

The History of Moderate Islam in Indonesia and Its Influence on the Content of National Education

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Abstract

Indonesia is a multicultural country consisting of various religions and ethnic groups. This diversity is unlikely to last long if the concept of Islamic teaching is filled with an exclusive and radical understandings. Moderate in Indonesia is known as religious moderation or *Islam Wasathiyah* which is understood as a concept of religious understanding that positions itself in the middle or has a middle stand. Moderate Islam in Indonesia came along with the teachings of Islam in the 13th century. According to historians, the content of Islam entering Indonesia has experienced moderation so that it is different from the Islamic teachings in Mecca and Egypt at that time. Yet, it is this difference that made Islam in Indonesia survived and turned to be the dominant religion in the archipelago. The history of moderate Islam in Indonesia begins with the Sufis in Aceh, followed by Walisongo in Java, public figures and Islamic organizations during the fight of independence, and authorities of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the present days. This article is a result of a library research conducted in a qualitative approach. The method used for study is descriptive analysis toward recent relevant sources within the last 3 years. The result of study showed that the history of moderate Islam in Indonesia historically moves from essential dimension to authoritative one. The essential dimension covers moderate Islam in terms of *Islam Wasathiyah* (middle stand) values in various persuasive approaches. Whereas authoritative dimension is referred to the time moderate Islam is taken into the formal forms (government programs) called “Religious Moderation”. This further penetrates the content of education and feature of national curriculum.

Keywords: History, Moderate Islam, National Education

Introduction

The character of Islam in Indonesia is reflected in the models of worship practice of its people. Although globally Islam in the world embraces the same pillar of Islam, the same pillar of faith, and religious rituals, in reality, each region must have its own uniqueness that differs from others. The typical characteristic of Islam in Indonesia distinguishing it from other is the social-based traditional dimension deriving from *Asy’ariyah* Islamic concept (tawhid), *Maturidiyah* Sufism, and the *Syafiiyah* school.¹ Therefore, the plot of Islamic history in Indonesia cannot be separated from those facts. In addition, the multi-ethnic of Indonesian community puts moderation as an alternative which inevitably has to be implemented in order to narrow the friction between sects and religions. This is also the reason for the existence and survival of moderate Islam in the midst of a pluralistic society of Indonesia.

The discussion about moderate Islam in Indonesia should depart from 3 approaches. First, *Al-qur’an*. Verse 143 in *Surah Al-Baqarah* mentions the term ‘*Ummatan Wasatan*’ which means the middle people. ‘Middle’ in this context (by the moderates) is understood as an Islamic perspective taking a middle stand, it is not orthodox nor liberal.² More broadly, it is the concept of understanding Islam which is monotheistic from within (non-negotiable) but flexible (tolerance) to the outside. In this middle stand concept, it is believed that the religion followed is correct but they cannot impose it on others, so that they can live in diversity.

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¹ Fisher Zulkarnain (2012), “Fenomena Madzhab dan Sekte-sekte di Indonesia: Sebuah Studi Medan Dakwah,” *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*, Vol. 6, No. 19, pp. 41-53.

² Mohd Anuar Ramli, Paizah Hj Ismail and Ahmad Badri Abdullah (2016), “Pendekatan Wasathiyah (sederhana) dalam Hubungan Sosial Masyarakat Majemuk di Malaysia,” *Jaqfi: Jurnal Aqidah dan Filsafat Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 18.

Second, the practices of Prophet Muhammad in his life time. When Islam held power in Mecca and its surroundings, the Prophet never forced non-Muslims to embrace Islam. Da'wah carried out by the Prophet was not authoritarian, he did not take justice into his own hands, and never damaged the principles of individuals who are firmly committed to his previous religion.³ For example, the Prophet never forced his uncle (Abu Thalib) to embrace Islam but offered it on wisdom (*bil hikmah*). Even so, the Prophet never hated his uncle, and nor did his uncle who were willing to help Islam despite his non-Muslim status. This is the clearest example of moderate Islam, where every religious believer helps each other in differences.

Third, the role of *Walisongo*. The character of Indonesian Islam is closely linked to da'wa Islam performed by Walisongo in the shade of animist and dynamism. Walisongo is not only well-known in Indonesia, but their charisma is also recognized in other Malay areas such as Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam.⁴ Islamic characters developed by these Wali became the spirit of Islamic organizations during the fight for independence period such as Nahdhatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. This Islamic dimension also spread to nationalist figures who are the bearers of Indonesian sovereignty that upholds the unity and integrity of the nation. If the nuances of moderate Islam did not exist in the religious spirit of Walisongo, Pancasila which contains the precepts of unity and diversity would have not possibly been realized to these days.

Recently, Indonesian government has been very concerned in socializing the discourse of moderate Islam under religious moderation approach. The policy is not only directed toward public community but it is also emphasized on all government organizations and institutions, particularly those within the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, it is not without a problem. The emergence of opposition parties who reject the existence of Moderate Islam with various arguments and diverse motives has challenged its implementation. As a result, the society is divided and intolerant behavior is getting stronger in Indonesia. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for some groups to propagate that religious moderation is a political mask to break the unity of Indonesian Muslims. These circles are usually loved by classical Muslim groups intending to adhere the concept of Indonesian religious practices to the traditional concept practiced at the time of the Prophet. Even worse, these circles are also trying to change the system of the Indonesian state to embrace the concept of *Khilafah*.

