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Strengthening the Value of Moderation as a Solution to Resolving Religious Conflicts that Occur in Indonesia

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Abstract

This article examines the facts of the conflict and the resolution found in resolving the conflict according to the Government of Indonesia, Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 58 of 2023 concerning Strengthening Religious Moderation. This article aims to be able to implement moderation by the concept of moderation in order to resolve the facts of conflict. This research uses a library study method, namely collecting data from trusted sources such as books, academic journals, articles and relevant documents. The results of the research show that religious conflicts that occur in Indonesia tend to be caused by inappropriate application of moderation, so a solution by strengthening the value of moderation will be very helpful in resolving these conflicts, as are the characteristics of moderation, namely *tawassuth, tawazun, I'tidal, tasamuh, mosawa, syura, and ishlah*. It is important to apply these seven principles correctly according to the concepts that have been explained.

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Introduction

Indonesia, with the largest Muslim population in the world, is known as a country with a vibrant religious diversity. In the context of diversity, religious moderation is one of the important concepts to create a harmonious society, mutual respect, and not trapped in extremism. Religious moderation can be understood as an approach that emphasizes a moderate or moderate attitude in carrying out religious teachings by avoiding extreme or radical attitudes.

The negative stigma that has developed in Indonesian society, namely the mainstreaming of religious moderation in the life of society and the state, is seen as a form of religious liberalization that will keep religious believers away from their religious teachings. It does not stop there; misunderstandings about the term religious moderation also often clash with the religious character of individuals who adhere to the normative teachings of religion. The implication of the lousy stigma against religious moderation is the emergence of public antipathy that tends not to accept or even oppose all forms of mainstreaming religious moderation values (Athoillah, 2022).

Therefore, religious moderation must be understood contextually, not textually, meaning that moderation in religion in Indonesia is open to moderation in Indonesia. However, understanding religion must be moderate because Indonesia has many cultures and customs (Fahri, 2019). Moderation must be understood as a shared commitment to maintain a perfect balance, where

every citizen of society, regardless of ethnicity, ethnicity, culture, religion, and political choices, must be willing to listen to each other and learn from each other to practice the ability to manage and overcome differences between them. So, it is clear that religious moderation is very closely related to maintaining togetherness with an attitude of tolerance. An ancestral heritage that teaches us to understand each other and feel each other differently from us (Hadisanjaya in Abdullah: 2020).

Furthermore, efforts to ground moderate religious and social beliefs and attitudes in Indonesia require the active role of all elements of society, especially religious leaders and the government. Considering that mainstreaming the values of religious moderation in the lives of Indonesian people is not as easy as imagined. It takes a collective struggle effort, namely all elements of society through various mediums, to internalize the nation's moderate religious and social values, as is the case through educational institutions in Indonesia (Zaman et al., 2022).

Religious conflict is a discussion that is often a hot topic among religious communities, especially in Indonesia. Indonesia, rich in the diversity of religious differences, cultures and traditions, is the main sector for the emergence of conflict. Sometimes, differences that are not handled well will only give rise to endless conflict. Although, on the other hand, differences become a wealth of diversity. On the negative side, quite a few put each other down to maintain the existence of each group, which ultimately becomes a conflict. (Mukhlis, 2015)

Although, on the other hand, conflict has positive impacts, such as mutually defending groups through collaboration or religious broadcasts, the negative impact is more significant. It can even muddy the internal atmosphere so religious figures and leaders, including the government, consider minimizing conflict.

The conflicts that occur are often related to the values of moderation; this is an oddity where the application of moderation, which should be a solution in resolving conflicts, actually becomes a factor in the occurrence of conflicts. The differences in moderation attitudes applied between each group become new conflicts that must be improved, meaning there must be a resolution to standardize the moderation application so that it no longer becomes a factor in conflict. (Mukhlis, 2015).

Survey results from the Lembaga Survey Indonesia (LSI) in 2020 showed that 31% of respondents thought that Indonesia was vulnerable to acts of terrorism. This survey also shows increased misunderstanding regarding religion and belief and intolerance towards differences of opinion (M.Ikhwan, 2023).

