Fighting Islamic Radicalism Through Religious Moderatism in Indonesia: An Analysis of Religious Movement

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Abstract

The Indonesian socio-religious circumstances have been complicated lately, especially since the reformation era. This situation is marked by turmoils, horizontal conflicts, and unfriendly political dynamics involving radical religious and political ideology (henceforth: radical Islamic groups). Against this backdrop, this research is an attempt at getting a comprehensive understanding of radical islamic movements as well as the strategy of coping with them. The method employed is participatory action research, with Surabaya is selected as its setting. This study finds that re-upholding local tradition framed with religious moderation concept that have for years been the trademark of Indonesian Islam, which is manifested through distinctive local practices labelled as Islam Nusantara (henceforth: Islam wasatiyya), is capable of minimises the radical Islamic movements that has growth as a threat for the nation.

Abstrak

Kehidupan sosial keagamaan di Indonesia menghadapi problem rumit beberapa tahun belakangan, terutama semenjak masa reformasi. Kondisi seperti ini ditandai dengan meningkatnya gejolak konflik sosial dan dinamika politik dengan berbagai ideologi politik keagamaan yang radikal yang selanjutnya disebut sebagai kelompok Islam Radikal. Mencermati fenomena demikian penelitian ini adalah upaya untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang utuh mengenai gerakan Islam radikal dan strategi yang bisa dijalani untuk mengatasinya. Metode yang digunakan adalah Participatory Action Research dengan mengambil setting di Surabaya. Dari hasil penelitian yang ada dapat digambarkan bahwa menghidupkan kembali budaya dan tradisi lokal yang dikemas dalam konsep moderasi beragama yang bertahun-tahun telah menjadi ciri khas Islam Indonesia yaitu berupa tradisi-tradisi keagamaan yang telah dikembangkan dalam wadah Islam Nusantara yang selanjutnya disebut sebagai Islam Wasatiyyah telah mampu meminimalisir adanya gerakan Islam radikal yang selama ini menjadi ancaman dan tangan bagi kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara.

Keywords: Islamic Radicalism; Religious Moderation; Religious Movements; Islam *Wasaṭiyyah*.

Introduction

Indonesia as a country with variant tribes, customs, cultures, beliefs, and religions have existed for centuries. Niels Mulder explained that ancient religious communities in Indonesia are used to be having various form of beliefs, namely animism and dynamism.[1] The typology of these beliefs is familiar with the existing culture, especially the Javanese. Their religious understanding and movements, I suggest, are inclusive and pluralist which prevents them from the contestation of "truth" that can lead to exclusivism and radicalism in religious context. However, the incoming foreign religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam has changed those beliefs and contributed in re-shaping the contemporary culture of the society.

In the early development, Islam which comes to archipelago brought by the Arabian Gujarat people has to face new cultures, which are Buddhism and Hinduism, that is alien to its tradition.[2] At this phase, Islamic community began to dialogue and interact with others. Sufism plays an important role in this part. A.H. Johns, for example, argued that the process of Islamization in Southeast Asia less likely causes conflict due to the "inclusive nature" found in its mystical tradition.[3] In the provision of hospitality and sincerity, Islam able to coexist in harmony with established values, culture, and traditions of ancient religions.[4] Islam can adapt to a new environment and build a new character of religiosity named the Moderate Islam (*Islam Wasathiyah*) with challenges and oppotunies that come along.

As the globalization and modernization spread rapidly across the world, Islam in Indonesia faced heavy challenges that threaten its moderatism. The movement of Islamic salafism and fundamentalism is one of those major threats. The waves of such doctrine hegemonize the community and tend to counter the existence of Islamic moderatism that has been initiated by the early Islamic scholars of Nusantara. The salafist movement has its ideology under the name of global Salafism by taking advantage of globalization. Their presence is a lack of a friendly, tolerant, and egalitarian attitude, emphasizing the "truth claim" of Islam, and manifest themselves in radical movements. They are presenting the tradition and culture of Arabia as branding of Islam and pointing others as heretical (*bid'ah*), infidel, and so forth. Noting such phenomena, I argue that there have been tensions at the level of ideology and practice between Moderate Islam and Salafist movement.

The issue of radicalism and religious moderation has been widely studied by mang researchers, such as Arifinsyah and his collegues who raised the theme and the title "The Urgency of Religious Moderation in Preventing Radicalism in Indonesia",[5] Abdul Jamil Wahab who wrote a book with the title 'Radical and Moderate Islam : Discourse and Contestation of Indonesian Islamic Variants.[6] Likewise, Suparman Syukur ego wrote an article entitled "Radical Islam versus Rahmah Islam: The Case of Indonesia".[7]

These works have examined certain topics or issues related to religious moderation and Islamic radicalism, but they have not been otherwise said not to 'touch' or discuss about how the religious traditions packaged in Islam *Wasaṭiyyah* are able to target and reduce the

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[1] Niels Mulder, *Kepribadian Jawa dan Pembangunan,* (Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 1984), 12.

[2] Ahmad Syahrizal, "Sejarah Islam Nusantara", *Jurnal Islamuna*, Vol. 2, 2 December, 2015. 236-250.

[3] Anthony H. Johns. "Islamization in Southeast Asia", *Japanese Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 31.1, 1993. 43-61.

