ideas are labeled as kafir, taghut; democracy as taghut-system; western made political system and ideology	vaccination as a form of control and surveillance. End of Days Theory Conspiracy Theory
<i>Manifestations</i>	incendiary political postings, racist remarks, separation from Malaysia, and hate speech call against the democratic process. Attempt to revive communist ideology; anti-monarch discourse; separation od Sabah and Sarawak movement from Malaysia also right wings extremism, QAnon (US)	The emergence of terrorist organizations/ groups. Extremist discourse IS-affiliates ISIS-Khurasan (Afghanistan)	Anti-vaccination movement; calling vaccination as a form of control and surveillance. Anti-vaccination movement
<i>Case</i>			

4. POSSIBLE THREATS TO MALAYSIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

This section explores the threats of radicalization in terms of religious, political, and health to Malaysia's national security. However, before we embark on the analysis, let us define the concept of national security. Malaysia's National Security Policy (NSP) defines national security as a state of being free from any threats, whether internally or externally, to its core values' (National Security Policy, 2019).

The above definition gives us several guides of what constitutes threats to our national security, such as: first, the situation of being free from threats either tangible or intangible; second, the dangers could be originated from internal and external sources; third, the threats may endanger its core values. In this context, the NSP identifies nine Core Values that need to be "maintained, preserved and strengthened to guarantee its survival as an independent, peaceful and sovereign nation" (National Security Policy, 2019). The core thrusts are as follows:

1. Territorial sovereignty and integrity;
2. Socio-political stability;
3. National integration;
4. Good governance;
5. Economic integrity;
6. Social justice;
7. Sustainable development;
8. People's security;
9. International recognition.

The MNSP also identified thirteen (13) key imperatives that existed in its national security environment, such as the fragility of national unity, challenges facing the federal democratic system, illegal immigrants and "refugees," disputes over territorial claims, extremism and terrorism, cybersecurity, disasters, crises,

transnational crime, pandemics, and infectious diseases, energy security, food security, and proliferation of nuclear arms and arms development program (National Security Policy, 2019).

Another critical document that one must refer to when discussing national security is Dasar Keselamatan dan Ketenteraman Awam (DKKA) (2019). It provides general guidelines of Malaysia's security, political, and public order. The DKKA document asserts that Malaysia is a multiethnic, religious and cultural society that seeks to preserve unity, harmony, and national integration based on the national ideology (Rukun Negara). In so doing, it maintains the balance, peace, and well-being of its people (DKKA, 2019). It outlines six core principles for protecting the security and public order such as:

- (a) protection of the constitution, the integrity of the laws, and principal states institutions
- (b) enhancement the governance and the integrity of the law enforcement agencies
- (c) improvement of the border security control
- (d) protection the national security and public order
- (e) elimination of drugs abuse
- (f) protection of national assets and key national installations

DKKA (2019) asserts that the Federal Constitution is the highest source of authority in Malaysia that protects the country's sovereignty and becomes a vital reference for the promulgation of laws. It delineates the constitutional monarchy, democratic process, and parliament, including the executive, legislative and judicial authorities. The constitution also enshrines the unique position of Islam as the religion of the Federation, the special rights of the native people in Sabah, Sarawak, and the Peninsular, the position of Bahasa Melayu as the national language that everyone must respect. Respect and preservation of these elements become the foundation of public order, harmonious relations, and national stability. Based on the preceding exposition, three key terms stand out in both documents, socio-political stability (political and social stability), extremism and terrorism (religious extremism and ideological

threats), and infectious diseases (health security). These components are considered potential threats to Malaysia's national security.

Regarding political radicalization, one can observe a gradual increase of radicalization among some quarters resulting in political discourse particularly related to the institution of monarchy, such as the mockery against the royal institution, royal family, and the call for establishing a republic in lieu of the constitutional monarchy. The call may not gain traction in mainstream society, but it remains as undercurrent discourse among some groups. In addition, increased reporting on malicious attacks against Islam and racial-related issues is also observable in recent years and has caused public social, religious, and political anxiety. In 2019, Security Commission and Multimedia received 21,296 reports that involved cases related to racism, religion, and denigration of royal institutions (3R – race, religion, and royalty) (SKMM, September 11, 2019). In some cases, politicians also play a role in inciting religious and political hatred, intentionally or unintentionally. The call for separation of Sabah and Sarawak from the Federation also constitutes a manifestation of political radicalization. This narrative has been employed regularly in both states to stir up public support during the election. Even though this may not amount to violent extremism or radicalization, it does cause political instability, racial tension, and possible exploitation by foreign agents to destabilize Malaysia.

