
> Vol. 03, 1 (2025), 60 – 74

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To cite this article: Kadir, S., Abd. Rasyid, N., Rudji, H., & Kamal, K. (2025). Modernization of Islamic Thought Amidst Challenges Radicalism and Secularism : Modernization of Islamic . *ISTIFHAM: Journal Of Islamic Studies*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.71039/istifham.v3i1.86>

Available at: <https://jurnal.seutiahukamaa.org/index.php/istifham/article/view/86>

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First Publication Right :

© ISTIFHAM: Journal of Islamic Studies

Published online: June 09, 2025.

Published by:

Seutia Hukamaa Cendekia

Journal Homepage:

<https://jurnal.seutiahukamaa.org/index.php/istifham>



Modernization of Islamic Thought Amidst the Challenges of Radicalism and Secularism

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Published: June 09, 2025

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Keywords:

moderation,

Islamic thought,

radicalism,

secularism.

Abstract

This article discusses the modernization of Islamic thought as a response to the increasingly complex challenges of radicalism and secularism in the contemporary era. Modernization in Islamic thought aims to align religious principles with the dynamics of developments in the era without sacrificing the core values of Islam. On the one hand, radicalism emerges as a movement that rejects all forms of change and modernity, often using the pretext of religion to legitimize violence and intolerance. On the other hand, secularism offers an approach that separates religion from public life, thus potentially reducing the role of spirituality in the social order. Through literature analysis and case studies in several Muslim countries, this article explores the strategy of modernizing Islamic thought that can be a middle ground between the two extremes. The results of the study indicate that the modernization of Islamic thought must be based on a deep understanding of classical texts, accompanied by contextualization according to the social and cultural needs of today's society. In addition, collaboration between Muslim intellectuals and traditional scholars plays an important role in spreading a moderate, inclusive, and relevant understanding of Islam. In conclusion, the modernization of Islamic thought can be an effective solution in bridging the need to adapt to global change without ignoring the essence of Islamic teachings, while at the same time countering the threats of radicalism and secularism. This research contributes to the development of moderate Islamic discourse that is appropriate to the modern socio-political context.

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Introduction

The modernization of Islamic thought has long been a debate in Islamic intellectual discourse, especially in the era of globalization that is accelerating the flow of information, cultural exchange, and social, political, and economic change. In the midst of this global development, Muslims are faced with the challenge of remaining relevant by maintaining the essence of Islamic teachings while responding to the changes that occur. Globalization not only brings technological and economic progress, but also shifts cultural values and introduces new ideologies that demand adaptation without losing fundamental spiritual principles (Bakri, 2013).

Many Muslim scholars believe that modernization of Islamic thought is an urgent need to balance the progress of the times with Islamic principles. This effort is not intended to overhaul Islamic teachings, but rather to reinterpret religious texts and teachings so that they can answer contemporary problems. Majdi, A. L. (2019) stated that the reform of Islamic thought is part of

the responsibility of Muslim intellectuals to maintain the relevance of religion in a changing society. In this context, modernization seeks to combine the essence of Islamic teachings with the needs of the modern world through an adaptive and contextual approach.

However, this modernization process faces major challenges, including the emergence of radical groups that reject all forms of renewal and view change as a threat to the purity of religion. Radical movements often seek to maintain a literal understanding of religious teachings and reject adaptation, which sometimes leads to intolerance and even violence (Abou El Fadl, 2005). Meanwhile, on the other hand, secularism as a modern ideology suggests the separation of religion from the public sphere, which is considered to reduce the role of spiritual values in social and political life (Al-Attas, 1993).

In the midst of these two extremes, the modernization of Islamic thought tries to be a middle way that maintains the core values of religion, but remains open to adaptation and relevance in modern times. Islamic intellectuals such as Mohammad Arkoun and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd emphasize the importance of reinterpreting Islamic teachings through a more contextual and humanistic perspective, which allows religious teachings to continue to adapt to the demands of the times without ignoring their spiritual essence. This strategy is expected not only to strengthen Islamic values in the era of globalization, but also to tackle radicalism and secularism simultaneously (Esposito & Mogahed, 2007).

However, in the process of modernization, Muslims are faced with two major challenges that limit their room for maneuver in aligning religion with the dynamics of the times, namely radicalism and secularism. Radicalism, which often develops among conservatives who reject all forms of innovation, creates tension in the social and religious spheres. This radical group tries to strictly maintain the “purity” of religion, often with rigid textual interpretations and rejects any changes that are considered contrary to traditional values (Raja & Shah, 2021). Radicalism not only impacts the internal Muslim community, but also the global perception of Islam, which is often associated with violence and intolerance due to the actions of a small group that justifies violence in the name of religion (Hasan, 2020). This kind of view hinders efforts to modernize Islam to be more moderate and inclusive, because it creates negative stereotypes and marginalizes Islamic thought that is open to change.