[4] Kunawi Basyir, "The 'Acculturative Islam' as a Type of Home-Grown Islamic Tradition: Religion and Local Culture in Bali", *Journal of Indonesia Islam*, Vol. 13, No. 2, year 2019. 297-325.

[5] Arifinsyah dkk, "The Urgency of Religious Moderation in Preventing Radicalism in Indonesia, *Esensia Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Ushuluddin,* Vol. 21, No. 1, tahun 2020. 91-108.

[6] Abdul Jamil Wahab, *Islam Radikal dan Moderat: Diskursus dan Kontestasi Varian Islam Indonesia,* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2019)

[7] Suparman Syukur, Islam Radikal VS Islam Rahmah Kasus Indonesia, *Jurnal Theologia,* Vol 23, No. 1, Januari 2012. 89-107.

existence of Islamic radicalism movements which have a place in the vortex of a plural society that lives in the middle of metropolitan cities like Surabaya. In such a context, the researcher still have found a state of the art, and he would offer a solution 'how the concept of religious moderation is able to fight Islamic radicalism' without any resistance by re-presenting cultural and religious traditions as a characteristic of Islamic Nusantara (*Islam Wasaṭiyyah*), and proven has been able to minimize the existence and activities of the existing Islamic radical groups. To make it easier for readers to understand the description of existing phenomena, the researcher will begin describing the portrait of Islam in Indonesia, then proceed with the presentation of the phenomenon of Islamic radicalism, and ended by the concept of religious moderation developed by Islam Nusantara (Islam *Wasaṭiyyah*).

Islam in Indonesia: General Overview

In the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, Indonesia is facing many vibrant and dynamic religious phenomena. Such an atmosphere will consequently give impacts to the life of the nation and the state. In speaking of religious problems, we can not detach the existence of ethnicity in Indonesia that is so diverse, despite this fact is not a novel thing especially for the Semitic religion that was familiar to the diversity of ethnicity both in the social and cultural realms. All of this will lead to the creation of the character of religious life to the communities by which the religion has been embraced. Thus, it is not surprising if sociologists and anthropologists define religion as one of the human cultural systems.

Globalization, which characterized by the rise of modernization, has always brought an impact on shaping the patterns and models of religious life in Indonesia. The wave of migration from the other part of the world has been coloring the community's daily life. Yet, those immigrants bring their own culture and traditions along with their religious ideology,

which by the time are gaining sympathy in the wider community. Extremely, they enforce their "truth claim" of Islam to other Muslims and proselytize their ideology. This fact can lead to the friction of the religious understanding among fellow Muslims, and eventually, lead to the unfinished conflict that happens to this day.

Departing from this issue, I am interested in re-analyze the concept of *Theo-Centric*[8] which is central in the discourse of radical Islam. I argue that this term needs to be questioned because there is a hegemony used by the radicalist group to emphasize it by negating the other part, which is *Ethno-Centric*.[9] It makes the adagium "religiosity from Theo-Centric to Ethno-Centri*c*" become less meaningful in the religious life of the society. It means that religion as social cohesion, social norm, and social civilization has less place on social reality.

It is true then to follow Sayyed Hossein Nasr who said that modern-day Muslim life will manifest in some models or types of Islam which eventually challenges the dominant character of the Muslim in the place. As an illustration, the "migration of Islam" from the Middle East caused the migration of its Arabian culture brought by its adherents. It also happens in the case of Persia and other cultures. In short, Islam in Indonesia faced several models and types of Islamic concepts and movements that challenge its existence. In the end, I argue that it will change the definition of Islam from Indonesian Islam (which is Pluralist) to Islam in Indonesia (which is fundamentalists).[10]

The integration of ethnicity and religion, also known as ethno-religiosity, becomes an important aspect of socioreligious studies since those two entities are shaping as the foundation for religious believers. It is through ethnicity that society identifies one another and makes

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[8] Religious understanding and behavior oriented to Divinity.

[9] Religious understanding and behavior oriented toward ethnic interests.

[10] This dichotomy is my own conceptualization to make it easier in showing the phenomena of Muslim religousity in Indonesia.

them distinct from each other. In this way, cultural fault lines are a very basic line of opposition to foster religious harmonization. In this cultural relationship, religion becomes one of the most determinant forces in differentiating the society based on their ethnic-religiosity.[11]

This can be seen through the result of some events that have occurred in recent years, where the issue of plurality is a focal point for the religious believer in Indonesia. Concerning this, awareness of the existence of ethnoreligious diversity has to be understood as a natural reality. It will bring logical consequences in religious social life, namely the demands for peaceful coexistence among religious traditions. Exclusive paradigms and attitudes have now been tested in the multi-religious sphere in a multicultural society. What is at stake is to enhance an inclusive paradigm and tolerant perspective to generate a moderate religious understanding. Religious moderatism thus can be a solution for the multicultural society.[12]

Islamic Radicalism as the Symbol of Resistance

Islam as a discourse invites prolonged criticism. It is normal to happen since there are a lot of contestations of power used by a certain group to claim their Islamic understanding. It also causes different interpretations of the doctrine of Islam itself as it grows and develops in a particular context and environment. As a cultural phenomenon, Islam has dealt with many different traditions across the border of the nation in history, which produces a different type of Islamic practice that varied between one and another. Therefore, Islam as a religion is determined by the culture and traditions of a particular society.