This article is essential to mediate the friction between traditional Islam and moderate Islam in Indonesia. It intends to highlight that the diversity in Indonesia survives to these days due to the adherent of Islam moderate concept. By studying the historical record of Indonesian Islam Moderate, people can be made aware that the promotion carried by the government is a necessity, as Indonesia is a multicultural country consisting of various religions, tribes, ethnicities. Therefore, it is also needs to oriented in education. This article is significant to shatter negative perceptions and support Islam moderate education so that it can be increasingly enforced. History has proven that through the contextualization of Islam (instilling moderate Islamic values) Indonesia can anticipate and avoid divisions and bloodshed due to religious pretexts (identity masks).

Moderate Islam among Scholars

According to Bernard Lewis, the notion of moderate in Islam is a vital part of the Muslim society discourse since the classical period. This is reflected in the content of Islamic teachings which promotes the values of tolerance and respect between cultures.⁵ It is also in line with the Prophet's statement that differences are a blessing and a destiny ordained by Allah SWT. This principle then continues to take root and grow into the foundation of moderate Islam until modern times as it is today. The history has proven that intolerant and radical movements in the name of Islam was almost non-existent at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Massacre of non-Muslims, expulsion of infidels, or the burning of places of worship hardly ever happened. These radical movements only emerge lately when some Muslims misunderstood the concept of da'wa *rahmatan lil alamin*.

³ M. Affan and Ajid Thohir (2019), "Conflict Resolution in the Mecca–Medina War: Sirah Nabawiyah Study," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 323.

⁴ Abdurrohman Kasdi (2017), "The Role Of Walisongo In Developing The Islam Nusantara Civilization," *Addin*, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 1.

⁵ Adian Husaini (2017), "Bernard Lewis dan Apologia Barat," *Tsaqafah*, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 25.

The Muslim group such as Taliban and Al-Qaeda are few groups claimed as radical but get the support from the community. These groups are certainly different from the concept of moderate Islam which accepts modern advancements in a limited dimension. Although their roles in keeping the purity of Islamic teachings are undeniable, their understanding of Islam is irrelevant and against ideologies of modern countries. For example, the Caliphate system was common and the typical feature of Islamic government at the time of the Prophet.⁶ However, in this modern day it is seen as a contradictory concept, and some countries are against it.

According to Abou Fadl (Kuwait), the current features of Islam can be classified into two models, puritan and moderate. Moderate in this context is different from other terms such as progressive, reformist, and modernism. Progressive and reformist are closely related to the dictatorial implementation model.⁷ Some people claim that reformist thinking (revolution) is an acceleration towards the advancement of Islam. In fact, many liberal perspectives lead to the collapse of a civilization and the loss of local wisdom. The term reformist is likewise. According to Abu Fadl, they are a group of Muslims who reject modernity and tend to be reactionary.

Therefore, moderate Islam is a middle way. It is in line with statements in the Qur'an and Prophet actions when dealing with extreme problems. If there were crucial and sensitive problems, the Prophet would not handle them in a rush. He would always take a middle way which then interpreted as deliberation. Likewise, moderate Islam has the characteristics of respecting the wisdoms of the past by balancing it against the actualization of the modern era.⁸

However, some people disagree with the concept of moderate Islam. Greg Fealey, for example, viewed moderate Islam as the product of the West (America) which was deliberately promoted in an attempt to minimize the presence of terrorism. Similarly, Hasyim Muzadi argued that moderate Islam is a mask of the liberal Islam group to get their teaching accepted by the community.⁹ Muzadi further added that liberal Islam moves behind the shadow of moderate Islam so that rational dimension (burhani) can become a dominant tool in understanding the Qur'an and Hadist.

Along with Fealey and Muzadi, Chomsky also conveyed the same thing, according to him, this is America's strategy to obtain international support related to ideological friction between the West and Muslims. Moderate discourse is deliberately broadcasted to create a new identity to fight those who are against America. Akbar Ahmed (Pakistan) is also one of the figures who refused to classify Islam into the category of terrorist and moderate. He rather classified it into mythical, modernist and textualist.¹⁰ The mythical circles or that is also known as mystical Islamic groups are those who believe that the supernatural dimension plays an important role in the life of Muslims and their worship practices. This group existed around the 13th century when the Sufis and their teachings were in the rise.

Meanwhile, the modernists are Islamic groups aiming to balance modern culture and civilization. These groups believe that Islam can adapt to and compete with the existing western civilization. The groups were predicted dominant in the early 20th century. Lastly, textualists are hard-line Muslim groups such as Hamas, the Taliban and Ikhwanul Muslimin. They are who understand Qur'an traditionally and think that Muslim glory can only be restored by implementing the teachings of the Prophet in the 7th century. To this groups, Islam is currently being oppressed, and this oppression will not end without serious resistance.¹¹

The author adopts the figures above to illustrate that Islam moderates itself, even since the beginning, has had pros and cons (supporters and opponents). All have their own perception on how Islamic concept should be practiced in the community. In Indonesian context, the discourse of Islam Moderate which tends to move in promoting tolerance and contextualization of religion is more relevant,

⁶ Happy Saputra, Mahdalena Nasrun and Muhammad Anzaikhan (2021), "Revitalizing Local Wisdom in Committing Radicalism in Aceh," *INNOVATIO: Journal for Religious Innovation Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 112-121.

⁷ Qurrotul Ainiyah (2019), "Contemporary Islamic Jurisprudence though in the Work of Khaled Abou El Fadl," *Jurisprudensi*, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 22.

⁸ Rusli Rusli (2009), "Gagasan Khaled Abu Fadl Tentang Islam Moderat versus Islam Puritan (Perspektif Sosiologi Pengetahuan)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Ushuluddin*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 99.

⁹ Wasisto Raharjo Jati (2013), "Radicalism in the Perspective of Islamic-Populism: Trajectory of Political Islam in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 268.

¹⁰ Alison Edgley (2000), *The Social and Political Thought of Noam Chomsky*, London: Routledge, p. 45.

