

**Strategies And Implementation of Religious Moderation
In Islamic State Religious Higher Education Institutions**

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Abstract

The mainstreaming of religious moderation is being intensively carried out by the Ministry of Religion Affair through the State Islamic Religious University (PTKIN). This mainstreaming is intended to ensure the presence of a moderate and tolerant religious narrative. This article is the result of a brief research using library research methods, where the data presented comes from the literature and any information related to the object of research and then the contents are analyzed, especially regarding how to implement mainstreaming of religious moderation in various PTKIN. Mainstreaming religious moderation program is still purely ceremonial in nature and has not been carried out systematically and simultaneously through a clear roadmap and technical guidelines for its implementation. The presence of this article is expected to confirm how the religious moderation strategy and its implementation along with solutions are implemented within PTKIN.

Keyword

Elevation, Religious Moderation; UIN Jakarta; Radicalism; PTKIN

Introduction

Indonesia is a country with a diversity of cultures, religions, ethnicities, tribes, and languages. Indonesia is one of the largest multicultural countries in the world (Muslimin, 2012) and diversity is a necessity as a blessing from God in this life. Diversity is manifested in a unity of various religions, hundreds of tribes, ethnicities, cultures, and languages.

It is truly appropriate that the founding fathers of this nation have formulated "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" as a symbol of unity in religious diversity because in truth, diversity is a natural occurrence and its existence cannot be denied (Hakam et al., 2019). This extraordinary mosaic of diversity in Indonesia is accurately depicted by Kees van Dijk and Jajat Burhanuddin as follows:

“Indonesia is diverse not only in terms of ethnicity, but also in terms of religion. The maintenance of peaceful coexistence between religions and ethnic communities is of importance for stability and sustainable development in the country. National integrity has become a state concern due to the fact that Indonesia was plural from the outset, and it is the collective identities of the various existing religions that shape Indonesia as a nation-state. As an acknowledgement of this diversity, Indonesia reintroduced the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (unity in diversity). (Jajat Burhanuddin dan Kees van Dijk, 2013).”

The presence of multiculturalism and diversity should be the capital for creating harmony in the Indonesian community, but the reality is not so. Indonesia is facing various problems that occur in society such as inter-tribal violence, extremism, terrorism, and radicalism in the name of religion. In situations like this, religious moderation is needed.

The prioritization of religious moderation has increasingly found its momentum after the discovery of research showing that religious education institutions are no longer sterile from radicalism exposure. Setara Institute's research (2019), for example, mentions that UIN Jakarta and UIN Bandung are higher education institutions with a fairly high potential for radicalism. In addition, research findings also show that public universities such as UI, ITB, and IPB have a very high potential for radicalism.

In order to address the findings above, the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2014-2019 period, Lukman Hakim Syaifudin, established several strategic steps in the prioritization of religious moderation. First, create standards and indicators that can be used as parameters for understanding and experiencing religious, national, and national life categorize as extreme actions. Second, map the understanding of religion that has indications of extremism and radicalism, especially in relation to religious, national, and national life. Third, formulate a grand design, make policies, and take action in order to deal with understanding, ideologies that are considered extreme and radical.

The Minister of Religion's policy above is at least present as a response to the increasing phenomenon of intolerance, hateful speech and hoaxes as well as extremism both on a micro and macro scale, which are spread through social media. Extreme, radical, and also intolerant attitudes not only endanger individuals, persons, or certain groups, but have also endangered the unity and unity of the Republic of Indonesia. Examples of extreme and radical actions are by intimidating and persecuting groups with different beliefs than those held by extremist groups.

Given the above, it is urgent and important to conduct a short research on the strategy and implementation of religious moderation in PTKIN, which aims to analyze the extent to which PTKIN's strategy and implementation in

developing and disseminating moderate Islamic ideas or religious moderation in Indonesia.