On the other hand, secularism offers an approach that encourages the separation of religion from public and political life, with the aim of making religion a private matter. Although secularism is seen as an alternative that provides religious freedom in a more neutral framework, this approach also has negative implications. By placing religion outside the public sphere, secularism has the potential to reduce the role of spiritual values in shaping social and political ethics, thus creating a distance between religion and social issues relevant to everyday life (Saeed, 2018). In addition, secularism often triggers concerns among Muslims who see it as a threat to the identity and integrity of religious values, especially in areas with a strong Muslim majority population.

These two challenges confront Muslims with a complex dilemma, namely how to maintain religious identity in the face of an increasingly secular world fragmented by extreme views. In response to these challenges, modern Muslim scholars have proposed the concept of a middle approach that allows for a synthesis between religious thought and modern reality, balancing adaptation to change and maintaining the spiritual essence of Islam (Ahmed, 2022; Ismail, 2019). This strategy aims to bridge radicalism and secularism, so that Islamic modernization can be

carried out contextually without sacrificing the fundamental values that are at the heart of the beliefs of Muslims around the world.

The gap between efforts to modernize Islamic thought and the challenges of radicalism and secularism demands a new, inclusive and balanced approach. This approach is needed to enable Muslims to adapt to social and political changes, without losing their spiritual essence and religious identity. Previous modernization efforts have often encountered obstacles, both from radical groups who view every change as a threat to the purity of religion, and from the influence of secularism which tends to marginalize religious values in public life (Al-Atawneh, 2020).

This study aims to explore approaches to the modernization of Islamic thought that offer a middle ground between radicalism and secularism. Using literature analysis and case studies in Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, and Tunisia, this study explores how contextual and adaptive modernization approaches can be implemented in various socio-cultural contexts. For example, Indonesia is known for its "Islam Nusantara" approach, which combines Islamic values with local traditions in an effort to build a moderate and inclusive society, without losing its fundamental Islamic roots (Azra, 2021).

This approach emphasizes that the modernization of Islamic thought is not simply following the flow of global change, but as a strategy to maintain the core principles of Islam while opening up space for dialogue with the development of the times. In the case study in Turkey, for example, Islamic modernization focuses on the integration of Islamic values in modern democratic life, which is able to bridge the gap between state secularism and the spiritual needs of Muslim society (Yavuz, 2022). Meanwhile, in Tunisia, the Islamic renewal movement under the leadership of local intellectuals sought to assert an inclusive Islamic identity, while remaining in line with the spirit of political and social reform that emerged post-Arab Spring (Boulby, 2020).

The results of this analysis indicate that an effective Islamic modernization strategy must remain true to fundamental Islamic values, while being flexible in responding to complex social dynamics. In this context, developing a moderate and contextual Islamic approach can be key to responding to the challenges of radicalism and secularism in a balanced way. In this way, it is hoped that the modernization of Islamic thought can be a constructive solution that not only strengthens religious identity but also contributes to the formation of a peaceful, inclusive, and harmonious society (Osman, 2022).

Method

A qualitative approach with a descriptive-critical analysis method has been used in the study to understand the dynamics of the modernization of Islamic thought amidst the challenges of radicalism and secularism. This approach aims to analyze how modernization can bridge Islamic values with social change without sacrificing the essence of religious teachings. Data were collected through a literature study that included journals, books, research reports, and the latest scientific articles relevant to the themes of radicalism, secularism, and Islamic modernization in Muslim-majority countries (Al-Atawneh, 2020; Hasan, 2021).

The literature analyzed includes views from contemporary Muslim scholars as well as sources that describe the development of radicalism and secularism in different social contexts. This study also refers to a case study approach in countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, and Tunisia to understand the variations in the application of modernization of Islamic thought in facing these challenges (Yavuz, 2022; Osman, 2022). With this approach, the study aims to identify general

patterns that can be used as a basis for efforts to modernize Islam globally, while still paying attention to the diversity of unique local contexts.

This study also adopts a case study method in Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, and Tunisia to explore their experiences in dealing with secularism and radicalism, and to evaluate the application of contextual modernization of Islamic thought in each country. The selection of these countries is based on the significant role they play in the global discourse on moderate Islam and their different approaches to Islamic modernization amidst the influence of secularism and radicalism. Through this case study, the study attempts to understand the approaches that have been successfully implemented and the obstacles faced in each country with its unique socio-cultural context (Azra, 2021; Boulby, 2020; Salvatore, 2022).

