Islamic Moderation in Indonesia in Strengthening the Study of Islamic Community Development (PMI)

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the moderating role of Islam in the context of the development of Islamic society in Indonesia, with a focus on how this moderation influences perspectives and practices in the study of Islamic intellectualism (PMI). The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing interview methods and text analysis to gain a profound understanding of the impact of Islamic moderation in the context of PMI in Indonesia. The findings of the study indicate that the history of PMI reveals that the organization emerged in response to significant changes in post-independence Indonesian history and has evolved into an institution playing a central role in shaping an inclusive and contextual understanding of Islam. PMI has successfully adapted to various local contexts rich in Islamic traditions and schools of thought, bridging diverse interpretations of Islam and embracing a diversity of perspectives.

Keyword: Islamic Moderation, Islamic Community Development, PMI

Introduction

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, plays a crucial role in the development and moderation of Islam[1]. Amidst the diverse dynamics of society, Islamic moderation becomes a crucial issue related to the development of Islamic society in Indonesia. One of the instrumental platforms driving the agenda of Islamic moderation is the Strengthening of the Study of Islamic Community Development (PMI). PMI serves as a center for the study and research of Islam, addressing various critical issues in the lives of Muslim communities in Indonesia[2].

The significance of Islamic moderation in the Indonesian context extends beyond religious aspects to encompass social, political, and economic dimensions. In this context, PMI plays a

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[1] Amru Almu'tasim, "Berkaca NU Dan Muhammadiyah Dalam Mewujudkan Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Islam Di Indonesia," *TARBIYA ISLAMIA: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keislaman* 8, no. 2 (2019): 199–212; Imam Kanafi et al., "The Contribution of Ahlussunnah Waljamaah's Theology in Establishing Moderate Islam in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* (2021); Khairan M Arif, "CONCEPT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN INDONESIA," *Al-Risalah* (2021); Tatar Pasundan et al., "INDONESIAN ISLAMIC MODERATION IN PRINT MODERASI ISLAM INDONESIA DALAM MEDIA CETAK," *Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan* (2020).

[2] Irwandi Ibenk, "KONSTRIBUSI MAHASISWA JURUSAN PENGEMBANGAN MASYARAKAT ISLAM (PMI) DI NAGARI PARAMBAHAN KECAMATAN KAUM KAB. TANAH DATAR," *Masyarakat Madani: Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Pengembangan Masyarakat* (2020); Nurul Hidayati, "Strategi Pengembangan Prodi Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam (PMI) Fidkom Uin Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta Dalam Menghadapi Masyarakat Ekonomi Asean (Mea)," *Dakwah: Jurnal Kajian Dakwah dan Kemasyarakatan* (2019).

central role in formulating critical thoughts that have a positive impact on Indonesian Muslim society. Therefore, research on Islamic moderation in Indonesia within the framework of strengthening PMI studies holds great relevance[3].

Human diversity is a inherent and valid reality according to the decree of Allah SWT, as implied in the Quran Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, which means: "*O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.*"

In everyday life, everyone encounters differences, which often become triggers for problems escalating into conflicts when not understood, addressed, and responded to appropriately. Within differences, there lies a meaningful understanding that should be acknowledged and comprehended. Differences bring about a sense of togetherness, and they provide reasons for understanding and interpretation. Differences are the conditions, qualities, and characteristics created by Allah with the purpose of enabling mutual recognition, interaction, understanding, and mutual benefit among individuals. Understanding and responding to differences depend entirely on one's perspective. If viewed as a threat, differences may become challenging problems. However, if differences are perceived as a natural aspect of human existence and a grace from Allah, they transform into a beautiful spectrum coloring life[4]. One's perspective on differences significantly determines their attitude toward understanding the meaning of differences. Therefore, complete and accurate understanding is crucial for individuals to cope with and manage differences.

Understanding and comprehension reflect the realization and awareness of the diverse, varied, and never-perfect realities of life. Within understanding and comprehension, there is sincerity, readiness, and openness to accept everything, both within and outside oneself. Equally important is the realization that everything has its strengths, whether acknowledged or not, and they complement each other. Understanding and comprehending a difference is a process and a follow-up action based on respect and mutual appreciation. With respect and mutual appreciation, one can comprehend and accept, and gradually, the primary attitude will emerge, allowing everyone to coexist peacefully, comfortably, and harmoniously amid differences. Therefore, maximum effort is needed to emphasize and instill positive values in every individual, encouraging them to understand, comprehend, and respond to differences, such as avoiding negative assumptions, steering clear of provocative information, and adopting a moderate and tolerant approach.