¹¹ Nafi Muthohirin (2015), "Radikalisme Islam dan Pergerakannya di Media Sosial," *Afkaruna*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 240-259.

considering that Indonesia is a constitutional state based on democracy. Indonesia is not a theocratic country neither it is country that constitutionally recognizes one specific religion. Therefore, the figures who proclaim the importance of moderate Islam is more suitable to be referred to and counted on in maintaining Indonesian unity and avoiding division over existing religion and ethnic differences.

Wasathiyah Definition

One of popular terms related to moderate Islam in Indonesia is *Islam Wasathiyah*. Basically, moderate Islam and *Islam Wasathiyah* has the same meaning, but due to Indonesian Muslim fondness for linguistically Islamic term, the term *Islam Wasathiyah* is considered more acceptable for the community.¹² *Wasathiyah*, in Arabic, originates from the word *wasatha* which has several meanings including a middle point and balanced. It also contains the meaning of justice, firmness, goodness, security, and strength.

The word *wasathiyah* has two meanings; always avoiding extreme behavior or disclosure which lead to a middle dimension or path. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) the word moderate is define as tending to be in the middle point (radical) and not in an extreme understanding.¹³ As a middle liner, one must be able to stand up straight and hold on to the truth to unite two problems in a balanced way without being biased and can resolve them harmoniously without having to sacrifice the existing truth values.

Putting forward a moderate attitude should be adapted to the main character of a Muslim. Interpreting moderate means making Islam a method of thinking, interacting and behaving. Being balanced in responding to two situations so that one can find a suitable attitude between Islamic principles and Muslim traditions in each respective region, including the balance of faith, worship and morals. Quraish Shihab interprets the word *wasathan* as middle, moderate, and exemplary, in which, the position will direct individuals not to look at one particular side but to act fairly.¹⁴

Presently, the meaning of the word Islam and *wasathiyah* creates a necessity for Muslims to apply values contained in Islamic teachings which includes tolerance and respect for plurality in order to bring peace to the world and reject any kinds of extreme actions and violence. The main purpose is to avoid war and create peace, safety, and justice for every individual in the world without exception.

The History and Origin of Moderate Islam

Some historians argued that when Islam came to Indonesia, it was no longer taught in its original concept such as applied at the time of the Prophet. Clifford Geertz even considered that Indonesian Islam was not the same as the model of Islam in Egypt and Mecca which are the central Muslim zones at that time.¹⁵ Meanwhile, according to Djajadiningrat, the feature of Indonesian Islam has been influenced by *irfani* (Mystical) dimension of the Persians and Indians. However, Azyumardi Azra, an Indonesian Muslim intellectual is against this perception. Azra claims that the features of Indonesian Islam correlate with those of the Middle East in the 17th century. In fact, the model of interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah among Southeast Asians resemble that of Middle Eastern Muslims.

Basically, the mystical dimension featuring Islam in Indonesia is not influenced by *Irfani* (India) epistemology, but it is the acculturation of Islamization process in Indonesia which was the dominant adherents of animism and dynamism. For example, the mystical dimension existed in Indonesia is different from that in India and Persia. Mystical dimension in Indonesia tends to come from local superstition meanwhile the mystical dimension in India rises from *Khasyaf* that is later known as Sufism.¹⁶ The myth in Indonesia believes that sweeping the floor unclean will bring a lazy husband,

¹² Zainun Wafiqatun Niam (2019), "Konsep Islam Wasathiyah Sebagai Wujud Islam Rahmatan lil 'alamin: Peran Nu dan Muhammadiyah dalam Mewujudkan Islam Damai di Indonesia," *Palita: Journal of Social Religion Research*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 91-106.

¹³ Trini Diyani (2019), "Implementasi Paradigma Islam Wasathiyah; Strategi Menjaga Masa Depan Keindonesiaan," *SALAM: Jurnal Sosial dan Budaya Syar-i*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 303-316.

¹⁴ Syafri Samsudin (2021), "Konsep Moderasi Islam Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab dan Relevansinya Terhadap Pendidikan Agama Islam Kontemporer," Undergraduate Thesis, Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung.

¹⁵ Ahmad Sugeng Riady (2021), "Agama dan Kebudayaan Masyarakat Perspektif Clifford Geertz," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia (JSIAI)*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 13-22.

¹⁶ Mahli Zainudin Tago (2017), "Agama Dan Integrasi Sosial Dalam Pemikiran Clifford Geertz," *Kalam*, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 79.

sitting on a pillow can cause ulcers, and taking a seat in front of the door will get someone far away from his/her soulmate. In fact, beyond all these beliefs, lies moral messages implied indirectly by Indonesian parents in the past.

The rejection for Indian Muslim concept as the basis for Islam Nusantara is also voiced by Mark Woodward. He claims that the feature of Java's Islam is purely a reflection of the model of Islam in the Middle East. This can be seen from various Javanese Muslim religious rituals such as *grebeg*, *selamatan*, *kalimosodo* which are the acculturation of Islamic teachings with the local wisdoms of Java.¹⁷ Islamic preachers in Java, such as Wali Songo, used a cultural approach so that Islamic teachings could easily be absorbed and accepted by the Javanese community, whose dominant religion at that time was Hindu-Buddhist.