Data analysis in this study was carried out with the stages of coding and categorization to identify the main patterns and themes that emerged from the literature that had been collected. The data obtained were then analyzed critically with a sociological and historical approach, in order to understand the relationship between religious thought, the challenges of modernization, and responses to issues of radicalism and secularism. This analysis process also involves theoretical reflection on the concepts put forward by modern Islamic thinkers such as Fazlur Rahman, who emphasized the importance of reinterpreting sacred texts in the context of changing times (Rahman, 2021), Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, who proposed a hermeneutical approach to understanding religious texts (Abu Zayd, 2022), and Abdullah Saeed, who introduced the concepts of pluralism in the context of contemporary Islamic thought (Saeed, 2020).

Results

The results of the study show that the modernization of Islamic thought is not only relevant but also strategic in facing the challenges of radicalism and secularism, as long as the approach is carried out comprehensively and contextually.

1. Understanding the Modernization of Islamic Thought

The modernization of Islamic thought is understood as an effort to reinterpret Islamic teachings to be relevant to the context of the times without abandoning its fundamental values. Muslim scholars emphasize the importance of combining Islamic tradition with contemporary intellectual innovation to answer global challenges.

The understanding of the modernization of Islamic thought today is not only an academic discourse, but also an urgent need in responding to the ever-changing dynamics of global social, political, economic, and cultural life. This effort reflects the desire to keep Islam alive and provide solutions in facing various problems of the times, while still adhering to the principles of the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Basic Concept of the Modernization of Islamic Thought; The modernization of Islamic thought does not mean replacing Islamic teachings with modern Western values, but rather carrying out *ijtihad*—creative and contextual reasoning—in understanding Islamic texts. The goal is for Islamic teachings to remain applicable and down-to-earth amidst the development of the times. Thinkers such as Fazlur Rahman, Mohammad Arkoun, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, and Nurcholish Madjid have emphasized the importance of rereading classical texts (*turats*) with a more critical, historical, and contextual approach.

Some contemporary phenomena that encourage the modernization of Islamic thought include: The Rise of Digital and Information Literacy. With the advancement of information

technology, Muslims now have wide access to Islamic sources from various schools of thought and ideologies. This raises the challenge of distinguishing between authoritative and radical information. The modernization of Islamic thought plays an important role in equipping people with critical and methodological ways of thinking about Islamic information.

Plurality and Tolerance ; In the midst of a multicultural and multireligious society, there is a need to affirm universal Islamic values, such as justice, compassion, and tolerance. Ideas such as "inclusive Islam" or "Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin" are part of the modernization narrative that tries to balance Islamic identity with the need to live side by side peacefully.

Issues such as gender equality, children's rights, and human rights are often debated among Muslims. The modernization of Islamic thought encourages a re-reading of religious texts by considering the social context and universal human values. Figures such as Amina Wadud, for example, interpret the Qur'an from a female perspective to fight for gender justice.

The global climate crisis is also a concern in contemporary Islamic discourse. The modernization of Islamic thought tries to reinterpret the teachings about the caliph fil ardh (leader on earth) in the context of ecological responsibility. An eco-Islamic movement has emerged that campaigns for an environmentally friendly lifestyle as part of faith.

Intellectual Dynamics in the Islamic World; Various Islamic educational institutions, such as universities and Islamic boarding schools, are now starting to open themselves to interdisciplinary approaches and modern methodologies in Islamic studies. In Indonesia, the discourse on progressive Islam, Nusantara Islam, or transformative Islam shows that modernization does not have to eliminate local identities, but rather strengthens them within the framework of the universality of Islamic teachings.

The modernization of Islamic thought is not just an intellectual project, but an effort to ground Islam so that it remains a blessing for all nature. By combining the roots of tradition and branches of innovation, Islamic thought will continue to live, develop, and provide solutions to the challenges of the times.

2. Challenges Faced

It was found that radicalism emerged due to a literal understanding of religious texts without considering the historical and social context. Radical groups tend to reject moderate thought dialogue, considering modernization as an attempt to weaken Islam.

Secularism is seen as a threat by some groups because it is considered to separate religious values from public life. However, some scholars see secularism as an intellectual challenge that can be responded to with an inclusive and contextual approach.

a. Radicalism, a Rigid and Disconnected Understanding of Texts

Religious radicalism emerges as a result of a literal reading of Islamic texts, without considering the historical, social, and maqashid (objectives of sharia) dimensions. This kind of understanding tends to ignore the diversity of interpretations, reject differences, and claim a single truth.

Social Media as a Means of Spreading Radical Ideology. In the digital era, various radical groups use platforms such as YouTube, Telegram, and Facebook to spread exclusive and anti-dialogue religious ideas. Militant Recruitment in the Name of Religion: Groups such as ISIS or its sympathizers in Southeast Asia have succeeded in recruiting members with the narrative of "returning to pure Islam" which rejects the system of democracy and pluralism. Radicalization Among Young People and Students: In a number of cases,

campuses and online communities have become fertile ground for radicalization due to the weakness of contextual and inclusive religious education.