This setting will become a platform for studying Islam, which is an understanding of the Islamic community that is so dynamic in addressing diversity. On the one hand, Muslims are inclusive which gives birth to a pluralist view, but on the other hand, there are times when they become exclusive and tend to be fundamentalists. Both of these emerge from a complex history between a Muslim's encounter with the other, which of course has an impact on their attitude and religious behavior.[13] In line with this, Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif stated that radicalism is an ideology that grows hand in hand with fundamentalism. These religious movements also varied in orienting and manifesting their agenda, yet they have a common goal which is to establish an Islamic state by covering all aspects of people's lives.[14]

In the last ten years which known as the century of spirituality, the nuances of world civilization have always been enveloped by anxiety in religious life. This is a result of differences in religious understanding, in which the area of peace and justice left untouched, especially in the tradition of Islam. For the exclusivist, they interpret Islam as a religion that has a universal truth (absolutism), so that the truths of other religions are considered false and misguided, and therefore must be destroyed. In contrast, the inclusivist view that the truth in Islam does not exclusively occupy by Muslims only, but also for other religions, beliefs, and traditions.

Observing the differences in understanding and implementing the term "Islam", this article attempts to read and analyze through socio-cultural approaches (philosophy and theology) related to Islamic term that has been used by fundamentalists who tend to be exclusive in rejecting religious pluralism in Indonesia. This kind of ideological project not only describes the

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[11] *Ibid.*, 56.

[12] Fatimah Husein, *Muslim-Christian Relations in the New Order Indonesia: The Exlusivist and Inclusivist Muslims Perspectives* (Bandung: Mizan, 2005), 31.

[13] Kunawi Basyir, "Makna Eksoterik dan Esoterik Agama dalam Sikap Keberagamaan Eksklusif dan Inklusif.", *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam,* Vol 8, No. 1 June 2018, 218-241. Kunawi Basyir, "Perjumpaan Agama dan Budaya: Melacak Konsep dan Gerakan Radikalisme Islam di Indonesia," *Jurnal al-Kalam,* Vol. 11, No. 2 Desember 2017, 2.

[14] Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan* (Bandung: Mizan, 2009), 183. Jumhari dan Jajang Jahroni, *Gerakan Salafi Radikal di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2004), 45.

pattern of physical activity alone, but also describes the processing of cognition through a set of doctrines, rules, and some policies either directly through the movement of an Islamic institution as well as through the structure of power and politics in all regions in Indonesia.

Thus, to trace the existence of the orientation of power behind the religious ideological movement of the radical groups, it can be seen through various problems of religious life that are happening in Indonesia. Like a snowball, many separated issues of religion occurred almost every day, making religion not easy to define. All the people contribute to contesting the definition of religion including academics and indigenous communities. Some define religion as a social institution, a social cohesion, a measure of human civilization, and as a source of ethics and moral order. Moreover, there is one who defines religion as a destroyer of the social order. To examine this phenomenon, I think that it is necessary to juxtapose several religious theories that were initiated by several prominent figures such as Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and also Karl Marx.

From some of the theses of these great figures, it can be described that both Durkheim and Weber seem to lose meaning when interpreting religion in different spaces and time. This means that religion as in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 is often no longer religion as a social cohesion that fosters civilization, but religion as a trigger for the hatred that results in prolonged conflict. We can see this through the emergence of radical groups in the last few years. This is as if proves Karl Marx's thesis that religion no longer promises beauty but instead offers action that triggers tension and culminates in the tomb of a civilization.

M. Syafi'i Anwar characterizes the radicalist movement by four points.[15] First, radical groups tend to be anti-Western, meaning that they believe in the existence of conspiracy theories which assume that the decline of the Islamic world is caused by the Western world. They consider the Western world to have a hidden agenda to crush the Islamic community through political, economic, military, and cultural channels. Everything that has been done by the West is considered a product of Jewish and Christian civilization. Seeing this, they always try to fight Western products in Indonesia because they consider it as an illegal product and is prohibited in Islam. So from here, they have an agenda of the anti-Western movement.

Secondly, they are not in favor of peace and tolerance among religious believers that enshrined in the jargon of pluralism, arguing that pluralism is a Western product. They perceived that pluralism is an ideology developed by the Western world to attack Islam as a single Truth. To deal with pluralists, they have an understanding that the truth belongs only to Islam. It means that outside of Islam is an infidel. For them, Jews and Christians are among those condemned by God. Therefore, the issues raised by them are usually to align Islam with Arabian Culture. For example, by preferring the Arabic language than Bahasa, and dress like the style of Arabs than Nusantara. They applied it while they socialize their ideology. This is the pattern of religiosity that has been developed by Wahhabism originating from Saudi Arabia in the late 19th century.