In addition, the ideology of monotheism in Indonesia that is strengthened by Wali Songo, has grown significantly because of the multi-ethnic of Indonesian society. In the 19th century, Ash'ariyah and Maturidiyah school of thoughts began to rise and were considered as the concept of moderate Islam. According to Ahkmad Munawar, the emergence of this school of thoughts was different from that of Khawarij and Mu'tazilah during the time of Ali bin Abi Thalib. While Khawarij and Mu'tazilah tended to separate and differentiate itself from the primary Islam, moderate Islam, on the contrary, aims to unite diverse religious features.¹⁸ Moderate Islam seems to bridge the friction between sects and religions so that national integrity is maintained. More fully, the historical series of moderate Islam origin is illustrated in the following sub-headings;

Islamization by Sufis

Various historical researchers note that model of Islam in Indonesia is built on a long history of Islamization. As it has been previously explained, before Islam came to Indonesia, ethnographic research concluded that Indonesia was a region in which religions were characterized with the most conspicuous animist character in East Asia. The form of animism practices is apparent from community belief on the involvement or influence of ancestral spirits on the life that is being lived.¹⁹ This belief is then transformed into rituals of worshiping the spirits of those who have died in the hope of getting good luck or avoiding evil. The Sufis, then successfully maneuvered this animistic habit when they entered Indonesia with a moderate Islamic approach. Moderate in this context is a condition where the Sufis did not directly claim that the practices of animism are haram, but how they Islamize those practices towards local wisdom that is monotheistic.

Starting from the 13th century, the Sufis (followers of Sufism) began entering Indonesia, particularly Aceh region for trade. Being the first stop of Islam in Indonesia, Aceh was then called 'Serambi Mekkah' (the porch of Mecca).²⁰ The Sufis that initially came for trading purposes began to spread the values of da'wah (Islamization) in various models. For example, implementing syar'i buying and selling principles, showing morally gentle and kind attitudes, and marrying indigenous citizen after recommending them to embrace Islam. Some researchers believe that the Sufis who entered Indonesia had previously been in contact with Arab, Gujarati, and even Chinese culture.

Considering the Islamization in Indonesia which involves local traditions, it is presumable that similar situations also happen in other regions before the Sufis set their feet in the Archipelago.²¹ As a result, assimilation between various acculturations is inevitable. It is on this rationale the researchers argue that the feature of Islam in Indonesia is not a pure concept anymore like the one in Mecca and Medina. Beyond this, unwittingly, moderate values will be born over time. The route of Islam entry into Indonesia which passed various stages was unlikely to survive if the Sufis did not apply the concept of moderate Islam. Logically, it is moderate values that can possibly be accepted by various ethnic groups and tribes without serious conflict or resistance.

¹⁷ Syarif Hidayatullah (2020), "Gagasan Islam Nusantara Sebagai Kearifan Lokal di Indonesia," *Panangkaran: Jurnal Penelitian Agama dan Masyarakat*, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 1.

¹⁸ Khairan Muhammad Arif (2020), "Konsep Moderasi Islam Dalam Pemikiran," *Millah*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 307-344.

¹⁹ Ellya Roza and Yasnel Yasnel (2017), "Islamisasi di Riau; Kajian Sejarah dan Budaya Tentang Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Kuntu Kampar," *POTENSIA: Jurnal Kependidikan Islam*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 133-163.

²⁰ Dalimunthe Dalimunthe (2017), "Kajian Proses Islamisasi di Indonesia (Studi Pustaka)," *Jurnal Studi Agama dan Masyarakat*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 115-125.

²¹ Taufani Taufani (2018), "Pengaruh Sufisme Di Indonesia," *Potret Pemikiran*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 87-97.

In a point of fact, the Sufis entering Indonesia were the moderates of Shafii school. The moderate dimension can be seen when Asy'ariyah-Maturidiyah adherents take the middle path from the two poles of Jabariyah (surrender) and Qadariyah (endeavourer).²² These Sufi circles believe that there is a dimension of endeavor that must be pursued to the highest possibility, but there is also a certain phase of resignation (tawakal) when all efforts have been made. Historically, there are close similarities between the Sufis entering Indonesia and Al-Ghazali's Islamic model, which is dominant with the (moderate) intellectual-Sufism concept. Al-Ghazali is a figure who is proven to be looking for a middle way from the tendencies of bayani (fiqh) and burhani (philosophy). His attitudes in moderating the dimensions of thought for not being loosely free inspire Indonesian Sufis in performing Islamic da'wah. What is new regarding the Islamization carried out by the Sufis is how their existence differs in the pre-independence and post-independence eras. Prior to Indonesian independence period, islamization carried out by Sufis was dominantly concerned with Islamic da'wah movement. Simply put, the islamization in this period is more likely to focus on the monotheistic dimension, as the case with the early Islamic movement in Mecca that taught the values of *aqidah*. Hence, it is not surprising that at the time the Sufi is a figure who likes to self-isolate and stays away from the hustle and bustle of the world. If they happened to have students, the students will come to their zone, which is usually located far from the crowds.

After Indonesian independence, the Sufi movement should no longer stayed the same and be isolated. Sufis in this era are more ideally known as 'tie Sufis.' That is, how a Sufi is involved in businesses of the modern world and provides enlightenment for the various existing inequalities. Sufis in this era, ideally, should also be involved in political movements, take part in selecting the nation's leaders, and make da'wah on the political stage as the most exhaustive media in spreading goodness the people. When associated with the time of the Prophet, this was an era where the Prophet left his contemplation area (in the Hira cave) and was more intense in winning the leadership stage. In this context, what has been considered taboo, that Sufis merge into the millennial world to provide enlightenment, is a novelty and uniqueness worth further exploration.

The Role of Walisongo

After the entry of Islam in Aceh through the Sufis reached its peak, it began to spread to other regions of the Archipelago (Indonesia). The most popular figures of da'wah Islam at this time were those known as the 'nine guardians' (Wali Songo).²³ Historically, Wali Songo were propagators of Islamic teachings in Java, precisely in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Javanese population is the dominant ethnic group in Indonesia, even now almost half of the Indonesian population reside in Java.