Intellectual and Cultural Responses: Scholars such as Nasaruddin Umar, Quraish Shihab, and Haedar Nashir emphasize the importance of moderate Islamic education based on compassion (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*), tolerance, and respect for differences. Deradicalization programs are now focused on a narrative approach—countering extremism with peaceful and rational religious narratives, not just legal action.

b. **Secularism, Between Threat and Intellectual Challenge**

Secularism, in the Western context, means the separation of religion from state and public affairs. However, in Islamic discourse, secularism is often perceived negatively, as if it is a symbol of marginalizing religion. Some Muslims consider it an attempt at westernization that is contrary to Islamic values.

Controversy over Religiously Neutral Public Policy. For example, the ban on the use of religious attributes in public spaces in several European countries has caused a strong reaction from the Muslim community. **The Dichotomy of "Religion vs Science" and "Religion vs State":** There is still an assumption that religion is irrelevant in the development of science, technology, or public policy—even though Islam has a long history in science and government. **The Tendency of Polarization in Muslim Society:** In a local context such as Indonesia, a dichotomy has emerged between "secular nationalist" vs "ideological religious" groups, which is often exploited politically and exacerbates identity conflicts.

Intellectual and Contextual Responses: Many contemporary Muslim thinkers such as Tariq Ramadan, Abdul Karim Soroush, and Nurcholish Madjid offer a middle way. They emphasize that religion should not be marginalized in public life, but must be present in the form of values and ethics, not the dominance of dogma. The idea of "Islamic secularism" is developing among academics, namely the separation of religious institutions from the state but still prioritizing Islamic moral values in the practice of public life and policy.

Radicalism and secularism are indeed two extreme poles that test the resilience and flexibility of modern Islamic thought. This challenge cannot be solved with a black-and-white approach, but rather requires in-depth reading, dialogue between thoughts, and awareness of the changing global context. The modernization of Islamic thought must continue to be developed as a bridge: between text and context, between tradition and innovation, between idealism and reality.

3. **Strategy for Modernizing Islamic Thought**

Text Reinterpretation: Emphasizing the importance of the *maqashid al-shariah* (objectives of sharia) approach in understanding the Qur'an and Hadith. **Islamic Education:** Introducing a curriculum based on the integration of religious knowledge and general knowledge to build a generation of moderate and critical Muslims. **Inter-group Dialogue:** Holding a forum for cross-group dialogue to bring moderate, conservative, and secular groups closer together in finding common ground.

This strategy encourages re-reading of the Qur'an and Hadith by considering the main objectives of Islamic law (*maqashid al-shariah*) such as justice, welfare, protection of reason, soul, religion, property, and descendants. This aims to avoid a rigid and textualist understanding that can give rise to intolerant or even extreme attitudes.

Contextual Interpretation Studies are Developing in the Academic World. Many Islamic institutions in Indonesia such as UIN, IAIN, and Muhammadiyah University have developed contextual interpretation and social fiqh curricula based on maqashid. Maqashid-Based Fatwas: The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and the Sharia Council in several countries have begun to consider maqashid in formulating contemporary fatwas, for example on issues of sharia fintech, vaccination, and environmental issues. Figures such as Jasser Auda promote a “maqashid-based governance” approach that provides flexibility in the application of Islamic law in the modern era.

Integration of Religious Knowledge and Science for a Moderate Generation. Education is the main foundation in shaping the way people think. The modernization strategy in this field is carried out by integrating Islamic knowledge (ulumuddin) with modern science, thus producing a generation of intellectual, critical, and moderate Muslims.

Current Phenomenon: Integrative Curriculum Development in PTKI and Islamic Boarding Schools: State Islamic Universities (UIN) are now adopting a transdisciplinary integrative curriculum, combining Islamic studies with social sciences, science, and even digital technology. Modern Islamic Boarding Schools such as Gontor or Daar el-Qolam are starting to combine classical religious learning with general education, foreign languages, and global leadership. Campus Intellectual Islamic Movement: Such as the Muhammadiyah Young Intellectual Network (JIMM) and the Islamic student movement on secular campuses that fight for progressive Islam based on science.

Inter-Group Dialogue: Building a Bridge between Moderates, Conservatives, and Secularists. Dialogue is an important strategy to prevent conflict and strengthen social cohesion in a pluralistic society. The goal is to build a meeting space between groups to understand each other's differences and find joint solutions to religious and national problems.