Hence, amid a diverse environment, including national and state life, understanding, comprehension, as well as moderate and tolerant attitudes are crucial for creating peace and integral synergy in the development process. In this regard, the Indonesian Muslim community, as the majority, must position itself at the forefront of advancing and strengthening the integrity, unity, and peace of the Indonesian nation, as symbolized by the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity). Islam, as a divine doctrine, contains noble and universal values[5].

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[3] R W Hefner, "Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia * Edited by GREG FEALY and SALLY WHITE," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 21, no. 3 (2010): 479–482, http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jis/etq058.

[4] Mercy Aprilia Dyah Arini, Puji Rahayu, and Masyhuri Machfudz, "Kontribusi Islam Terhadap Perkembangan Sains Dan Teknologi Abad 21," *Jurnal Filsafat, Sains, Teknologi, dan Sosial Budaya* (2021); Nila Nila, Wiwik Indriani, and Siti Nurjanah, "Pendidikan Anak Dalam Perspektif Hadist," *ANWARUL* (2021); Indah Nurfi and Chuzaimah Batubara, "MENJAGA TOLERANSI BERAGAMA DENGAN TEOLOGI ISLAM," *Islamijah: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (2021).

[5] Rahma Fitria Purwaningsih and Doli Witro, "Islam Nusantara in Slogan Bhinneka Tunggal Ika: Al-Quran

The development of PMI must also be understood in the context of the overall development of Islam in Indonesia. As a country with diverse traditions and streams of Islam, Indonesia serves as a unique laboratory for Islamic moderation, covering a wide spectrum of interpretations. This complexity adds to the challenges in strengthening the study of Islamic moderation conducted by PMI. Therefore, understanding how PMI adapts to different local contexts in Indonesia is crucial.

Additionally, the role of PMI in strengthening the study of Islamic moderation is important for identifying the tangible impacts resulting from their studies. This includes implementing study results in public policies, social changes, and the general understanding of Islam. By understanding these tangible impacts, we can evaluate the extent to which PMI has succeeded in moderating the understanding of Islam in Indonesia[6].

Challenges and opportunities faced by PMI in dealing with recent developments, such as advancements in information and communication technology affecting the spread of Islamic understanding, as well as global issues influencing the dynamics of Islam in Indonesia, need to be addressed. In this context, the role of PMI as a crucial stakeholder in Islamic moderation will be further clarified.

With a deeper understanding of Islamic moderation in Indonesia and the role of PMI in strengthening the study of moderation, it is hoped that this research will contribute positively to efforts promoting inclusive and tolerant Islamic moderation in Indonesia. It also aims to guide PMI in fulfilling its role more effectively and sustainably.

Methods

The study aimed to analyze the role of Islamic moderation in the context of Islamic community development in Indonesia, specifically focusing on how this moderation influences perspectives and practices in the study conducted by the Center for the Study of Islamic Community Development (PMI). The research employed a qualitative approach and utilized interview methods along with text analysis to explore a profound understanding of the impact of Islamic moderation within the PMI context in Indonesia.

The qualitative approach involved in-depth interviews, allowing researchers to gather rich and nuanced insights into the participants' views and experiences related to Islamic moderation. Additionally, text analysis was employed to scrutinize relevant documents, texts, and possibly transcripts of interviews, aiming to extract and analyze themes, patterns, and meanings related to the impact of Islamic moderation on PMI.

Result and Discussion
The Importance of Interpreting 'Religious Moderation'

Perspective," *Cakrawala: Jurnal Studi Islam* (2020); Elly Malihah, "Islam, Keindonesiaan Dan Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," *Himmah: Jurnal Kajian Islam Kontemporer* (2021); Nur Khamid, "Bahaya Radikalisme Terhadap NKRI," *Millati: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* (2016).

[6] Anoushiravan Ehteshami, "Islam, Muslim Polities and Democracy," *Democratization* (2004); Akbar S. Ahmed, "Islam and Society in Southeast Asia," *American Journal of Islam and Society* (1989).