Wali Songo whose zoning were in Java, would likely get in contact with Javanese traditions which are salient with Hindu-Buddhist culture. However, Wali Songo were accepted by Javanese people for spreading Islam with a moderate character. They were able to take a middle path from the traditional spiritual dimension and the concept of secular thought that spread to Indonesia.²⁴ Wali Songo did not promote Islam on its extreme features which are against the existing traditions, they carried out Islamization continuously and gradually by embracing local cultures instead of immediately eliminating them. Although at this era of Wali Songo the number of Muslim did not raise significantly, the foundation they built accelerated the next generation preachers. Accordingly, this era was referred as the era of transition in which the Hindu-Javanese values were transformed towards Islamic teachings.

Interestingly, the transition from Hinduism to Islam took place peacefully without any large-scale bloodshed. It shows that the model of moderate Islam practiced by Wali Songo was a great success and accepted willingly by the community. Even to these days, Javanese people are known as the most tolerant ethnic group among all other ethnic groups in the Archipelago.²⁵ The distinguished model or concept of Wali Songo's Islamization is how Javanese and Islamic culture is able to find a middle ground so that they do not destroy but strengthen each other instead. The essence of Islamic teachings is preserved without jeopardizing a Muslim's *aqidah*.

²² Asep Abdurrohman Abdurrohman (2018), "Eksistensi Islam Moderat Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Rausyan Fikr: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pencerahan*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 29-40.

²³ Dewi Evi Anita (2014), "Walisongo: Mengislamkan Tanah Jawa (Suatu Kajian Pustaka)," *Wahana Akademika*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 24.

²⁴ Moh. Nailul Muna (2020), "Moderate Islam in Local Culture Acculturation: The Strategy of Walisongo's Islamization," *Islamuna: Jurnal Studi Islam*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 166-184.

²⁵ Ahmad Sodikin and Muhammad Anas Ma'arif (2021), "Penerapan Nilai Islam Moderat Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di Perguruan Tinggi," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 188-203.

Nonetheless, individuals opposed to the Wali Songo Islamization approach continue to exist. This apathetic group believes that the Wali are overly reliant on popular culture and the media in their efforts to disseminate Islam over the world. Yenny (Gusdur's daughter) stated categorically that this was not a problem. For her, it was appropriate for the Wali Songo to employ culture as a tool of da'wah because religion and culture were inextricably linked.²⁶ Both are strongly intertwined and contribute significantly to Islam's status as a worldwide religion. According to Yenny, Wali Songo has established a paradigm of Islamic moderation that Indonesian Muslims should emulate, particularly in averting the nation's fragmentation.

One of the most popular Wali Songo is Sunan Kalijaga. According to Supriyanto (a cultural figure in Semarang), Sunan Kalijaga is a Muslim thinker as well as a cultural figure. Sunan Kalijaga is empirical evidence that Islam is successfully accepted and respected when it takes the middle way of the existence of local religion and culture. In fact, Sunan Kalijaga is very creative in using past cultural media as an instrument in the spread of Islam in his area.²⁷ As for one of the cultural assets that is used as a propaganda mediator is 'gamelan'. Gamelan through the cold hands of Sunan Kalijaga is able to exist and is even very popular until it is in a form like the current era. What was initiated by Sunan Kalijaga influenced wayang culture to form a more dramatic and sensational form.

Through wayang performances, Sunan Kalijaga instills peaceful and tolerant Islamic principles. Without recognizing it, many Hindu-Javanese people who are serious about studying Islam have decided to embrace it joyfully through the wayang cultural method. Sunan Kalijaga embodied the concept of moderate Islam, which later served as the foundation for reformist Islam's da'wah movement.²⁸

Moderation during Independence

The spirit of moderate Islam is not only seen in the early phases of the entry of Islam into the archipelago. More than that, this was also found in the era of independence until post-independence. When the proclamation of Indonesian independence was proclaimed on August 17, 1945, the heroes of independence agreed to establish Indonesia on the pillars of a moderate state.²⁹ The Indonesian state system does not adhere to a secular or communist state system where religion and government affairs are separated. Indonesia was formed by upholding religious awareness as stated in the Pancasila, namely the first principle as a concrete form so that it can recognize the existence of multi-religious nations in a tolerant frame.

The history of the formation of Pancasila, especially the first precepts, has indeed experienced a lot of debate. At first, the first precepts of Pancasila were more inclined towards Muslims, which read; "The obligation to carry out Islamic law for its adherents". Furthermore, the Investigating Body for Preparing Indonesia's Independence (BPUPKI) which consists of neutral nationalists, Muslim nationalists, and Christian nationalists work together in determining the basic model of the Indonesian state.³⁰ In the end, a 'middle way' (moderate) was taken by changing the sound of the first precept to 'The Godhead of the One'. This change was accepted in a conducive manner even by elite Muslim nationalist figures at that time such as Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, Teuku Moh. Hassan, Moh. Hatta and other Muslim intellectuals. This event and agreement later became a historical record and became known as the Jakarta Charter event (22 June 1945).

By the turn of the twenty-first century, Moderate Islam had expanded throughout Indonesia and the rest of the world. This is demonstrated by Indonesia's role in disseminating Moderate values via Islamic intellectual personalities. Indonesia, via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hosts a variety of conferences and partnerships centered on the paradigm of just, peaceful, and tolerant relations between religions.³¹ The conference, which took place in Indonesia, drew people from throughout Asia, the Pacific, and

²⁶ Zainal Abidin (2012), "Pemikiran Abdurrahman Wahid Tentang Islam dan Pluralitas," *Humaniora*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 373.

²⁷ Naufaldi Alif, Laily Maftukhatul and Majidatun Ahmala (2020), "Akulturasi Budaya Jawa Dan Islam Melalui Dakwah Sunan Kalijaga," *Al'adalah*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 143-162.