Concept of Religious Moderation

The emergence of the term religious moderation in recent years has at least resulted in some interpretations that are sometimes not in line with what is intended. Religious moderation should be understood as a balanced religious attitude between an exclusive attitude (practice of one's own religion) and an inclusive attitude (respect for the religious practices of others with different beliefs). The pattern of balanced views and attitudes in religious practices is believed to prevent us from being radical, overly fanatic, and extreme in religion. In other words, religious moderation is a solution to the presence of two extreme poles in religion, namely ultra-conservative or extreme right on one side, and liberal or extreme left on the other. (Dr. Joni Tappingku, 2021)

The most important thing in the concept of religious moderation is the principle of maintaining balance, both between reason and revelation, between physical and spiritual, between individual interests and rights and obligations, and communal welfare, between religious texts and the *ijtihad* of religious figures, between the obligation and voluntariness of ideal ideas and reality, and between the past and the future. That is, the essence of religious moderation is fair and balanced in viewing all issues. (Faisal, 2020)

In the perspective of religious moderation, the principles of balance and justice can be practiced in an attitude where one should not be extreme in viewing something, but should always seek a middle ground known as a moderate attitude. Moderation is a virtue that promotes the creation of social harmony and balance in personal, family, and community life, as well as wider human relationships. (Saifuddin, 2019).

From a historical aspect, the concept of moderation can actually be found in the works of Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. One study that discusses the concept of moderation in Aristotle is M. Khusnun Ni'am and Puput Dewi lestari, entitled, *The Concept of Islamic Moderation in Aristotle's Ethics of Priorities* (Nia'am et al., 2020). In this article it is mentioned that moderation is part of the values of wisdom.

Moderation is the result of rational thinking process related to good and bad actions in humans or between two extremes such as miserly and wasteful or reckless and cowardice. Moderation is the middle ground between these extreme attitudes, namely recklessness without any rational calculation and cowardice which is the loss of rational attitude. From this moderate attitude, another attitude is born, namely bravery. Moderate attitude is very needed by humans to achieve perfection and happiness (Noer, 2019).

The attitude taught by Aristotle is not only at the individual level, but also at the social level. This is for example seen in the thoughts of his teacher, Plato. According to him, human perfection can be achieved when practicing moderate and balanced behavior and a balance between theoretical and practical knowledge, and a balance between science and morality (Ibn Rushd, 2016).

The thoughts of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were extensively developed by Muslim philosophers such as al-Farabi in his work *Tahsil al-Sa'adah*, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi in his work *Naserian Ethics*, and also Ibn Miskawaih in his work *Tahdzib al-Akhlaq*. The difference with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, Muslim scholars developed the values of moderation not only based on rational reasoning but also based on Islamic values and teachings.

How about the concept of moderation in holy scripture? One of the most productive Indonesian Quranic exegetes, M. Quraish Shihab, has written

a specific work on Islamic moderation based on verses of the Quran, entitled, *Wasathiyyah: Islamic Vision of Religious Moderation*. Generally, this book consists of 3 chapters, namely first, What is Washatiyyah? Second, Why Wasathiyyah? Third, How to Implement Wasathiyyah (Ulinnuha et al., 2020).

In answering the first question, Quraish Shihab begins his discussion by analyzing the term "wasath" in the Qur'an and Hadith. He then discusses other terms in addition to wasathiyyah, the essence of wasathiyyah, and also the opposite of the term wasathiyyah such as ghuluw. All of his discussions start with Quranic verses and also hadiths. Similarly, when answering the second and third questions, he uses linguistic, historical, sociological, and comparative approaches.

In conclusion, Quraish Shihab proposes seven strategies to implement and establish moderation in Islam. The first strategy involves understanding the correct meanings of texts in the Quran and Hadith related to the concept of moderation, as well as the maqashid al-syariah of those texts. The second strategy involves cooperation with all sectors of the Muslim community based on shared principles and tolerance of differences. The third strategy involves integrating faith and knowledge, including economic and moral strength. This aligns with the teachings of ancient Greek philosophers.

The fourth strategy is to implement values that are oriented towards humanity such as justice, freedom, responsibility, and human rights. The fifth strategy is to call for the renewal of thought in accordance with the guidance of religion and the times. The sixth strategy is to give great attention to efforts for unity and unity, not the opposite, namely differences and disputes. And the seventh strategy is to make the best use of the legacy of old thoughts in order to see current life.

Religious Moderation in PTKIN

Since January 2019, the Ministry of Religion, through its Minister, Lukman Hakim Saifudin, has instructed its staff to adhere to three mantras in carrying out their duties: first, religious moderation, second, unity, and third, improving the quality of service to religious believers (Qolbi, 2019). The emphasis on religious moderation in particular demonstrates the Ministry's strong commitment to protecting the fundamental rights of all religious believers as guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution.