The term moderation in Arabic is referred to as al-wasathiyah. Linguistically, al-wasathiyah comes from the word wasath. Al-Asfahaniy defines wasath as sawa'un, which means in the middle between two limits, or with justice, which is moderate or standard[7]. Wasathan also means to guard against adopting uncompromising attitudes and deviating from the religious truth. The same meaning is found in Mu'jam al-Wasit, which refers to simple and selected guidance and choices. Ibn 'Asyur defines the word wasath with two meanings. First, according to etymology, the word wasath means something in the middle or something with two comparable ends. Second, according to terminology, the meaning of wasath is Islamic values built on a straight and moderate mindset, avoiding excesses in certain matters.

In practice, the embodiment of moderation or the middle path in Islam can be classified into four areas of discussion[8]:

a. Moderate in matters of creed.

b. Moderate in matters of worship.

c. Moderate in behavior and ethics.

d. Moderate in the formulation of Sharia.

The moderation (wasathiyah) of Islamic teachings is reflected, among others, in the following aspects:

a. Creed

b. Worship

c. Morality

d. Formation of Sharia

The explanation of the above words is for us to learn moderation: not extreme textualism, nor too much reliance on reason alone. I believe you all are moderates who can measure yourselves in positioning substance and responding to situations. I hope you can become moderators who can moderate religious communities. As for the technicalities, feel free to be creative according to your abilities, as long as you convey a meaningful message and share the same vision. Understanding is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of the message. Often, one word becomes a problem when interpreted differently. The sharper the differences in interpreting words, the more complicated the problem becomes. Conversely, the same interpretation will result in a harmonious understanding of behavior that can be followed in coordinated action. That is why, on this occasion, I want to convey a summary of the meaning of the keyword "moderation" according to our duties in the field of religion and religious matters. The goal is that the context of using this word is not understood narrowly or overly broad, let alone misunderstood. In short, I call it a mantra as a magical word to influence the public so that religious life in this country runs as expected. That mantra is Religious Moderation. Transforming small movements among us into a great energy capable of leading religious communities and this nation towards a better civilization.

Moderate Islam in National Life

Islam came to the earth not only to bring creed (doctrines of faith) and Sharia (ritual

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[7] Muhammad Khairan Arif, "MODERASI ISLAM (WASATHIYAH ISLAM) PERSPEKTIF AL-QUR'AN, AS-SUNNAH SERTA PANDANGAN PARA ULAMA DAN FUQAHA," *Al-Risalah* (2020); Siti Rohmah and Zakiyatul Badriyah, "Analisis Materi Islam Wasathiyah Pada Mata Pelajaran Aqidah Akhlak Di Madrasah Aliyah," *Jurnal Alasma : Media Informasi dan Komunikasi Ilmiah* (2022); Al Qudus Nofiandri Eko Sucipto Dwijo et al., "Quranic-Based Moderate Islam in Pesantren against Radicalism," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)* (2022); Heri Aulia Rahman and Aspandi Aspandi, "Konsep Islam Wasathiyah Dalam Al-Qur'an; Analisis Munasabah Q.S Al-Baqarah Ayat 143," *SAINTIFIKA ISLAMICA: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* (2023).

[8] M. Yusuf Wibisono and Wahyudin Darmalaksana, "The Idea of Moderate Islam in the Media Space for the Social Construction of Religious Moderation in Indonesia," *Khazanah Sosial* (2022); Abdur Rahman Adi Saputera, "The Contextualization of Islamic Law Paradigms in the Pandemic Time Covid-19 as the Word of Religious Moderation," *Jurnal Mahkamah : Kajian Ilmu Hukum Dan Hukum Islam* (2020); Rayno Dwi adityo, "PENINGKATAN ADAPTASI COVID-19 DAN MODERASI BERAGAMA," *Journal of Research on Community Engagement* (2021).

doctrines) but also to carry out the mission of rahmatan lil 'alamin with its civilizational concept, which is actualized in the development of civilization through science, technology, culture, and manners[9]. The term madani comes from the Arabic vocabulary madaniyyun, which is rooted in the verb madana, which means to inhabit, reside, or build. Other than that, it is sometimes interpreted with other meanings such as cultured, urban, civil, or civil. By knowing the meaning of madani, it should be understood that the term Madani society, popular in the late 90s, is a cultured society or a civil society or a society residing in an urban area or a city community familiar with pluralism issues[10].