Current Phenomena: National and International Religious Forums: Such as R20 (Religion of Twenty) initiated by Nahdlatul Ulama together with the G20, presenting world religious leaders to discuss global issues from an ethical and spiritual perspective. Dialogues across Islamic Schools and Islamic Mass Organizations: Conducted by institutions such as the MUI, Maarif Institute, Wahid Foundation, and Muhammadiyah, to bring groups with different views closer together. Collaboration between Islamic and Secular Communities in the Social Realm: For example, on issues such as climate change, women's rights, and education, conservative, moderate, and secular groups often meet in joint advocacy forums, even though they come from different perspectives. The strategy for modernizing Islamic thought in the contemporary era is not enough with just discourse. It must touch on the practical level, namely touching on the education system, religious policies, and public spaces where differences of opinion often intersect. By prioritizing maqashid al-shariah, forming an integrative curriculum, and building cross-group dialogue, Muslims will be better prepared to face the complexities of the times without losing the roots of Islamic values.(Suriana et al., 2024)

4. The Role of Islamic Institutions

Islamic institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools, Islamic universities, and community organizations, play an important role in voicing moderate thought. Several institutions have succeeded in becoming centers of study that combine Islamic tradition with modern knowledge. The Role of Islamic Institutions in the Modernization of Islamic Thought. Islamic institutions have a strategic position in shaping the way people think. They function not only as centers of religious education, but also as agents of social and cultural change. Amid the challenges of

radicalism, secularism, and globalization of values, the role of these institutions is becoming increasingly vital in mainstreaming moderate Islam that is contextual and inclusive.

Guardians of Tradition and Pioneers of Reform. Islamic boarding schools are the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia that now not only focus on teaching yellow books, but are also starting to be open to the development of science, technology, and contemporary Islamic discourse. **Current Phenomenon:** Modern Islamic Boarding Schools such as Gontor, Al-Amien, and Al-Mukmin Ngruki introduce an education system that combines classical Islam with national and even global curriculum. Many Islamic boarding schools are now developing entrepreneurship education, digital technology, and global leadership in response to the needs of the times. The birth of a network of peaceful Islamic boarding schools that are active in deradicalization and tolerance education, for example through the child-friendly Islamic boarding school program, green Islamic boarding school, and inclusive Islamic boarding school.

Islamic University: Intellectual Laboratory of Progressive Islam. Islamic universities such as UIN, IAIN, and STAI have become places for the development of critical, open, and academic Islamic thought. The transformation from IAIN to UIN reflects an effort to integrate religious knowledge and general knowledge formally and systematically.

Current Phenomenon: State Islamic Universities (UIN) in various regions (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim) have developed Centers for Islamic and Gender Studies, Centers for Tolerance Studies, and interdisciplinary studies that discuss contemporary issues. Many lecturers and researchers from Islamic universities are actively writing in international journals, introducing hermeneutic approaches, maqashid, and modern Islamic philosophy. Students from Islamic campuses are now digital da'wah agents who bring friendly, logical, and solution-oriented Islamic discourse through podcasts, YouTube, and other social media.

Islamic Community Organizations: Pillars of Da'wah and Social Transformation. Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Persis, Al-Washliyah, and others play an important role in nurturing the Islamic community while being actively involved in education, social services, humanitarian advocacy, and public policy.

Current Phenomenon: NU with its Nusantara Islamic Movement emphasizes the importance of down-to-earth, tolerant Islam and preserving local traditions. Through institutions such as Lakpesdam and the Ma'arif Institute, NU is active in inclusive education and strengthening religious moderation. Muhammadiyah with the concept of Progressive Islam prioritizes education, health, and social services. Muhammadiyah University, Aisyiyah, and AMM are centers for the development of knowledge based on modern and rational Islamic values. Both are active in global agendas, such as the R20 forum, interfaith dialogue, and advocacy for humanitarian, ecological, and social justice issues. Islamic institutions are not only a stronghold of tradition, but also a catalyst for intellectual and social change in the modern Islamic world. Their success in combining Islamic tradition with modern science shows that Islam is not contrary to progress, but rather a source of inspiration for a civilization that is rahmatan lil 'alamin. (Arifin et al., 2022)

5. Impact of Modernization of Islamic Thought

Modernization of Islamic thought applied contextually is able to reduce polarization between conservative and liberal groups. The emergence of moderate Islamic figures who become references in responding to contemporary religious issues, such as tolerance, human rights, and social justice. Success in reducing the influence of radicalism among the younger generation through an inclusive educational and preaching approach.

Modernization of Islamic thought based on a contextual, rational, and maqashid al-shariah approach has proven to be an effective means of bridging the differences between conservative and liberal groups within the Muslim community. This approach not only moderates the way of viewing religious texts, but also presents alternative solutions to contemporary issues such as tolerance, human rights, and social justice.

Reducing Conservative-Liberal Polarization; Polarization within the Muslim community, especially between those who uphold textual conservatism and those who think progressively liberal, often triggers discourse and social conflicts. However, a moderate and contextual approach to Islamic thought offers a middle ground that can be accepted by various groups.