The prioritization of religious moderation by the Ministry of Religion is further manifested through the establishment of Islamic State Institutions of Higher Education (PTKIN) as a laboratory for religious moderation, reinforced by the issuance of regulations in the form of a Circular Letter from the Director General of Islamic Education (Number B-3663.1 / Dj.I / BA.02 / 10/2019 dated October 29, 2019 on the House of Religious Moderation), which requests all Rectors of Islamic State Institutions of Higher Education (PTKIN) to establish and activate the House of Religious Moderation as a space for nurturing, education, accompaniment, and strengthening the movement of religious moderation on each campus (PPIM, 2019).

In addition to this, in regards to the strengthening and development of moderation in religion, the Ministry of Religion in 2020 has published a book entitled "Roadmap for Strengthening Moderation in Religion 2020-2024." This book was compiled by the Working Group on Moderation in Religion of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. The book consists of nine chapters, ranging from Introduction, Summary of Moderation in Religion, Ecosystem of Moderation in Religion, Performance Indicators for Strengthening Moderation in Religion, Policy and Strategy for Strengthening Moderation in Religion, Program for Strengthening Moderation in Religion in All Ministries/Agencies, Roadmap for Strengthening Moderation in Religion,

Implementation Strategy, and Conclusion.

(<https://pendispress.kemenag.go.id/index.php/ppress/catalog/book/7>)

According to Oman Fathurrahman, head of the Moderate Religious Working Group, this book is a realization and continuation of the recommendations in the Moderation of Religion book, which was published in 2019. As a roadmap, this book contains policy and strategic steps that are the Mid-Term National Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024 of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia.

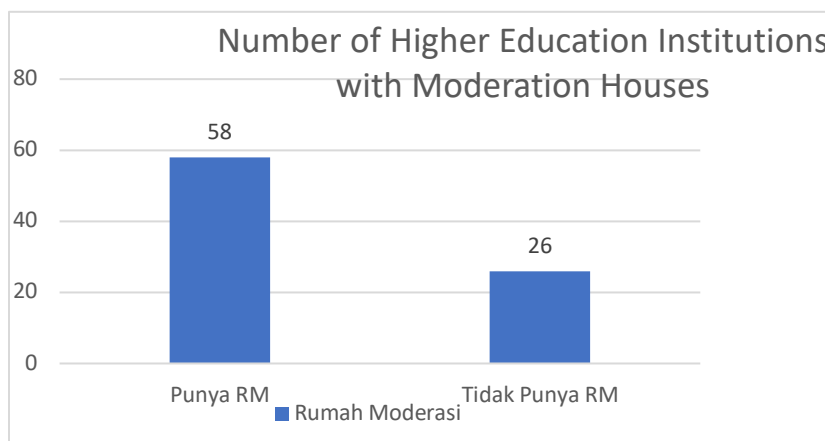
Included among the reinforcement programs outlined in this book are the strengthening of religious perspective, attitude, and practice with a moderated religious perspective among civil servants; the strengthening of a moderated religious perspective in the management of places of worship within the Ministry and agencies; the protection of the right to religion in public programs and services in accordance with the duties and functions of the Ministry and agencies, particularly within the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, the Indonesian National Police, the National Resilience Council, and the National Counterterrorism Agency; and the utilization of religious and cultural celebrations within the Ministry and agencies to bolster tolerance. (Agama, 2019)

As part of the aforementioned programs, while not explicitly mentioned, PTKIN is considered a part of the Ministry of Religion, with the latter being a leading sector in the strengthening of religious moderation in Indonesia. Therefore, PTKIN automatically becomes an integral part of the agenda and program of the Ministry of Religion itself.

Implementation and Strategy of Religious Moderation at PTKIN

Based on the limited research and investigation of the objective conditions for the implementation of religious moderation at several universities within the PTKIN, several strategies that have been implemented have been identified, including:

The first strategy is the formalization of moderate religious education through the establishment of a specific institution such as the creation of a moderation house or center for moderation studies (Musyafak et al., 2021). Out of 58 Islamic higher education institutions scattered throughout Indonesia, 32 have established a Moderation House. The remaining 26 have not yet established a formal Moderation House institution.