Looking at the facts and realities related to the current internal and external religious conflicts has given rise to an understanding among Indonesian people that moderation is no longer a solution to solving problems. This kind of understanding arises because the application of moderation is not by the existing concept. Exists, so the problem that must be addressed now is to strengthen the value of moderation by the Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia number 58 of 2023 concerning Strengthening Religious Moderation, in order to achieve the goal of moderation, namely harmony and religious harmony, not by looking for new solutions that may not necessarily minimize conflict, because an attitude of moderation will always remain a solution in resolving religious conflict, it is just that when the application of moderation values is not in harmony with the existing concept of moderation, it will give rise to a commotion among the moderate community.

In order to create a society that is moderate in religion, the state needs to be present to facilitate the creation of public spaces to create interaction between religious communities. Do not let the

state issue regulations with specific religious sentiments that are discriminatory and enforced generally in public spaces. The presence of the state must facilitate, not discriminate. (Ministry of Religion Research and Development Agency: 2019).

From the background of the existing problem, the researcher wishes to examine several facts about religious conflicts that occurred in Indonesia which were caused by the application of moderation that is not following the concept and explain the concepts of moderation that should be applied as a strengthening of the application of moderation values which will later become solutions to minimize religious conflicts that occur in Indonesia.

Method

This research method uses methods of *library research* namely a research method by taking information from library data, whether books, papers, articles, or other data available in the library. This method can also be taken from several data reports that have been collected and tested for correctness. The reason for using this method is that it can serve as a guideline for literature studies, that in collecting data it is not only obtained using field studies or observations but can also be taken from several library literatures, whether in the form of books, journals, notes or report data that has been published and previously researched.

Discussion

Religious Conflict in the Archipelago

The religious conflicts in Indonesia are more internal conflicts within one's circles (religious sects). Religious conflicts that often occur are caused by differences in concepts in the application of religious values, differences in preaching strategies, and truth claims between groups (Ulum & Utami, 2022). These factors are religious conflict factors that are commonplace in Indonesia, such as regarding religious legal provisions regarding saying Merry Christmas to Christians and welcoming Christmas for Muslims, some of whom ulama' stipulates that this is permissible, guided by the letter Al-Mumtahanah verse 8 regarding applying well to people of different religions (Muchlishon, 2019). No explicit prohibition exists, provided they do not follow their beliefs and worship. For example, moderation not legalized by the Shari'a, such as participating in celebrating Christmas, which is deviant behaviour from religion, is different from the ability to say Merry Christmas. This fatwa was expressed by the contemporary ulama, one of which was a fatwa from Al-Azhar Cairo alumni, namely Yusuf Al-Qardhawi and Qurays Shihab, who live in Indonesia (Elnizar, 2023). The issue of saying Merry Christmas has sparked debate among Muslims, giving rise to conflict between Muslim mass organizations. Among the groups that strongly threatened this decree in Indonesia was the FPI; from this debate, the community, both Muslim and non-Muslim, also responded. Some people supported the criticism because they thought it was true, and some responded negatively because this action showed intolerance towards differences and spread hatred.

Conflicts like this have occurred in the past, where 'ulama' often differed in determining a law, only these differences were not considered errors. However, instead, as a treasure of Islamic treasures, even if the fatwa was not valid, it was not true and needs to be followed because the fatwas that are pronounced cannot be applied in every place but are adapted to each place because the provisions of the fatwa that are pronounced are only from a mufti who does not have the status absolute mujtahid (N., n.d.). Like the case regarding saying Merry Christmas, one of those who

allowed it was Kiai Aqil Siradj, who then served as the general chairman of PBNU. in 2020 (Syakir, 2020).

This statement again invited debate until several groups insulted and insulted him because they were considered an apostate Muslim because, according to them, saying Merry Christmas was haram and could even be a cause of shirk. However, because this law was still being debated, many NU ulama determined that this was legal. However, some individuals from the FPI mass organization insist that saying Merry Christmas is still considered something wrong that must be prevented and not legalized (Elnizar, 2023).