²⁸ Bayu Anggoro (2018), "Wayang dan Seni Pertunjukan: Kajian Sejarah Perkembangan Seni Wayang di Tanah Jawa sebagai Seni Pertunjukan dan Dakwah," *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)*, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 122.

²⁹ Rendy Adiwilaga (2020), "Ketuhanan Pancasila Dan Ketuhanan Islamisme: Sebuah Tinjauan Teoritis," *Jisipol*, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 13.

³⁰ Ariesman and Iskandar (2020), "Histori Piagam Jakarta: Spirit Perjuangan Penerapan Nilai Islam Secara Yuridis Konstitusional," *Bustanul Fuqaha: Jurnal Bidang Hukum Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 458-471.

³¹ Faris Maulana Akbar (2020), "Peranan dan Kontribusi Islam Indonesia pada Peradaban Global," *Jurnal Indo-Islamika*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 40-49.

even Europe. Not only that, but the actualization of Indonesia's Moderate Islam is also evident in Indonesia's collaboration with Extreme Muslim movements such as Hamas to end the Palestinian conflict. On the Asian continent, Indonesia's government maintains cordial relations with Muslim Patani (Thailand). Indeed, many Muslims from Thailand continue to study in Asia, particularly the Aceh region, to this day. Moderate Islam is also becoming more entrenched in national groups such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Al-Washliyah, Persis, Perti, etc, to name a few.³²

This group, which promotes religious nationalism, is a product of an Indonesian religious community that is peaceful. Without these reforming organizations' moderating influence, Indonesia will undoubtedly face internal war prior to gaining independence. This organization, via its varied educational spirits, is able to mature their respective congregations in order for them to live in harmony with one another despite their differences. The period's growing religious zeal is also reflected in an increase in the use of the headscarf in Indonesia, which is not accompanied by significant bigotry. The notion of Moderate Islam has also spread to a variety of dimensions, including an increase in pilgrimage, the establishment of numerous Islamic-based educational institutions, and even the establishment of various sharia-based financial systems.

The rebirth of the Islamic spirit in Indonesia is proven by the fact that Indonesia ranks first in the world in terms of adherents. Naturally, this achievement is contingent upon Islam in Indonesia remaining silent on the khilafiyah issue. Islam in Indonesia is capable of distinguishing between primary and secondary concepts of worship. This is referred to as moderate thinking in a broad sense.³³ According to Eliraz, Indonesia's growth of Islam is distinct from the Middle East's. If the Middle East saw a rebirth of Islam as a result of the intellectual political element of the execution of core and militant Islamic teachings, Indonesia saw a revival of Islam as a result of its moderation. Islam is popular in Indonesia because it promotes peace, tolerance, and acculturation.

Numerous organizations that arose in preparation for independence, eventually moved as mediation centers so that the format of Indonesian politics moved significantly. At first, Indonesia was divided into various forms of kingdoms. There are many kingdoms in Indonesia and each one is separate from one another. When the invaders attacked the kingdom, one by one the kingdom collapsed due to the lack of technology and modern war equipment. Through Islamic organizations, many kingdoms in Indonesia merged with each other to expel the invaders.³⁴ The fusion occurred because the concept of moderate Islam offered was in line with noble values and did not eliminate civilization. As a result, a national unity was formed which later became the Republic of Indonesia.

The moderate dimension that emerged as a result of Indonesia's independence did not only affect the socio-religious area. It also penetrated into the economic and business areas with the birth of various Islamic financial systems and institutions. Even so, the conventional system that existed previously was not immediately abolished. The government realizes that forced abolition will harm many sectors, including society itself, which is already bound by the conventional system.³⁵ The birth of the Islamic banking model while maintaining conventional conditions is a form of moderate character or by another name called the middle way which is still the best solution. As explained by Habib Ahmed, the foundations of Islamic banking are the joints built from conventional existence. Islamization as a whole is certainly impossible, but the most important thing is how to minimize conventional practices if they are considered contrary to the concept of religion.

The imposition of the Islamic financial system and Islamic banking to the extreme (suddenly) can cause chaos for the community. This has happened in Aceh recently, when the Regional Government required Sharia Qanun in various financial systems, many economic sectors collapsed, even the process of financial transactions was shattered.³⁶ This happens because conventional systems that have previously been standardized are forced to transform in a short time. As a result, not a few people are unable to

³² Malia Fransisca (2019), "Moderat Antar Umat, Organisasi dan Pendidikan." *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 85-92.

³³ Diyani (2019), "Implementasi Paradigma Islam Wasathiyah," p. 303-316.

³⁴ Ramli, Ismail and Abdullah (2016), "Pendekatan Wasathiyah (sederhana) dalam Hubungan Sosial Masyarakat Majemuk di Malaysia," p. 18.

³⁵ Muji Mulia (2018), "Islam dan Transformasi Sosial Dalam Perspektif Kuntowijoyo," *Al-Ijtima': International Journal of Government and Social Science*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 117-130.

³⁶ Renniwaty Siringoringo (2017), "Analisis Fungsi Intermediasi Perbankan Indonesia (Studi Kasus Bank Umum Konvensional yang Tercatat di BEI Periode 2012-2016)," *Jurnal Inspirasi Bisnis dan Manajemen*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 135.

withdraw their money from the bank, cannot make transactions outside the region, even large-scale queues occur in various Aceh financial systems. If only the implementation of Moderate Islam also led to this dimension, of course a similar incident could have been avoided.