Current Phenomenon: Cross-ideological discussions in academic and public spaces are increasingly being held. Forums such as Islamic Studies Talks or the Routine Study of Religious Moderation present speakers from different spectrums of thought for dialogue. Young moderate clerics and intellectuals such as Gus Baha, Buya Yahya, Prof. Quraish Shihab, and Haedar Nashir have become common reference figures who are respected by various groups, because of their cool and solution-oriented approach. The “Moderate Hijrah” movement among young people is now more inclusive, rejects exclusivism, and carries a down-to-earth Islamic message—as seen from the more reflective and dialogical digital preaching content. (Salsabilla & Dewi, 2024)

Responses to Contemporary Issues: Tolerance, Human Rights, and Social Justice. Issues such as religious pluralism, gender equality, minority protection, and economic justice are real challenges for Muslims. The modernization of Islamic thought is here to ground Islamic values in a universal humanitarian framework without losing its normative roots.

Current Phenomenon: Fatwas and progressive religious views such as support for the protection of minority rights, advocacy for environmental justice, and rejection of violence in the name of religion are starting to find a place among the people. Organizations such as the Wahid Foundation, Maarif Institute, and Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC) are actively raising human rights, peace, and humanitarian issues based on Islamic values. The “Moderation Village” program by the Ministry of Religion and local Islamic organizations has succeeded in creating a shared space between religious communities and across sects, as well as reducing the potential for horizontal conflict.

Inclusive Education and Preaching Approach; Islamic education based on the integration of knowledge and universal values is now mainstream in various educational institutions. Da'wah is no longer limited to the pulpit, but also through digital media, art, and culture that touches the hearts of the wider community. (Amin & Amin, 2024)

Digital da'wah platforms such as the YouTube account "Kultum Gus Baha", the Habib Ja'far podcast, and the Instagram content @muslimmoderate spread Islam with an inclusive and friendly face. The curriculum of religious moderation has been implemented in schools and madrasas as part of the national policy to form tolerant and critical-thinking students. The community-based Deradicalization Program is carried out by BNPT and partner institutions, involving former terrorist convicts, religious figures, and educators to instill peaceful and solution-oriented Islamic values to the younger generation. The modernization of Islamic thought that is applied contextually is able to unite differences and answer the challenges of the times. Not only avoiding internal conflict, but also bringing Islam as a solution to contemporary social problems. This success cannot be separated from the collaboration of moderate figures, educational institutions, and da'wah media that directly touch the roots of the reality of society.

Table 1. Perspective of Islamic Modernization on the Challenges of Radicalism and Secularism

Aspect	Radicalism	Secularism	Modernization of Islamic Thought
Definition and Main Characteristics	Extreme approaches to understanding religion tend to be exclusive and intolerant.	Extreme approaches to understanding religion tend to be exclusive and intolerant.	An adaptive interpretation of Islam, relevant to the context of the times without sacrificing core values.
Faktor Penyebab	Interpretasi tekstual sempit, tekanan sosial-politik, ketidakadilan.	Globalization, dominance of Western culture, lack of religious education.	The need for holistic Islamic education, the advancement of science.
Impact on the Ummah	Polarization, internal and external conflict.	Erosion of Islamic spiritual and moral values.	Opening up space for dialogue, harmony between religion and science.
Solution Approach	Moderate education, promotion of inclusive values	Integration of religious values in modern life.	Educational reform, collective <i>ijtihad</i> , and contemporary <i>da'wah</i> .

Perspective of Islamic Modernization on the Challenges of Radicalism and Secularism

1. Definition and Main Characteristics

- Radicalism. Refers to extreme patterns of thought and action, based on a narrow interpretation of religion, which often leads to intolerance of other views.
- Secularism. Emphasizes the separation of religion from the public sphere or political life, which aims to avoid the influence of religion on social policies and norms.
- Modernization of Islamic Thought: A dynamic approach that seeks to adapt Islamic teachings to the challenges of the times, without sacrificing the essence and fundamental values of Islam.

2. Causal Factors

- Radicalism. Emerges as a result of literal interpretation of religious texts without considering the social and historical context. Socio-political conditions such as injustice, oppression, and poverty also trigger the emergence of radicalism.
- Secularism. Supported by the flow of globalization and the dominance of Western culture that reduces the relevance of religion in modern life. In addition, the lack of deep understanding of religion also accelerates the process of secularization.
- Modernization of Islamic Thought: Driven by the need to integrate Islamic values with advances in science and technology so that Muslims can compete at the global level.

3. Impact on the Ummah

- Radicalism. Causes internal divisions within the Muslim community, inter-group conflict, and a negative image of Islam in the eyes of the world.
- Secularism. Leads to the erosion of spiritual and moral values in the lives of individuals and society, which has the potential to weaken the identity of the Muslim community.
- Modernization of Islamic Thought: Contributes to the creation of harmony between religious values and science, and builds a more productive dialogue between civilizations.