Similarly, in the case of religious radicalization. It is clearly against the foundational values of Malaysia due to the extreme nature of their discourse. Extremist-militant groups such as Daesh-affiliates in Malaysia promote the narratives of a radical interpretation of Islam by calling the current government un-Islamic, manifestation of taghut, and the call for the abolition of a democratic system in lieu of Islamic State. The group also accused Muslims who are not supportive of their cause as unbelievers, and they are in cohort with the taghut-government. These types of Muslims, in their view, have to be eliminated through "jihad" (interview with former detainee, November 2021). Despite continuous government efforts to curb the spread of virulent ideologies such as Daesh, this narrative

remains active in social media platforms seeking to influence vulnerable youths. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic gives a new inspiration to legitimize their records, arguing that this pandemic occurs due to God's retribution for people who failed to implement Islamic laws in the country (former interview detainee, November 2021, 2021).

In the case of health radicalization, it is non-violent. No indicators show that the anti-vax would be taking a violent approach, such as overthrowing the government or attacking government or public infrastructure. However, this movement can challenge the state due to their refusal to take the vaccination. This situation may derail the government's vaccination policy and its integrity to control infectious diseases in the case of the COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccinations. In this regard, this movement is considered a 'radical group' or advocating 'radical ideology' because it refuses to follow the mainstream. It is possible that their radical thoughts would be acceptable in the future, especially when the time changes and it becomes part of the mainstream. The anti-vax movement had become more emboldened recently, primarily when Michael Yeadon, former Pfizer scientist who served as vice-president for Pfizer Inc. based in the United Kingdom, joined the call to "halt COVID-19 clinical trials" (Reuter, March 18, 2021). Even though many findings disputed Yeadon's claim, and some call his claim misinformation (Reuter, May 21, 2021) yet he is regarded as a "hero" for the anti-vax movement (Reuter, March 18, 2021).

It is also equally important to note that it is dangerous to accuse anti-vax of a threat to national security without considering and understanding their concerns for their refusal to take the vaccine (The Star, October 19, 2021). Some individuals refused to take vaccines due to health issues, age factors, freedom of choice, and religious reasons. A high-handed approach to 'making the life of anti-vax difficult' may cause resentment and generate more problems than solutions. Health literacy and education are considered the best way to tackle vaccine hesitancy (The Star, October 19, 2021). However, health radicalization that infused the theory conspiracy narratives and the end of the world that calls for

war poses severe threats to Malaysia's national security and public order. The emergence of a Telegram group known as Perjalanan Mimpi Yang Terakhir (PMYT) is one of the examples of this category. This Telegram group is led by a woman who used the name Sittah Annur as nom de guerre calling her followers to prepare for the third world war and the coming of Mahdi (Sinar Harian, September 18r 2021). Similarly, on 15 December 2021, German authorities have arrested several members of a Telegram group known as Drenden Offlinevernetzung in several locations in the eastern state of Saxony after they found out that this group discussed of killing state's prime minister, Michael Kretschmer. The Drenden Offlinevernetzung is known for anti-vaccination stance and Saxony police said they might be in possession of weapons capable of firing live rounds. Two crossbows were reportedly seized in the raids as well. These incidents proved that although health issue is not considered as security matter or treated in the same manner like terrorism, but it is capable of generating similar effect, at least to undermine the state's initiative to tackle the pandemic (The Guardian, 15 December 2021).

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, we can draw several conclusions. First, radicalization can take a variety of forms, either religious, political, or health radicalization. It is a natural reaction to a specific stimulus that exists in the internal and external ecosystem. Second, radicalization is a personal experience. It is experienced by a person who lives in a particular environment and reacts to a specific stimulus. Pre-radicalization life such as family upbringing and education also play a significant role in determining the nature of radicalization. Third, radicalization is not necessarily making a person terrorist unless the person translates the ideas into violent acts. In many instances, non-violent radicalization is more common than violent radicalization. However, it should not be taken lightly. Preventive measures in the form of intervention programs are necessary to dissuade people from continuing on the path of radicalization. Fourth, health radicalization is a new form of radicalization observable recently, including in Malaysia. However,

one needs to distinguish between those who refused to take the vaccine on a legitimate basis and those who propagate conspiracy theory narratives infused with religious and political elements. The latter is considered dangerous at two levels; religious and political due to its deviant teachings, and it may pose security threats to national security and public order.

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