In historical records of Indonesia, these movements come into being since the beginning of Indonesian independence, marked by some movement such as the Darul Islam (DI) which was pioneered by Kartosuwiryo in the 1950s. Furthermore, in 1976, there was a similar movement that emerged, namely *Kommando Jihad* (Komji). Likewise, in the following year of 1977, the Indonesian Muslim Liberation Front (*Front Pembebasan Muslim Indonesia*) emerged, which was then manifest themselves as the

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[15] M. Syafi'i Anwar, "Memetakan Teologi Politik dan Anatomi Gerakan Salafi di Indonesia," at M. Zaki Mubarak, *Geneologi Islam Radikal di Indonesia: Gerakan, Pemikiran dan Prospek Demokrasi* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2008), xi.in

Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Isalm*/FPI). Azyumardi Azra called them radical groups because they reject the unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), the ideology of Pancasila, and the 1945 Constitution.[16] Although the number of these groups was not the majority, they were able to lead public opinion and create a discourse as if there was something wrong in the plurality of the religious life of Indonesian society. They have a strong militancy of attitudes and discourse that they spread both in public space and social media to voice their vision and mission.

Departing from these issues, the religious phenomena of Islam in Indonesia is interesting to be studied, analyzed, and criticized. The diversity of the nature and movements of religious ideologies such as the strengthening of legal-textual exclusivism along with the inclusion of transnational Islamic ideals is a problem in itself. Islam in Indonesia is currently experiencing a vacuum of religious authority so that between puritans and moderates contesting the discourse in the community. Theologically, puritans are identified with literalism, primitivism, legalism, and tribalism. While politically, they tend to appear as fundamentalists or reactionary populism. On the other hand, moderate Islamic groups are more likely to be rational. They use philosophy as a basis of thought, placing humans at the center of the universe, use historical-critical methods, and believe in idealism and progress.[17]

The Puritans and Moderate Islam have built their theological bases as the foundation of their activism. They both claim their theological bases derived from the canonical sources of the Qur'an and Hadith. The difference in interpreting these scriptural verses leads to "truth claim" in understanding and practicing their religiosity. They have an equal perception of their belief and conviction as the totality system of meaning that applies to everyone. In short, only their religion can save mankind. This absolute claim in turn gives legitimacy to assume that it is only their religion that contains the truth. Indeed, such attitudes will eventually develop a symptom that is further accumulated to be a potential for unfinished conflict.

Since the reformation era in 1998, conflict and violence in the name of religion dominating public discourse. A new phase in the process of organizing the life of the nation and the state seems to move at a high pace. This phase immediately erupted the extraordinary exploitation of freedom in public spaces. Not only political excitement in the democratization but also the desire of many people to return to play their respective primordial identities which are so strong, especially the issue of ethnic and religious identities. The rise of communal violence in the early years of the transition era is a further effect as well as factual evidence of how significant religious and ethnic preferences affect the magnitude of conflict and violence in the name of religion. As a result, the religious life of a multicultural community is at stake.

After the fall of Soeharto and the end of the New Order regime, the elements of political interest were indeed involved in the contestation of public discourse. Yet in general, the conflict escalates more likely when ethnic and religious sentiments are played. Religion is not the only factor in many cases of conflict and violence, but religious considerations are always present and are crucial in that case. The Ambon-Maluku, Kalimantan conflict which covers Central Kalimantan and West Kalimantan, the Poso conflict, and many other cases are some of the most concrete examples of how religious and ethnic sentiments play an important role in escalating conflict.[18]

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[16] Azyumardi Azra, *Pergolakan Politik Islam: Dari Fundamentalisme, Modernisme, Hingga Post Modernisme* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1996), 44.

[17] Stephen Sulaiman Schwartz, *Dua Wajah Islam: Moderatisme vs Fundamentalisme dalam Wacana Global*, trans. Hodri Ariev (Jakarta: Blantika & Tha Wahid Institute,tt), ix.

[18] Fawaizul Umam, "Pola Pemikiran Majlis Ulama Indonesia Jawa Timur tentang Praksis Kebebasan Beragama", *Disertasi*, (Surabaya: Program Pascasarjana Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2012), 35.

In some cases, religious-based riots made a more complex problem both in Indonesia and in other parts of the world, especially when al-Qaidah attacked WTC buildings on September 11th,[19] which was later followed by some domestic case such as the Bali bombings on 12 October 2002, Marriot bombing in September 2003, and the Bomb in Kuningan on September 2004, and also a suicide bombing in several churches in Surabaya in 2018, all of which have been done by the Islamic radical group in Indonesia.

Mainstreaming Religious Moderation as the Foundation of Nationalism

As I have mentioned earlier, in the last few years Indonesia has displayed many diverse religious phenomena, especially related to the development of Islamic typologies that exist today. We can say that between moderates and puritans have offered their respective agendas by carrying out different religious ideologies. They fight for popularity by presenting the strength of their unique identity. Indeed, they also contesting their own "truth claim."

The rise of social media as a space for spreading the concept of radical ideology carries a significant impact on the middle-class society, especially among the young generation in the major cities in Indonesia. [20]They are fighting for popularity through social media by offering symbols of Arabic culture as an icon of Islam. They used it to claim that their Islam is the most authentic teaching.

They are very good at targeting netizens by offering consumptive ideas for people who have minimal knowledge about Islam. Thus, these people tend to take for granted the teachings of Islam offered to them without deep consideration and analysis. The objective of this viral radicalism continues to revolve, especially

among educated youth, because these people are still considered to be emotionally unstable. In other words, they are still in the process of finding their true identity. In that struggle, they usually begin to be fascinated by a religious ideology that has a radical ideology.