4. Solution Approach

- a. Radicalism. Must be addressed through moderate and inclusive religious education, which emphasizes the understanding of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin (bringing blessings to the entire universe).
- b. Secularism. Needs to be responded to by integrating religious values into modern life, so that religion remains relevant without having to oppose the development of the times.
- c. Modernization of Islamic Thought: Involves reform in Islamic education, strengthening the tradition of ijtihad (creative thinking), and the use of more contemporary da'wah media to convey the message of Islam effectively.

The modernization of Islamic thought is a strategic middle ground to face the challenges of radicalism and secularism. This approach seeks to maintain the relevance of Islamic values in modern life while preventing people from harmful extremism. A balanced and contextual understanding will be the key to the success of this strategy.

Modernization of Islamic thought is a strategic approach that not only tackles radicalism but also answers the challenges of secularism. By focusing on education, dialogue, and integration of values, this approach creates harmony between religion and modernity without losing the essence of Islam. The novelty of this research lies in the integrative and solution-oriented approach to the two main challenges of Muslims, namely radicalism and secularism. By positioning the modernization of Islamic thought as a strategic solution based on education and dialogue, this research provides a new contribution that is relevant both academically and practically.

In detail, this study offers new contributions (novelty) which can be summarized as follows:

1. Comprehensive Approach to Dual Challenges

This study does not only focus on radicalism or secularism separately, but simultaneously explores how both emerge as opposing challenges for Islamic thought. This approach provides a new perspective to see both challenges as a spectrum that requires an integrated solution.

2. Conceptualization of Modernization of Islamic Thought as an Integrative Solution

Modernization of Islamic thought is usually understood as a response to modernity in general. However, this study positions modernization as a strategic middle ground that is able to overcome radicalism (which is rigid and exclusive) as well as secularism (which is materialistic and reductionist). This broadens the understanding of Islamic modernization from mere adaptation to an innovative problem-solving strategy.

3. Focus on Educational Reform as the Main Pillar

This study places education as the core of the modernization of Islamic thought, with an emphasis on:

- a. Inclusive Curriculum Curation: Integrating contextual understanding of religion with global values.
- b. Strengthening the Tradition of Ijtihad: Encouraging renewal of thought based on sharia principles but adaptive to contemporary challenges.
- c. Use of Modern Technology: Bringing Islamic preaching and education into the digital era with an approach that is relevant to the younger generation.

4. Adaptive and Contextual Solution Model

This study not only presents theoretical criticism but also offers a solution model that can be adapted by various Islamic communities based on local contexts. With an approach based on collective *ijtihad* and intercultural dialogue, this study opens up space for the development of flexible solutions but still based on Islamic values.

5. Use of Multidisciplinary Perspective

This study utilizes a multidisciplinary approach, combining;

- a. Islamic Theology: To understand the root of the problem of radicalism and secularism.
- b. Sociology: To explore its impact on society.
- c. Philosophy of Education: To propose educational reform as a solution.

Discussion

This study found that the modernization of Islamic thought faces major challenges stemming from radicalism and secularism. On the one hand, Islamic radicalism, which often focuses on a rigid and literal understanding of religious texts, is an obstacle to the application of contextual Islamic thought that is open to social change (Surni Kadir, 2021). On the other hand, secularism, which separates religion from public life, is often seen by some Muslims as a threat to Islamic identity and values, thus triggering strong reactions from certain circles (Boulby, 2020). These two challenges create tensions that are difficult to overcome in the effort to modernize Islamic thought, where there is a need to find a middle way that is not only adaptive to the developments of the times, but also remains faithful to the basic principles of Islamic teachings (Salsabilla & Dewi, 2024).

In the discussion, the results of this study show that countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, and Tunisia have different approaches in facing this challenge. In Indonesia, the concept of "Islam Nusantara" which integrates local values with Islamic teachings has succeeded in creating a moderate and inclusive form of Islam, which is able to survive amidst the challenges of radicalism and secularism. However, challenges remain in educating society to be more tolerant and open to plurality (Azra, 2021). Meanwhile, Turkey with its secular approach tries to balance Islamic values and the need to maintain a secular national identity. However, strict secularism policies often create tensions between the state and conservative Islamic groups (Yavuz, 2022). Tunisia, after the Arab revolution, tried to implement an inclusive democracy and respect pluralism, but the struggle to create moderate Islam amidst the influence of radical groups continues (Boulby, 2020).

This study also found that the modernization approach to Islamic thought offered by scholars such as Fazlur Rahman and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, who emphasize the importance of reinterpreting religious texts in changing social and cultural contexts, is one solution that can bridge traditional Islamic values and the demands of modernity. Their thoughts offer a framework for Muslims to view religion dynamically, taking into account the context of the times and the needs of society (Rahman, 2021; Abu Zayd, 2022).