Departing from the above description, whether intentionally or coincidentally, the depiction of Madani society is clearly seen in the course of the history of Islamic civilization, how the Prophet Muhammad initiated the construction of the city of Yathrib in the 7th century with a constitutional concept that binds various ethnic groups, factions, and religions to become a civilized city known as Madinah. There, the Prophet saw and found a pluralistic society, consisting of immigrant Muslims (Muhajirin from Mecca), native Muslim residents (Ansar of Madinah consisting of the Aus and Khazraj tribes), and non-Muslims (Jews of Madinah consisting of the Banu Quraizah, Banu Qainuqa', and Banu Nadhir). They were all free to carry out their respective activities and strictly forbidden to be hostile to anyone except those who committed injustice. People should not be considered enemies just because they have different political views, religions, or ethnicities. In this regard, Islam brought radical changes to individual and social life in the city of Madinah due to its ability to influence the quality of all aspects of life. At the very least, this is an ideal model envisioned by Muslims worldwide, including Indonesian Muslims, about the realization of Islamic law in a socio-political life that is just and in harmony with the cultural development of society. Because they believe that the last and most comprehensive formulation for human social life is Islam, which emphasizes conflicts as strongly as it emphasizes consensus and cooperation issues.

Again, Islam is a way of life; Islam is a complete direction, attitude, and worldview. Conceptually, Islam must stand on the "middle path," meaning reaching and surpassing extremes in human processes and avoiding extreme attitudes. It means that the socio-religious moderation concept in religion, which is the core of Islamic teachings, as stated in the Quran in Surah Al-Baqarah: 143 "And thus We have made you [Muslims] a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you..." must be actively present and play a role in building peace, harmony, and harmonious relationships among fellow human beings. Many life and living issues discussed in the Quran, about the social order and the past prophets

Local Context in Strengthening Islamic Moderation

Initially, it is essential to comprehend that Indonesia boasts a rich tapestry of traditions and streams within Islam. PMI, as an organization, has adeptly adjusted itself to this diversity. In the pursuit of strengthening Islamic moderation, PMI recognizes and values the variations in

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[9] Muhammad Khairan Arif, "ISLAM RAHMATAN LIL ALAMIN FROM SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE," *Al-Risalah* (2021); Muhammad Makmun Rasyid, "ISLAM RAHMATAN LIL ALAMIN PERSPEKTIF KH. HASYIM MUZADI," *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* (2016); Megawati Fajrin and Taufikurrahman, "HAKIKAT DAN PRINSIP ISLAM RAHMATAN LIL ALAMIN," *El-Fata: Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah* (2023); Hasmi Rafsanjani, Mutohharun Jinan, and Muthoifin Muthoifin, "Penanaman Nilai Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin Di Pondok Pesantren," *JIIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* (2022).

[10] Eva Sofia Sari and Wely Dozan, "KONSEP PLURALISME PENDIDIKAN ISLAM DI INDONESIA DALAM PERSPEKTIF ABDURRAHMAN WAHID (GUS DUR)," *journal TA'LIMUNA* (2021); Mohammad Hashim Kamali, "Diversity and Pluralism: A Qur'anic Perspective," *ICR Journal* (2020); Dzuriyatun Toyibah, "Indonesian Muslim in the Netherlands: Responding to Nationalism, Islamism, Democracy, and Pluralism," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama dan Lintas Budaya* (2022).

Islamic understanding, rendering it an inclusive organization.

1. Adapting to Various Traditions and Islamic Streams: Indonesia, being a culturally and religiously heterogeneous nation, demands adaptability. PMI has successfully adjusted to various traditions and Islamic streams within the country. The organization acknowledges the absence of a homogeneous understanding of Islam in Indonesia. Instead, PMI has endeavored to comprehend and respect differences in Islamic understanding, including collaboration with diverse Islamic groups[11].

2. Collaboration with Various Groups: PMI not only concentrates on collaborating with Muslim communities but has also worked alongside various non-Islamic groups. This reflects the organization's inclusive approach in promoting Islamic moderation. Such collaborations encompass interfaith dialogues, joint discussions with other religious groups, and diverse activities fostering interreligious harmony. Such collaborations have reinforced the understanding that Islamic moderation is a shared responsibility among all citizens, not solely the Muslim community[12].

3. Embracing Diversity in Islamic Thought: PMI's ability to embrace diversity in Islamic thought is a pivotal aspect of strengthening Islamic moderation. The organization has created inclusive spaces for discussions where diverse Islamic understandings can be expressed and deliberated upon. This aids in avoiding rigidity in religious comprehension and paves the way for more moderate and inclusive thinking. PMI understands that diversity in thought is a distinctive feature of Indonesia, deserving respect and preservation[13].