The two groups both explained the arguments used as guidelines, and the FPI group also explained that there was no desire to show hatred, but it was a matter related to faith; the problem that occurred lay with some of the individuals who made these differences the cause. The emergence of conflict, with insults and inappropriate ways of responding, namely using foul language and harsh actions, often destroys institutions and invites hostility. Even though they explained that the fatwa from the FPI ulama did not reflect hatred, the attitude of individuals who badmouthed other mass organizations that legalized branding did not seem to show friendship, which then ended in badmouthing each other (Elnizar, 2023).

Strengthening Moderation as a Resolver of Religious Conflicts in the Archipelago

The term Moderation is no longer foreign among academics; moderation is a program of the Ministry of Religion to minimize religious conflicts that occur. Therefore, it is important to align appropriate moderation values to achieve the expected moderation goals, namely maintaining national commitment, fostering a sense of tolerance and avoiding violence between fellow religious believers (Latifa & Fahri, 2022).

In the face of a pluralistic society, the most powerful weapon to prevent radicalism from occurring, clashes are through moderate and inclusive Islamic education 165 (Alam, 2017). In the reality of real life, humans cannot avoid opposing things. Therefore, al-Wasathiyah Islamiyyah appreciates the elements of *rabbaniyyah* (divinity) and *insaniyyah* (humanity), combining *maddiyyah* (materialism) and *ruhiyyah* (spiritualism), combining revelation and reason, between *maslahah ammah* (aljamā'iyah) and *maslahah individual* (al-fardiyyah) (Almu'tasim, 2019). This research aims to make religious diversity an important asset for the Indonesian state, namely, how the moderate way offered by Islam can be a unifier for Indonesia. The formulation of the problem of this paper is how Religious Moderation is in Indonesia. This paper aims to find out how Religious Moderation in Indonesia is.

A moderation attitude is held by people who apply moderation correctly. The term moderation or moderation, termed for someone who applies the value of moderation, is often understood as inconsistency in religion (Latifa & Fahri, 2022). This is caused because the application of moderation is not by existing concepts, so this kind of understanding can make people reluctant to apply moderation values. Therefore, it is important to know the values of moderation and how to apply them. This aims to ensure that moderation can be aligned with the conflict occurring and can return Islam to the Islam of the time of the Sunans, namely Islam that brings peace invites without ridicule. The following are several moderation values that are correlated with resolving conflicts that occur in the archipelago. These moderation values are often linked to the attitudes of previous Sunans so that they can Islamize the archipelago (Mukhlis, 2015).

Tawassuth (intermediate) namely intermediate understanding and ideology, no *ifrath* (excessive) or *Tafrith* (reducing religious teachings) and can combine the textual application of religion with

existing reality (Miftah, 2023), sometimes someone in understanding religious rules understands that in general they are normative, so that existing truths and errors must be absolute and cannot be disturbed, as for example in the command to *amar ma'uf nahi munkar* which is a religious command, how to respond to someone who commits a crime, in religion the first stage to respond to this is to use the hands as an illustration of an action and then verbally then be careful in accordance with the hadith narrated by Imam Muslim (Katsir, 2013), if the hadith is applied fundamentally without looking at the existing contextual, then the application of the hadith will bring a conflict, because in reality someone who makes a mistake sometimes does not feel that he is wrong and sometimes they don't want to be blamed, especially in the general public, even though religion legalizes this, the existing institutions, culture and habits cannot accept it, if for example an action that is ordered, such as grabbing or hitting without prior confirmation, then will cause conflict. Incidents like this can happen due to a lack of implementation of traits *soft*, so that when there is a mistake or a deviation, it is responded to in an excessive manner, such as insulting, insulting or exaggerating in its delivery, which causes hostility and division.

Tawazun (balanced), namely being balanced in understanding and ideology in all aspects, both worldly and spiritual, *tawazun* can also be interpreted as an attitude in balancing life so that it remains peaceful and stable, being firm but not harsh, being firm in stating differences (*disagreement*) and deviation (*inbiraḥ*) (Ulya & Aziz, 2024), this kind of attitude should also be applied in religious life, but the facts that exist about religious social attitudes there are many weaknesses, mistakes in the application of attitudes *Tawazun* giving birth to many omissions regarding deviations, so that because there is no firmness because they are fixated on peace, in the end the deviation is considered a truth that must be appreciated even though it deviates from religious norms, for example, a Muslim who participates in the worship of another religion, this is considered good actions by some groups, even though this is a religious deviation that must be avoided, in Islamic rules this is not legal as per the MUI decision dated 7 March 1981 AD (Amalia & Angga, 2023).