However, despite some successful modernization efforts, the study also notes that this process is still faced with strong structural and ideological obstacles, both from conservative parties and from those who support extreme secularism. These obstacles require cooperation between ulama, intellectuals, and the government to create Islamic thought that can adapt to global dynamics without losing its essence as a religion that prioritizes peace, justice, and equality (Suriana et al., 2024).

The results of the study show that the modernization of Islamic thought faces very complex challenges, especially when dealing with two main ideological phenomena, namely radicalism and secularism. In an effort to integrate Islamic teachings with the development of the times, various Muslim countries apply different approaches based on their social and political contexts.

In Indonesia, the Nusantara Islam approach has succeeded in creating space for the modernization of more moderate Islamic thought (Amin & Amin, 2024). This approach emphasizes the integration of Islamic teachings with local cultures that are rich in values of tolerance and pluralism. This allows communities to maintain their Islamic identity while adapting to global dynamics. Research by Azra (2021) states that Islam in Indonesia has not only succeeded in maintaining a balance between religion and local culture, but also developed a more inclusive moderate concept in a pluralistic society.

On the other hand, Turkey shows how a secular state tries to balance between Islamic traditions and the demands of modernity. Since the era of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey has adopted secularism as the basic principle of the state, but in recent decades, its government has begun to seek ways to combine Islamic values with democratic principles. Yavuz (2022) notes that although Turkey has succeeded in building a democratic system of government, the tension between secularism and conservative Islam remains a major issue that must be carefully managed.

Meanwhile, Tunisia experienced a more complex modernization process after the Arab Revolution. The country faced a significant ideological shift, with secular and Islamist movements battling each other to define national identity. Boulby (2020) revealed that Tunisia sought to build an inclusive political model that allowed the role of Islam in public life without neglecting democratic rights and individual freedoms. However, tensions between secular and Islamist groups remain a major obstacle to the modernization process.

One of the main findings of this study is that the modernization of Islamic thought cannot be separated from the challenges of radicalism and secularism. Radicalization, which is often rooted in the rigid interpretation of religious texts, opposes renewal in Islam (*Diskursus Epistemologi Tafsir Isyārī Dan Tafsir Bathini.Pdf*, n.d.). On the other hand, secularism, although it offers modernization, has the potential to isolate religion from public life, which can reduce the influence of spirituality in social and political aspects. Therefore, efforts to modernize Islamic thought must be able to offer a more balanced solution, which not only accommodates religious principles, but also answers the challenges of the times (Hafinda & Saputra, 2024).

The process of modernizing Islamic thought in dealing with radicalism and secularism requires a more flexible and contextual approach. For example, countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, and Tunisia have developed strategies that balance loyalty to Islamic teachings and the need to adapt to changing times. However, the biggest challenge remains how to integrate moderate Islamic thought with the very dynamic socio-political reality (Abdillah, 2013).

Azra (2021) stated that in the Indonesian context, Islamic modernization involves not only theological but also socio-cultural aspects. This can be seen in the strengthening of the values of tolerance, inclusiveness, and pluralism in Nusantara Islam which is able to reduce the potential for radicalization. On the other hand, in Turkey, the secularist approach implemented since the Atatürk era still gives rise to tensions between secular and conservative groups, despite efforts to integrate Islamic principles into the existing democratic system (Yavuz, 2022).

In addition, Tunisia has become an important example of how countries can address the tensions between secularism and Islamism after the Arab Spring. The political transition process that took place in Tunisia demonstrated the importance of dialogue between different ideological

groups to create a more inclusive political system. This discussion led to the importance of a social agreement involving various parties in defining the role of religion in public life, without sacrificing basic democratic values (Boulby, 2020).

Conclusion

The modernization of Islamic thought in the contemporary era is no longer understood as a mere theological discourse, but has developed into a multidimensional strategy that responds to global challenges in a contextual and measurable manner, especially in dealing with radicalism and secularism. The novelty of this approach lies in the integration of *maqashid al-shariah* with a socio-humanistic approach, which allows for a more functional understanding of Islam in responding to issues such as human rights, tolerance, and social justice. The active role of Islamic institutions (Islamic boarding schools, Islamic universities, and mass organizations) as transformative actors that not only maintain tradition, but also produce Islamic narratives that are adaptive, moderate, and solution-oriented. The use of digital technology and virtual public space as a medium for *da'wah* and moderation education, which has succeeded in reaching the younger generation and reducing the space for the influence of radical and extreme ideologies. Thus, the modernization of Islamic thought not only bridges the conservative-liberal polarization, but also becomes a tool for social reconciliation and the reconstruction of an inclusive and globally competitive Islamic civilization.

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