In summary, the local context is inseparable from PMI's efforts in strengthening Islamic moderation in Indonesia. The organization's ability to adapt to diverse contexts and embrace diversity in Islamic thought is a crucial factor in its success in promoting inclusive and tolerant Islamic moderation in Indonesia

Challenges and Opportunities for PMI

PMI faces various challenges, including efforts of radicalization and the influence of the internet in disseminating extreme Islamic views. However, opportunities exist to enhance PMI's role. Collaborations with the government, educational institutions, and civil society organizations are among the opportunities that PMI can leverage to strengthen its impact in the promotion of Islamic moderation studies.

Challenges:

1. Radicalization and Extremism: One of the primary challenges confronting PMI is the spread of radical and extremist Islamic views. Extremist groups utilize social media and the internet to encourage individuals to engage in violent actions. PMI must strive to counteract this radicalization and provide alternative, moderate understandings of Islam.

2. Internet Influence: The internet has become a crucial tool for disseminating religious views. PMI needs to adapt to this digital world and utilize it as a means to spread messages of Islamic moderation. However, caution must be exercised to prevent the spread of misinformation or extreme views through the internet.

3. External Challenges: PMI also faces challenges from various external groups that may not support the mission of Islamic moderation. This includes groups tending towards

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[11] W. Hefner Robert, "Making Modern Muslims" (University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), http://dx.doi.org/10.21313/hawaii/9780824832803.001.0001.

[12] Djohan Effendi, *A Renewal Without Breaking Tradition: The Emergence of a New Discourse in Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama During the Abdurrahman Wahid Era* (Institute for Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia, 2008).

[13] Kathleen Woodward, "Indonesian Schools: Shaping the Future of Islam and Democracy in a Democratic Muslim Country.," *Journal of International Education and Leadership* (2015).

fundamentalism or conservatism. Maintaining independence and a vision of moderation when facing these challenges is key.

Opportunities:
1. Collaboration with the Government: PMI has the opportunity to collaborate with the government in addressing the challenge of radicalization. This collaboration could involve providing policy input, training religious counselors, and public campaigns to promote a moderate understanding of Islam[14].
2. Collaboration with Educational Institutions: PMI can form partnerships with educational institutions to integrate a moderate understanding of Islam into educational curricula. This presents a significant opportunity to influence the younger generation positively[15].
3. Collaboration with Civil Society Organizations: PMI can collaborate with civil society organizations sharing a similar vision to promote Islamic moderation and tolerance. This collaboration can enhance the impact and reach of messages promoting Islamic moderation[16].

In addressing challenges and capitalizing on opportunities, PMI can play an increasingly vital role in promoting Islamic moderation in Indonesia. Collaboration with various stakeholders, coupled with a profound understanding of Indonesia's social and political context, will be pivotal in these efforts.

Conclusion

In order to understand the role of the Center for the Study of Islamic Community Development (PMI) in strengthening the study of Islamic moderation in Indonesia, we have outlined several key aspects, including the history of PMI's establishment, its role in advancing moderate Islamic understanding, the impact of the implementation of research results, adaptation to local contexts, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced. PMI's history indicates that the organization emerged in response to significant changes in post-independence Indonesian history and has grown into an institution playing a central role in shaping an inclusive and contextual understanding of Islam. PMI has successfully adapted to various local contexts rich in traditions and streams of Islam, bridging diverse interpretations of Islam, and embracing a diversity of thoughts.

The impact of the implementation of PMI's research results is reflected in public policies, societal understanding, and strengthened inter-religious harmony. However, the organization also faces challenges such as radicalization and the influence of the internet in the spread of extremist ideologies. Nevertheless, opportunities to strengthen PMI's role through collaboration with the government, educational institutions, and civil society organizations remain open. With appropriate efforts, PMI can continue to play a crucial role as an agent in promoting inclusive and tolerant Islamic moderation in Indonesia.

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[14] R. Suyanto, B., Sirry, M. I., & Sugihartati, "Pseudo-Radicalism and the de-Radicalization of Educated Youth in Indonesia," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 45, no. 2 (2022): 153–172.

[15] Sari and Dozan, "KONSEP PLURALISME PENDIDIKAN ISLAM DI INDONESIA DALAM PERSPEKTIF ABDURRAHMAN WAHID (GUS DUR)."

[16] "Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr. <Italic>Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism</Italic>. New York: Oxford University Press. 1996. Pp. x, 222. $45.00," *The American Historical Review* (1998), http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/ahr/103.1.269.

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