I'tidal (straight and firm) puts things in their place and fulfils mandates and obligations according to their abilities (Amalia & Angga, 2023). The correlation of this attitude with the conflicts that occur today is that many people talk about religion. At the same time, they are not qualified and not experts in religious knowledge, so many controversial statements do not follow religious teachings, as explained by the Prophet's hadith narrated by Ibn Majah (Al-'Atsqolani, n.d.). In Islamic teachings, attitude *I'tidal* This is emphasized, especially for religious figures considered religious experts. It is emphasized to speak according to their capacity, and if you do not know about religious law, then answer that you do not know. However, the fact is that there are a lot of false statements that are considered valid because it was expressed by a religious figure who was not qualified, such as an interpretation of the Koran that did not comply with the rules of interpretation carried out by someone who was justified because he was considered a guardian and religious expert.

Tasamuh (tolerance), namely the attitude of recognizing and respecting differences in all aspects of life. This attitude is an attitude that is usually termed inter-religious social relations. An attitude of respect for differences can be a way to unite people who are rich in differences. Tolerance can change differences that cause division into a wealth of diversity, but tolerance is now the background in the conflicts that occur. Tolerance, which should be a uniter, becomes a divider caused by errors in implementing *Tasamuh*, which does not follow the established concept. Tolerance that is applied is more interpreted as neglect so that one cannot differentiate between differences and deviations, such as tolerance towards religious blasphemy, because they consider it

a difference that deserves to be respected, even though tolerance cannot be applied to something that deviates from the norms—religion, such as when Muslims participate in the worship of other religions.

Musawah (egalitarian) considers the same without excluding differences in all aspects, both beliefs and others, this attitude views that humans are the same and does not prioritize the majority or exclude minorities (Arikarani et al., 2024). In Islam attitude, *musabah* is a form of respect for others; there is no need to make any distinctions because Islam considers a person noble with his devotion according to the word of Allah in Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 (Abdullah, 1998). However, Islam also enjoins glorifying the scholars and the people of the Prophet's house as the word of God in Surat As-Shura verse 23. However, in reality, they lack understanding of the concept of applying attitude *musabah*. These people reject the pretext of being obliged to glorify the habaib; some of them even insult the habaib, as well as groups who are fanatical towards the habaib, insist on the pretext of having to glorify the habaib until they consider that the mistakes made by the habaib are not considered mistakes and do not deserve to be blamed which in the end, it ends up bringing each other down and vilifying each other between one group and another, a lack of attitude *musahah* causes this.

Shura (deliberation), namely responding to every problem in its resolution using deliberation until finding a path to consensus whose basic principle is to put the benefit first (Syahri, 2021). This attitude will have the impact of openness towards each other, which can prevent conflict. Of course, in deliberation, it is not good to impose one's own opinion because it will cause conflict. In reaching a consensus, you must apply an attitude such as moderation to embrace and lead to the right path. Better, it needs to be done in a kind, gentle and loving way, as the word of Allah in Surah Ali Imron verse 159. In the word of Allah it is stated that the best way for other people to accept opinions is by being gentle and loving. Unfortunately, vice versa, if you use harsh methods, it will only drive people away and even create hostility (Arikarani et al., 2024).

Ishlah (reformation) is reformative in every situation by prioritizing the benefit of the 'ammah (Arikarani et al., 2024). This is based on the basic principle of "maintaining good old traditions and implementing new and better things" However, this attitude is always considered deviant because it is considered to be making up something that the Shari'ah does not prescribe. Some groups call people who apply this attitude *ishlah* to be experts on heresy (something that did not exist in the time of the Prophet) based on a hadith narrated by a Muslim imam, which means "Every new thing is a heresy, and every heresy is considered heresy, and something that goes astray goes to hell" However, the application of this hadith is not only interpreted fundamentally, but there is an understanding of the meaning of *bid'ah*.