This group of young people has experienced significant development which can be seen through the rise of millennial community groups with a polite and well-mannered style that attracts themselves. Such phenomena can be found in several big cities. They have flourished with various identities such as the hijrah community (*komunitas hijrah*), hijaber community (*komunitas hijaber*), the Gema Liberation community (*komunitas gema pembebasan*) and other communities that are identical with radical groups. Such phenomena and groups are the genetic forms of groups that we often refer to as exclusive groups.

The community is increasingly getting an established place in everyday social life and has a very strong power in urban society, especially for the middle-class community with a millennial preaching style. From my observations in the field, they are not only motivated by economic and political interest but also ideological issues that I would like to call as puritanical and sectarian Islamic ideologies. Both are the embryo of Islamic fundamentalism.

They have a variety of preaching styles and patterns and carry various issues as well. Also, they have the same agenda and objectives, which is to establish a state-based caliphate system.[21] This is in line with Azyumardi Azra who conveyed that their agenda is against the ideology of Pancasila and the 1945 constitution. This radical group is largely aiming at the realization of transnational state and they are convinced that only with the application of the caliphate system and Islamic Sharia, all of the

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[19] Arifinsyah dkk, "The Urgency of Religious, 93.

[20] Wahyudin, "Religion and Millennial Generation in Indonesia (Efforts to Develop Religious Character in Anticipation of the Negative Influences of Modernization in Indonesia), *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Ushuluddin*, Vol. 20 No. 2, tahun 2019, 2010- 212.

[21] Ahmad Ainur Rofiq al-Amin, *Proyek Khilafah HTI Prespektif Kritis*, (Yogyakarta: LKiS Pelangi Aksara, 2015), 43. See also the writing from the same author, *Membongkar Proyek Khilafah Ala Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: LKiS Pelangi Aksara, 2012), 23.

issues in the country will soon be resolved. For them, the ideology of Pancasila is considered not able to fulfill the expectations of the ideal state that suits the nature of their minds. Thus, they invite all its cadre for jihad to change the unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) under the ideology of Pancasila into a state of Islamic ideology.[22]

As a sovereign nation under the ideology of Pancasila, it will be a huge challenge for Indonesia to build a civil society in their own country. Radicalism becomes a very fundamental issue and a solution is immediately needed because this issue is not enough to be resolved only in the political sphere such as the religious de-radicalization movement. This solution always leaves its problems such as a very sharp opposition to the policymakers so that the number of hatred and antagonistic nature increases as well. They consider that the government has been too ambiguous towards Muslims so that there is resistance through the slogan of jihad.

Thus, to avoid the emergence of resistance in fighting radicalism effectively and efficiently, the concept and movement of Islamic moderation must be revived. Islamic moderation, or what we often refer to as religious moderation, is a Muslim perspective in moderate ways. This means that in understanding and practicing Islamic teachings, every Muslim should not be extreme.[23] Extremism will result in the emergence of hate speech and antagonistic attitudes towards each other and create a rift in religious life that has been nurtured and preserved by the nation for years.

This is in line with what was delivered by Nur Syam with the idea of religious moderation in the body of the two largest religious organizations in Indonesia, namely Nahdlatul

Ulama, and Muhammadiyah. From these two organizations, Nur Syam obtained a concept of Islam that was tolerant and adaptive to local traditions without leaving the progress of the modern world. This is where a friendly portrait of moderate Islam with diversity can adapt to the dynamics of the times.[24] Ideas like this have inspired the Ministry of Religion is facing the challenges of religious life in the era of digitalization by including religious moderation in the plan of a Medium-term National Development Plan, 2020-2024.[25]

Based on the observations in several cities in Indonesia such as in Surabaya and its surroundings, we could illustrated that reviving religious culture and traditions, and the steps packaged in the concept of religious moderation make Islamic radicalism groups do not budge because these groups are increasingly less attractive to the community local. In fact, according to some informants, this Islamic radicalism group has disturbed the peace of society because the activities carried out by them who do not know the time and able to damage the existing young generation. We can thus illustrate that counter-radical movements can be realized through religious moderation with the following steps:

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[22] Azyumardi Azra, "Majlis Taklim, PAUD dan Radikalisme," *Republika*, 12 December 2019, 6. Haedar Nashir, *Indonesia Hitam Putih* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2017), 9.

[23] Arifinsyah dkk, "The Urgency of Religious, 94.

[24] Nur Syam, *Islam Nusantara Berkemajuan: Tantangan dan Upaya Moderasi Beragama* (Semarang: Fatawa Publishing, 2018), 22.

[25] Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, *Tanya Jawab Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Balitbang dan Diklat Kemenag RI, 2019).