Likewise, in the context of diversity, organizations with moderate character are able to filter out the existence of radical and intolerant movements. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah are two successful and productive models of Islamic organizations in the political and religious spheres in Indonesia.³⁷ These two groups are recognized as Muslims who are still tolerant of each other despite many differences in worship. These two groups are also actively involved in controlling the government system so that it does not go beyond the limits of becoming a liberal system. Likewise in the community, these two Islamic organizations are able to broadcast moderate Islamic values, especially how the Indonesian people are smart in responding to how to position religious interests and state interests so that they do not conflict with each other.

Moderate Islam in Millennial Era and Lukman Hakim's Ideas

The millennial era is marked by the rapid development of digitalization and the ease of accessing internet networks. Some intellectuals see this as the industrial era 4.0 which has its own advantages and challenges.³⁸ In this era, the problem facing Indonesia is the proliferation of hoaxes and hate speech involving religious embellishments. The influence of the use of social media is exploited by irresponsible elements to damage the unity and integrity of the nation from within. Many slander and false information spread sporadically and become public consumption without any filtering. As a result, hatred towards the state and leaders is increasing without any constructive reflection in the development of a more dignified thinking.

Through social media, radical Islamic groups broadcast the values of rebellion against the current standard state format. The concept of the Islamic Khilafah was deliberately raised and used as a warm discourse so that ordinary Muslims agreed to change the state system. In fact, if they understood the struggle of the previous independence heroes, this problem would have been resolved and all parties at that time had agreed to build Indonesia with a moderate Islamic character. In response to this phenomenon, Moderate Islam has again become the government's flagship program through the Ministry of Religion. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, with his book 'Religious Moderation,' is a figure who has returned to popularize this. He served as Indonesia's Minister of Religion from 2014 to 2019, and in that capacity, he revitalized Moderate Islam throughout the country.

Lukman asserts that religious moderation is frequently misconstrued by the general population. The community views religious moderation as a doctrine that keeps them from religion, despite the fact that religious moderation is attempting to revive Islam's tolerant and peace-loving treasures. Lukman's religious moderation departs from the Qur'an and hadith; throughout his work, Lukman emphasizes the necessity of tolerance and the extent to which it can still be preserved.³⁹ According to Lukman, what is being controlled is not religion, but general awareness of the dangers of extremist and radical ideas being imposed on others. Each religion has the same right to believe in its religion; yet, da'wah in the notion of religious moderation is still permitted but must be conducted with discretion.

Religious moderation is not intended to negate the presence of Islamic or other doctrines that have been ingrained in their adherents. According to Lukman, the problem is the understanding of religious adherents in implementing religious teachings. In essence, religion is perfect because it originates with God. However, due to human limits in interpreting and comprehending tolerant principles, religion is frequently used as a cover for extreme and excessive behavior.⁴⁰ For example, there are religious actors who are willing to carry out suicide bombings, or are determined to shoot other parties with the excuse of jihad in the way of religion. This is a misunderstanding of religion that is frequently employed by irresponsible individuals.

³⁷ Hidayatullah (2020), "Gagasan Islam Nusantara Sebagai Kearifan Lokal di Indonesia." p. 1.

³⁸ Kastolani Kastolani (2020), "Understanding the Delivery of Islamophobic Hate Speech via Social Media in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 247-270.

³⁹ Kemenag RI (2019), *Lukman Hakim Saifuddin: Gagasan - Kinerja: Moderasi Beragama dan Transformasi Kelembagaan Pendidikan*, Jakarta: Rehobot Literature (Bersama dengan Ditjen Bimas Kristen RI).

⁴⁰ Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI and Indonesia (eds.) (2019), *Moderasi beragama*, Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat, Kementerian Agama RI.

Lukman stressed that religious moderation is synonymous with the Islamic notion of Wasathiyah, which entails taking a stance in the middle. Lukman intended for the middle to be free of harsh Islamic conditions (left or right). Right-wing Islam promotes liberal (basic) religious practices, whereas left-wing Islam promotes a radical and extreme dimension.⁴¹ Moderate Islam entails opposing and even combating extremist and liberal groups. According to Lukman, as for why moderate Islam is currently often associated with liberals, it is because the moderate Islam movement is more intense in countering the rise of radical Islam. In fact, moderate Islam stands in a middle position, it does not only try to neutralize one side.

The Impact of Moderation on the Indonesian Education Model

The challenge of religious moderation often arises as a result of the assumption that moderation is a new teaching that is considered to violate the beliefs of adherents of a religion. In fact, religious moderation is not a religious teaching or sect. Rather, it is an understanding that seeks to raise public awareness of the importance of religious tolerance in Islam, and to encourage people to understand the importance of contextualization in understanding the changing times.⁴²

Similarly, on colleges and universities, lecturers and students frequently disagree on how to comprehend religious diversity, resulting in conflict. Not only that, even the are in the same college, fellow Muslims accuse one another of being infidels and even attack one another on numerous social media platforms without realizing they have harmed the Islamic brotherhood. In response to this chaos, the Indonesian government developed a variety of policies and programs aimed at promoting the ideology of Moderate Islam. Indeed, there are already particular courses on campus that investigate moderation under the label “Wasathiyah Islamic Studies.”⁴³

Among lecturers within the Ministry of Religion, the content of religious moderation is implemented from various programs such as scientific research, the scope of scientific journals, and even seminars with the theme of moderation. In fact, in almost all corners of the archipelago, there are now various Religious Moderation Houses in which various activities, lessons, seminars and discussions are held about the importance of Moderate Islam. Not only that, the content of moderation also targets the recruitment of employees of an institution, especially those under government authority.⁴⁴ The relevant ministry seriously emphasizes that the selection of employees, whether as ASN or contract workers, must follow an anti-radical mechanism. That means indirectly, employees who are recruited must be people who think and understand religious moderation.