Bid'ah is classified into two parts, namely *bid'ah hasanah* and there is *bid'ah Madzmumah*. *Bid'ah Madzmumah* is classified as heresy, which is not legalized because this includes behaviour that violates religious norms, while heresy *hasanah* is permitted (Anwar, 2020), because of the application of attitudes *ishlah*, which is not by the concept so that conflict arises among Muslims and understanding that attitude *ishlah* is deviant behaviour carried out by *ahlul heresy*, for example, the fact that the attack on a female Friday preacher was carried out at the famous Az-Zaytun Islamic boarding house, this is a *bid'ah* (something new) which is prohibited because it violates religious regulations that require a preacher to be male, this is the kind of thing that causes the value of moderation to be dulled, giving rise to the understanding that the value of moderation cannot resolve the conflict that occurs, assuming that the application of the value of moderation does not

produce results, and giving the label that the application Moderation will only be the cause of religious conflict.

Aceh, which is known as a Muslim-majority region, also has its challenges regarding diversity and tolerance between groups. In this context, it is important for students, as agents of change, to understand and practice religious moderation to create harmony in a heterogeneous society. (Inayatillah, et al: 2024). Medan, as a metropolitan city is a very diverse city. The diversity in Medan consists of ethnicity, race and religion. Even though most of Medan's population adheres to Islam, the six officially recognized religions also have their adherents. Of the approximately 2.26 million residents of Medan, they consist of Malay, Batak, Mandailing, Minangkabau, Javanese, Acehnese and other tribes. Medan residents also come from various ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Arabs, Pakistanis and Indians. This diversity seems to make Medan a miniature Indonesia. (Khairuddin, 2020). Several reports state that the fragmentation of movements in the name of religion, which hardens religious fanaticism, has negatively impacted the sustainability of national unity. Several cases were recorded, such as the riots in Flores in 1995, Ketapang, Sambas, Kupang, and Ambon-Maluku in 1999. This sparked social violence, which became increasingly acute and widespread until the Bali bombing occurred in 2004. Apart from that, the incident also occurred in Tolikara. - Papua, where a group of people attacked Muslims who were performing Idul Fitri prayers in 2015, then in Singkil Aceh, there was a burning of a house of worship in 2015. Furthermore, in Tanjung Balai City, North Sumatra, there was a burning of a house of worship in 2016, and in Surabaya, there was also a suicide which culminated in a house of worship in 2017 (Arifinsyah, Andy, and Damanik, 2020).

Conclusion

From the explanation of the facts of the conflict that occurred in Indonesia and the strengthening of moderation values that are by the concept which is used to resolve religious conflicts, it can be concluded that the religious conflict that occurred in Indonesia was caused by the application of moderation values that were not by the concept, such as a mismatch in the concept of values. Some groups carry out Tasamuh (tolerance) by participating in Christmas celebrations and following their worship. This kind of action is not an application of tolerance as a value of moderation following the concept, but it is a deviation that must be corrected. Applying moderation like this often leads to religious divisions and conflicts.

There are seven concepts of moderation values which are explained as strengthening material in the application of moderation values according to existing cases, namely concepts tawasuth, tawazun, i'tidal, tasamuh, musawa, shura, and ishlah, which should be implemented by correlating these moderation values with cases of religious conflict that occurred in Indonesia. Therefore, it is important for religious figures or people who have authority in regulating religious affairs, such as the MUI or the Ministry of Religion, to explain how the concept of moderation should be applied to new cases that occur as an ingredient in strengthening religious moderation which will later become a solution. In resolving conflicts that occur and can achieve the expected moderation goals.

Islam does not consider all religions the same but treats all religions equally, following the concepts of Islam wasattiyah itself, namely the concept of egalitarianism or not discriminating against other religions. The moderate methods intended are the first concept, namely the concept of tasamuh (tolerance). Following the characteristics of Islamic moderation above, it can be ascertained that if religious communities in Indonesia coexisted and tolerated each other, it would

maintain stability between religious communities and maintain harmony between religious communities

Religious moderation is the key to building a peaceful and harmonious Indonesia despite the many challenges faced. With the continuous efforts of the government, society, and religious leaders, religious moderation can be the foundation for maintaining unity and harmony between religious communities in Indonesia.

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