First, the Reinforcement of Islam *Wasaṭiyyah.* The term Islam *Wasaṭiyyah*[26] is often used to refer to the concepts and movements of Islamic moderation which are becoming iconic and popular in recent decades. The moderation of Islam is identical to Islam *wassatiyyah* (middle path) which means that its religious attitude does not favor extreme or liberal attitudes. The characteristics of Islam *Wassatiyah* can be described as follows: Islam *Wasaṭiyyah* is a middle Islam (*tawassut*), balanced (*tawazun*), tolerant (*tasamuh*), equality (*musawwa*), civilized (*tahadhdhur*), renewal (*islah*), loving the motherland (*wataniyyah wa muwatanah*), thinking of priority (*aulawiyyah*), progressive and innovative (*tatawwur wa ibtikar*), and become a pioneer (*qudwatiyyah*).[27]

Observing the definitions and indicators of Islamic moderation mentioned above, the attitude of Islam should be able to adapt to the environment by not eliminating Islamic values. This Islamic concept is often referred to as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. To dissect this kind of Islam, Muslims must be able to adapt to the culture in which Islam is embraced by them and developed as a building of civilization in Indonesia. Such parameters are referred to as "Islam Nusantara" by academics. Islam can adapt to local culture so that its Islamic style is contextual, distinctive, tolerant, elegant, and progressive. Such Islamic models and typology are often rejected by radical Islamic groups. They only consider that Islam must be in line with Arabian Islam. They reject local culture as a gateway to an ideal Islam.

Islam is not present from an empty space. This means that the existence of Islam at that time also had to face the culture and traditions of the Arabs (*Jahiliyah*) which were far different from the teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad. At this point, it can be illustrated that Arab is a place with a set of traditions and cultures, while Islam is a religion that carries all the teachings and dogmas contained in the holy book that is the Qur'an. At this moment, Islam began to meet, interact, and dialogue with local cultures to produce Islamic concepts and behavior following the place and time where Islam was present and practiced by its adherents, namely Arabic Islam.

Parallel with the case of the emergence of Islam in Arabia, Islam in the Indonesian context comes into being by carrying its distinctive culture and traditions that are different from the Arabian mainland. The Javanese culture—which I later refer to as Hinduism and Buddhism—has to play a key role in shaping the character of Indonesian Islam. This is where Islam began to dialogue, interact, and synergize with Javanese culture to produce a concept and religious behavior that is following the situation and condition of Indonesia. The scholars name it as Local Islam, namely Islam which adopts and synergize with local (Javanese) culture while promoting Islamic values and doctrine while not damaging the existing culture;

Second, the reinforcement of harmony and intimacy The problem of harmony and intimacy cannot be separated from the discourse of pluralism and multiculturalism. Both terms always go hand in hand when discussing harmony, especially concerning the interfaith dialogue. Historically, the term pluralism in Indonesia has drawn pros and cons of groups representing moderate Islam and Salafi Islam. The Indonesian Ulama Council (*Majlis Ulama' Indonesia*/MUI) as the largest organization handling religious substances in Indonesia through its announcement rejects the concept of religious pluralism to be applied in Indonesia on the pretext that pluralism will damage the teachings of Islam. They assume that pluralism has equated all religions. Conversely, Moderate Islamic groups view that pluralism must be developed to preserve the tradition of Islam in Indonesia.

The scholar of Islam in Indonesia who associated themselves with moderate Islamic

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[26]Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, *Kalimat fi> al-Wasat}iyyah Al Isla>miyyah Wa Mu'alimuha>*, (Kuwait: al-Markaz al-'Alami> li> al-Wasat}iyyah, 2007), 27.

[27] Bogor Message in Hight Level Consultation of World Muslim Scholars on Wasatiyyah Islam, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia (May, 1-3, 2018), 1-2

groups give respond to the way MUI understand pluralism. They argue that pluralism does not equate all religions. The term pluralism is emerging because of various kinds of religious expressions and beliefs, thus the pluralists view that each religion is different. These differences, according to them, need to be united without reducing the teachings of their respective doctrines, since those differences are assets to build harmony and intimacy in the religious life of the nation and state and the realization of a cosmopolitan Islam. For them, the difference is a necessity that is inevitable to be avoided under any circumstances.

In the context of world religions, the term pluralism refers to a theory or attitude that all religions have different paths towards God. However, they aim for the same goal, which is "the One." He is the only absolute, transcendent, immanent, and is the ultimate goal for all religions. While on a social level, the term pluralism appears among contemporary Islamic thinkers such as Nurcholis Madjid, Alwi Shihab, and Budhy Munawar Rachman. They have the same view that pluralism can not only be understood by portraying a pluralistic society and diverse ethnicities and religions. Pluralism must also be understood as a true link of diversity in the bonds of civilization because civilized societies can only be built through openness. Thus, the community can jointly fight for justice by continuing to promote the dignity of humanity collectively.[28]

From some of the above explanations, it can be concluded that the concept of pluralism can be used as a reference and basis for building harmony and intimacy among religious communities. Pluralism is a foundation to create harmonious situations and conditions between ethnic, cultural, and religious groups for the sake of peaceful coexistence;

Third, aligning religion(s) and culture. The movement of religious radicalization in its essence has pure ideological content. Radical groups are puritan, sectarian, textual, and scriptural groups. Hence, to reduce and minimize the existence of such movements, it is important to build religious moderation. I believe that the religious moderation movement can be a more effective solution compared to the political movement of religious deradicalization.