Despite the fact that 32 Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) have established Houses of Moderation, not all of them have clearly defined programs or roadmaps for the promotion of moderation. Each IHEI operates independently or ad hoc based on the views of their respective leaders. For example, IAIN Salatiga and IAIN Kudus do not use their Houses of Moderation as centers of study. However, UIN Walisongo, IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo, UIN Raden Intan Lampung, UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, and UIN

Syarif Kasim Riau have designated their Houses of Moderation as centers of study. This variation in policy is due to a lack of sufficient human resources, inadequate facilities, and the commitment of leaders to prioritize moderation. However, the majority of IHEIs have recognized the strategic value of Houses of Moderation in developing the Islam wasathi movement and as institutions for controlling and mitigating radicalism in the name of religion.

The second strategy is to instill the concept of religious moderation into the three pillars of higher education. This program is carried out through integration in the education process, conducting research, and publication. The habituation of the idea of religious moderation is still a debate, whether the idea of moderation is included in the curriculum as a separate subject (isolated subject) or as part of existing subjects (integrated subject). However, based on the author's research, the habituation of the idea of religious moderation is widely carried out in various campus activities such as orientation programs for new students, Practical Work Studies (KKN), and various forums, seminars, and discussions as well as campus publication media in print or online.

In the realm of research, for example, through the Ministry of Religion's Research and Community Service (LITAPDIMAS) program which provides funding for research proposals for lecturers at Islamic Higher Education Institutions, affords academic staff at these institutions the opportunity to participate in research on the theme of religious moderation.

In addition to the aforementioned programs, there is also a scholarship assistance program for students conducting research on religious moderation for their thesis. At the Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta State Islamic University (UIN), for example, there is a letter of decree from the Head of the UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta Budget Users (KPA) No: UN.01/KPA/1346/2019 concerning the Cost Assistance for UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta Research

Funding, Community Service, and Scientific Publication Recipients, for the 2020 fiscal year, which includes 11 research themes explicitly related to religious moderation. Among these research themes are: The Concept of Religious Moderation from the Betawi Ulama Perspective (A Study of the Thought and Dawah Activities of KH. Abdullah Syafii); The Ideological Contestation of Wasathiyah and Kafah Islam in Online Media; Religious Moderation in Nation-Building in Southeast Asia (A Comparative Study in Indonesia, Singapore, and Brunei); and The Influence of Teaching Islamic Philosophy in Building Religious Moderation: A Case Study of the AFI Program at UIN Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Palembang, and Padang.

Furthermore, the promotion of religious moderation in higher education institutions is also carried out through the publication of books. A book titled "Religious Moderation: From Indonesia to the World," published in 2019 by the LKiS in Yogyakarta, is written by 20 rectors of IAIN and UIN institutions across Indonesia. In this book, the meaning, history, principles, and implementation of religious moderation in Indonesia, particularly in higher education institutions, are explained.

Meanwhile, KH. Ahmad Mujahidin, the Rector of the Syarif Kasim Riau State Islamic University (UIN), has also written a book titled "The Implementation of Religious Moderation in Higher Education Institutions." Specifically, Mujahidin provides a depiction of the implementation of the ideas and concepts of religious moderation at the UIN Riau.

Conclusion and Closing

The promotion of religious moderation in higher education institutions under the Ministry of Religion has been a highly prioritized flagship program. The strategies and implementation of promoting religious moderation in higher education institutions have been running relatively well, though not yet

fully maximized. So far, the promotion of religious moderation program has been mostly ceremonial, such as the establishment of houses of religious moderation or centers for the study of religious moderation, and has only incorporated the values of religious moderation into a few activities, like including religious moderation values in some taught courses, encouraging research based on religious moderation, providing scholarships for research on religious moderation, and other programs.

Therefore, more structured and tangible efforts need to be made to continue maximizing the promotion of religious moderation through the development of a road map or roadmap and technical guidelines for implementing religious moderation in all higher education institutions. This is important to ensure a consistent and comprehensive understanding of the meaning of religious moderation and concrete steps to implement it, so as to truly maximize the output and outcomes.

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