Furthermore, the values of moderation are also embedded in the study of nationality (Wawasan Kebangsaan) or previously known as PPKN (Pancasila and Citizenship Education) subjects. This subject is a basic dimension that has always existed since elementary school to college. In fact, when an individual wants to take part in a job selection in a government office, he must understand and have sufficient standards on the national insight test. When associated with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at Islamic Religious Higher Education institutions (PTKI), the nuances of the integration of knowledge between Pancasila, Moderation, and Religion have been integrated into the education model in Indonesia.⁴⁵

Moderation studies in Indonesia are growing rapidly as radical ideologies typically attack the thinking of Indonesia’s golden generation, which includes students. In fact, they are easy targets for certain groups to become pawns against the state. Usually radical values and terrorism are instilled in students through exclusive Islamic understandings.⁴⁶ Discourses about self-righteousness, intolerance, and accusations that the state does not support the existence of Islam are the terms that are most intensively

⁴¹ Abdul Malik, Muhammad Alwi Hs and M. Anwar Hindi (2022), “Religious Moderation in Indonesian Islamic Scholars Articles,” Paperwork, International Conference on Sustainable Innovation Track Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICSIHES 2021), Bantul, Indonesia.

⁴² Muhammad Mansyur (2020), “Model Literasi Digital untuk Melawan Ujaran Kebencian di Media Sosial,” *Jurnal Iptek-Kom*, Vol. 22, No. 2, p. 18.

⁴³ Sodikin and Ma’arif (2021), “Penerapan Nilai Islam Moderat Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di Perguruan Tinggi,” p. 200.

⁴⁴ Rosyida Nurul Anwar and Siti Muhyati (2021), “Upaya Membangun Sikap Moderasi Beragama Melalui Pendidikan Agama Islam Pada Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 15.

⁴⁵ Yedi Purwanto et al. (2019), “Internalisasi Nilai Moderasi Melalui Pendidikan Agama Islam di Perguruan Tinggi Umum,” *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 110-124.

⁴⁶ Sodikin and Ma’arif (2021), “Penerapan Nilai Islam Moderat Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di Perguruan Tinggi,” p. 198.

accelerated by students. As a result, students have polluted their thoughts and even worse, they dare to take bold actions by taking action or physical contact against state policies.

In addition, students also often become political masks from stakeholders. Students with all their innocence feel that what they are doing is in the name of the truth, even though there are people behind the scenes who deliberately change mainstream thinking so that students become implementers of radicalism values through hate speech and hoaxes on social media. This can be seen from the proliferation of extracurricular institutions that deliberately seize political sympathizers from new students.⁴⁷ This phenomenon cannot be stopped quickly because it has taken root in various universities in Indonesia.

In response to this dilemma, a special curriculum should be present in higher education to neutralize student thinking that has been influenced by radical exposure. At least, the curriculum which is actualized in the lectures becomes a comparison medium so that students' thinking is not isolated by the extreme teachings of an organization.

Some frameworks or concepts that serve as role models are; First, grounding the implementable value of religious moderation. That is, how theory and promotion of religious tolerance does not remain only as the idea but can be put into practice in various aspects of life. For example, when religious moderation is successfully instilled among the people, there will be an understanding that one religion and another can coexist in differences. Believers of different religions can assist and support each other as long as it is not a matter potentially interfering the dimensions of each other's *aqidah*. During holidays, for example, when Muslims celebrate their big day, non-Muslims can help keeping the security when almost all Muslims in an area are carrying out the congregational prayer and vice versa. Similarly, when non-Muslims are commemorating their special events, Muslims can take part in keeping peace, so that commotion or religious conflict caused by certain Muslim elements can be avoided.

Second, separating politics from specific religious interest and education. Religion and education are positive discourses. However, when political content is present everything may change and become very different. Therefore, one of the ways to keep Indonesian education developing is to separate it from the political and religious poles. Political elements can focus on other areas, while religious matters, especially religious education, must be carried out by its own expert. This way, Indonesian education will achieve a stable progressivity, not a political agenda aiming at securing their interest.

Conclusion

Moderate Islam is a concept of Islamic teachings that is embodied in the Qur'an and the attitude of the prophet. The history of the entry of Moderate Islam in Indonesia in pre-Islam was not followed by the naming of 'moderate' itself. The naming of Moderate Islam (religious moderation) in Indonesia was only popular and was structured in a movement during the Jokowi leadership, especially when Lukman Hakim served as Minister of Religion of Indonesia. However, moderate Islamic values have existed since Islam entered Indonesia through the Sufis in Aceh. This is evident when the Sufis broadcast Islam with various local cultural approaches. This middle ground process between the concept of religion and the existence of culture was the dimension of Moderate Islam at that time.

Furthermore, the history of moderate Islam in Indonesia was continued by Wali Songo in Java. Wali Songo succeeded in becoming the foundation of Islamic teachings in Java and even changed Hindu-Javanese civilization into Muslim domination. Moderate Islamic character is seen when Javanese culture is Islamized with various Islamic principles. After the Wali Songo era ended, moderate Islam existed during Indonesia's independence through Muslim intellectual figures and Islamic organizations such as Nahdathul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. Moderate Islamic values are also an important part in the formation of the basis of the Indonesian state (Pancasila) which takes a middle path between religion and other interests. In the millennial era, moderate Islam became the cornerstones of government policy in preventing radical sects, especially those against the state with a religious mode. In this phase, this moderation then affects the content of Indonesian education which is serious in studying and socializing students to understand religious moderation.

⁴⁷ Fajar Fauzi Raharjo and Nuriyah Laily (2018), "Pengilmuan Islam Kuntowijoyo Dan Aplikasinya Dalam Pengembangan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Perguruan Tinggi Umum," *Jurnal Al-Ghazali*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 28-53.

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