Seeing the background of the development of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia, a significant and possible approach is to restore an Islamic model that can live and develop in the homeland, namely Indonesian Islam. This means that strengthening the concept of Islamic *Wasaṭiyyah* as mentioned above is very urgent. The concept of Islam *Wasaṭiyyah* (local Islam or Islam Nusantara) inviting pros and cons between Salafis and moderate groups. Yet, what should be understood is that Islam Nusantara as a characteristic of Indonesian Islam is the result of a dialectical relationship between Islamic normativity and Indonesian historicity. The style of Islam that combines theological values with the values of local traditions, culture, and customs in the Archipelago proceed through acculturation of verbal (*bil lisan*) and deeds (*bil hal*) by not prioritizing religious formalities, but also emphasizing the substance of theological teaching.[29]

Islam Nusantara has a strategic role to maintain the unity of the nation because it can function as a model that can bind local forces as a form of civilization and peace in Indonesia. This is possible because of the friendly, open, and inclusive nature of Islam that can provide solutions to humanitarian problems that occur oftentimes.

Therefore, to revive a friendly, civilized, tolerant, and egalitarian Islam is to instill awareness and local Islam in the community that has been a culture and tradition of Islam in

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[28] Nurcholis Madjid, *Fiqh Lintas Agama: Membangun Masyarakat Inklusif-Pluralis* (Jakarta: Yayasan Paramadina, 2004), 35. Budhy Munawar Rachman, *Islam Pluralis: Wacana Kesetaraan Kaum Beriman,* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001), 23. Alwi Shihab, *Islam Inklusif Menuju Sikap Terbuka dalam Beragama,* (Bandung: Mizan, 1997), 41.

[29] Abdurrahman Wahid, *Islamku Islam Anda Islam Kita: Agama Masyarakat Negara Demokrasi* (Jakarta: Wahid Institute, 2006), 27.

Indonesia for years. These traditions have become the hallmark of Islam Nusantara. There are many traditions of Islam Nusantara which have been increasingly less in demand by the Islamic community in Indonesia, such as the tradition of *selametan* which consists of life cycle ceremonies. Those ceremonies, for example, *tingkeban, babaran, wetonan,* and many others. In addition to life cycle ceremonies, there are also ceremonies related to social and natural conditions such as *wiwitan,* holidays such as *mauludan, isra' mi'raj,* and other religious traditions.

In the process of reviving religious and cultural traditions, of course, it requires the support of various parties both religious leaders, community leaders, and also the government as they have been successful in reviving the tradition of pesantren through National Santri Day (*Hari Santri Nasional*);

Fourth, improving the quality of religious service. Religion is one of the foundations for the people of Indonesia to determine the direction of their life, including in aspects of social, cultural, national, and the state. However, with the development of science and technology, people will be tested for understanding and implementing their beliefs and faith in religion. At this point, there is a diversity in determining religious attitudes which eventually leads to mutual claim of the truth among them.

In response to this phenomenon, there is a need for a movement to anticipate friction and conflict between religions. In realizing this, all religious leaders, community leaders, and the government must cooperate to make it happen. Religious figures or ulama, for example, have become the center of attention among religious communities. As Clifford Geertz states that ulama are a cultural blocker. This means that Islamic scholars or religious leaders have become the role model of society at large. They have the power to positively influence the wider community, especially in the grassroots context. Therefore, the problem of religious services in Indonesia should be put forward.

The service here is means how religious leaders can provide or construct religious life in the wider community that is tolerant and inclusive. Contemporary psychology figures such as George Herbert Mead provided an offer of how students tend to be attracted to the attitudes of central figures through many social processes such as assimilation, identification, empathy, and sympathy or antipathy.[30]

In this thesis, it can be illustrated that the mission of a person can give influence and bring change to a wider community. Thus, the thing that must be done by these figures is to enter the world of society itself and try to live it. Here, a religious figure will learn from existing social reality without giving his/her perspective towards others. Instead, they should learn directly from the community. So, they will get a lot of experience and particularly knowing what community needs and what is desired by the social reality in which they live. Once they know what is the basic need in society, they are introducing a program they have in accordance with the existing social needs. From here, the interaction will occur between the idealism of the figure and the wishes of society. So there is mutualism between the two, without having to negate each other.

In conducting intense dialogue with the community, the thing that someone must develop is to put empathy with each other. It is only, usually at this moment, a figure either too much proud with his/her program, or quickly put antipathy when the program that they practice is not following the concept. If these two moments are put forward without regard to empathy, then the community will tend to reject the concept they offer. This happens because the concept is usually not familiar with social reality. This is where the moment of empathy in the community becomes very important because in this way the idealism of the figure will be grounded in the existing social context.

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[30] George Herbert Mead, *Mean, Self, and Society*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago, 2015), 186.

This is in line with the theory of social construction initiated by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann at the moment of externalization, which is a moment of adaptation to the socio-cultural context as a human product.[31] Here, society is defined as a human product, meaning that an individual should come out of himself to adapt to existing social culture (assimilation and identification in G. H. Mead's term). Looking at the existence of Indonesian Islamic traditions and a set of Islamic culture that has become part of social institutions such as the ceremonial tradition of *selamatan* and *deba'an*, it will certainly be much easier to ground ideals through these adaptations for those figures who have power in the community. Since the assets owned by the Islamic community seem to have become an icon of Javanese civilization, both in villages and in cities.

In addition to religious leaders and community leaders, governments also play an important role in this issue. The government already has a big contribution to the creation of harmony among religious communities as in several laws and regulations of the central and regional governments to protect minority groups in Indonesia. For example, Three Principles of Religious Harmony (*Tri Kerukunan Umat Beragama*) consisting of; an internal harmony among singular religious community; harmony between religions communities; and the harmony of religious believers with the government.[32] Referring to one of these pillars, as a large nation with a wide variety of ethnicity and religion, the government has a strong legal basis for providing humanist religious services in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society;

Fifth, the economic development and religious resources. Economic and religious issues are two constantly evolving issues that coloring social life in the country. The improvement and utilization of the quality of the economy are considered not to meet the target or create an unequal distribution. This issue ignites the emotions of religious people, particularly the radical group, who feel less satisfied with the system developed by the Government that prioritizes religious plurality. Most of them consider that market economy actors do not prioritize an economy based on Islamic sharia. As Yusuf Qardhawi argues, the economy should not be separated from the ethical control of the market actors themselves because the ethics for Yusuf al-Qardhawi is the center of the heart in Islamic life.[33]

Given that Islam is a majority religion embraced by the people of Indonesia, it is a necessity when Indonesia's economy is managed based on Sharia. The fundamentalist group sees that the capitalist economic system has been engulfed in parts of the world including Indonesia. According to them, this system is a Western product and has failed to bring the Islamic community forward to the world economy, so they think it is necessary to create an alternative economic system based on Islam. The capitalist economic system is thought to have created a demarcation line that separates the economic problems with transcendent spirituality. Such a system is what triggers radical Islamic groups to voice their religious ideology under the slogan of anti-Western and anti-secularism.

Therefore, the thing that the Government should be concerned with is to establish a strong economic system to anticipate the critics from religious groups represented by radical fundamentalists who think that there is inequality of economic aspects in the community. Based on my observations so far, Indonesia is one of the countries that has

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[31] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Counstruction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge,* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 53. See also in Muhammad Basrowi, *Teori Sosial dalam Tiga Paradigma* (Surabaya: Yayasan Kampusina, 2004), 72.

[32] Jaja Sudarno, " Tri Kerukunan Umat Beragama", Kementerian Agama RI. *https://bengkulu.kemenag.go.id/artikel /42737-tri-kerukunan-umat-beragama*. Diakses 26 Juli 2020.

[33] Yusuf al-Qardhawi, *Dawr al-Qiya>m wa al-Akhla>q fi> al-Iqtis}ad al-Islami>*. (Mesir: Maktabah Wahbah, 1995), 23.

initiated the establishment of the *Wasaṭiyyah* economic system at the global level. This can be seen through the Bank that has implemented a Sharia economic system, which is an economic system with an emphasis on an inclusive and moderation attitude based on the values of Religiosity. This system is expected to be able to bring an impact on the increasing religious resources and the strong religious services that are inclusive by upholding the values of humanity. By respecting the culture and traditions of our nation, economic issues are capital to develop religious moderation in Indonesia.

To cultivate the concept of religious moderation as mentioned above, it is necessary to have an evolutionary strategy to makes the changes possible. This can be done through re-education, both formal and non-formal, and re-socialization. The formal education system requires the renewal of systems especially in Islamic religious subjects, from elementary level to higher education. This is because the movement of radicalism is largely dominated by educated youths, especially in colleges such as Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Gajah Mada University (UGM), Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), Brawijaya University (UB) and several other colleges.[34]

In addition to formal education, non-formal education is also important to note. This is because the basis of the radical group is not only on formal institutions. They are often found in centers of religious studies (*halaqah*) as mentioned before, such as Hijrah Community, Hijaber Community, Gema Pembebasan. These communities need to be supervised by both local communities and the government.

In terms of re-socialization, early evaluation is needed as a form of handling radicalization which has been practiced through the political agenda of deradicalization.[35] However, such systems often cause resistance and turmoil that lead to the growth and development of social movements in a plural society. The radical group considers that law enforcement officials have been hegemonizing them, so they feel that there is a need to conduct jihad against the government. This kind of situation can be seen from the peaky increasing number of radical movement compared to previous years.

Conclusion

From the explanations above, we can conclude that the existence of Islamic radicalism movements in Indonesia has increased in recent years. This phenomenon has become a special concern for all groups both from community leaders, religious leaders, and governments. To reduce the growth and development of the movement, several effective and efficient strategies are needed, without significant resistance. From the findings of the research, the concept of religious moderation needs to be put forward by reviving the religious culture and traditions carried by the islamic scholars of this archipelago (*ulama nusantara*), and for years has become a distinctive feature of Indonesian Islam within the framework of Islam *Wasaṭiyyah*, or more popularly known as Islam Nusantara.

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[34] Arifuddin Ismail, "Pemikiran dan Gerakan Keagamaan Mahasiswa: Memahami Merebaknya Radikalisme Islam di Kampus", *Harmoni: Jurnal Multikultural & Multireligius* , Vol. 11 No. 3, 2012, 48-61. Bandingkan Sri Lestari, "Anak-Anak Muda Indonesia Makin Radikal", *BBC Indonesia,* 18 Februari,2016. *https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2016/02/160218_indonesia_radikalisme_anak_muda*. Diakses 26 Juli 2020.

[35] Arkanudin Budiyanto, "Deradicalization and Formation of Public Attitudes of Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) in Sukoharjo, Indonesia", *Esensia Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Ushuluddin,* Vol. 21, No. 1, tahun 2020, 33.

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