Construction of Religious Moderation among Indonesian Islamic Student Organizations

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the social reality of religious moderation among students, especially activists from extra-campus Islamic organizations. The existence of student organizations has a strategic role in the process of building student character. In its development, Islamic student organizations are very vulnerable to being infiltrated by radical ideology. Religious higher education is the most relevant vehicle for sowing the virus of religious moderation. This study is important as material for evaluating the extent to which students respond to the mainstreaming of religious moderation echoed by the government. The results of this study indicate that students actively and continuously accept and respond to social issues and events related to religious moderation that occur on campus. It includes the process of externalization, objectification, and internalization.

INTRODUCTION

The existence of student organizations has a strategic role in the process of building student character. Student organizations as a forum for student creativity can be optimally developed if the campus can oversee them strategically and in its student management role to address various issues that have recently surfaced on campus.

In its development, Islamic student organizations are very vulnerable to being infiltrated by radical ideology. Many cases show that supporters of radicalism and perpetrators of global terrorism tend to be graduates of Islamic educational institutions. The phenomenon of radicalism was found in several state universities in several cases. It is quite concerning for us that the results of a study conducted by the MAARIF Research Institute explained that there was a massive movement of Islamism among students and students, ranging from extremists who rejected the Pancasila state to those who campaigned for the implementation of Islamic law (Ahmad F Fanani, 2020).
Another study conducted by the Institute for Peace Studies (LaKIP) on 100 schools in the Jakarta area shows their high support for violence and persecution of minorities and their sympathy for terrorists. Radicalism has also entered campuses in Indonesia with students as its target. This is supported by surveys conducted by BNPT and other survey institutions. SETARA Institute released the results of the 2019 survey with the results that there are 10 State Universities in Indonesia that are affected by radicalism (Alfian Putra A, 2021).

The spread of radicalism on campus, which targets students, seems to have paid off. This is supported by surveys of the phenomenon of radicalism among students. Mata Air Foundation and Alvara Research Center released the results of a 2017 survey showing that 23.4% of students had been exposed to radical ideas. The National Intelligence Service 2017 released research results which stated that 39% of students from several universities had been exposed to radical views (Miftahul Chusna, 2021).

The results of further research related to the phenomenon of radicalism, namely research from PPIM UIN Syarif Hidayatullah showed that in 2017 students and students who had religious views tended to be radical as much as 58.5% and as many as 51.1% internal intolerance and 34.3% external intolerance at the attitude/opinion level (Rangga Eka Saputra, 2018). The BNPT also released the results of a 2020 survey with the results of 85% of the millennial generation being exposed to radicalism. And what is even more surprising is the involvement of one of the students from IAIN Surakarta who was allegedly involved in an act of terrorism that resulted in his being expelled as a student at IAIN Surakarta. This is strong evidence that the seeds of radical understanding have begun to enter the PTKIN religious campus area in Indonesia.

Religious higher education is the most relevant vehicle for sowing the virus of religious moderation. Higher education institutions can become embryos of national ideas, and nationalist values, uphold democracy, and can be a place to train the younger generation to live and socialize peacefully in existing differences (Agus Santosa, 2017). Islamic religious higher education as a center for contemporary Islamic studies is currently being faced with various new challenges, which are currently dealing with very dynamic dynamics of social change, with the development of science and the very rapid revolution in the field of telecommunications (Hasbiyallah et al., 2019). Tantangan perguruan tinggi keagamaan makin kompleks, salah satu ancaman yang cukup menghawatirkan ialah menyusupnya faham keagamaan yang eksklusif di tengah-tengah lingkungan pendidikan tinggi keagamaan (Suharto, B., 2019).

The State Islamic Religious College which is an integral part of the Ministry of Religion, through the Director General of Islamic Education, took part in promoting religious moderation by issuing Circular Letter Number B-3663.1/Dj.I/BA.02/10/2019 dated 29 October 2019 concerning Circular of the House of Moderation of Religion. In this circular, the Director General of Islamic Education instructed the importance of religious moderation in the campus world by ordering the establishment of a moderation house in each PTKIN. Currently, religious moderation is included in the 2020-2024 RPJMN and has become a priority scale for the Ministry of Religion with the enactment of Minister of Religion Decree No. 18 of 2020 concerning the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Religion for 2020-2024.

Religious moderation is an effort to restore the understanding and practice of religion by its essence. Religion is sent down to protect human dignity and civilization, not the other way around. The spirit of religious moderation is to find common ground between the two extreme poles of religion. The first pole is ultra-conservative who only believes that their interpretation of religious texts is correct, while the other interpretations are wrong. The other pole is the liberal extreme which has too many reasons to ignore the sanctity of religion. They also sacrifice their basic religious beliefs for the sake of undue tolerance of followers of other religions (Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).
The series of facts above confirms the urgency of the research that the author will raise. This research is also an effort to maintain the harmony of a pluralistic Indonesian society. There are at least two reasons why this theme is significant for the adopted author. First, his contribution feels very important to foster the spirit of Indonesian Religious and National Culture. In this context, the presence of organizations on campus should ideally contribute by their role in counteracting radical ideas that are deliberately infiltrated in various religious materials that are taught in a structured way inside and outside the campus. However, if not taken seriously, developing organizations may also be infiltrated by radical ideas and become a powerful weapon in the spread of radical ideas. Second, the study of religious moderation among extra-campus Islamic student organization activists is an important theme that is continuously rolled out as an effort to develop strategic policies.

METHOD

The type of research used is qualitative field research. The method used in this study is the analytical-descriptive method to describe a factual and actual symptom, event, or incident as it was at the time the research was conducted, then to carry out data analysis by organizing the data in the form of reports, biographies, articles, or manuals and so on. So it is expected to gain an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the meaning of the facts found in the field (Moleong, 2018).

FINDINGS

Religious Moderation

Moderate Islam is referred to as wasthiyah, which means fair, good, middle, and balanced (Amar, 2018). Moderate Islamic education puts forward the teachings of Islam as Rahmatan Lil Alamin, which means mercy to all creations, so it brings benefits like peace to the soul of mankind, compassion, and a culture of helping, respecting, and honoring others. A moderate Islamic education respects differences in both aqidah (creed) and madhab (ways of acting). It helps students to understand reality (fiqh al-waqi’), priorities (fiqh al-awlawiyat); the immutable constants of Allah’s system (sunnatullah), and religious texts, and it encourages them to be open to the outside world and promotes dialogue and tolerance (Yasin, 2019).

According to Al Qardhawi, characteristics, and behaviors are developed through wasathiyah, namely a) helpfulness and tolerance; b) actions based on conscience before physical behavior; c) a wise, loving attitude toward fellow Muslims and tasamuh (respect) for nonMuslims; d) a preference for unity over division; e) a combination of knowledge, faith, material creativity, a noble soul, economic shrewdness, and a strong character; f) a firm and clear purpose, but one that is gentle and based on human and social values; and g) a comprehensive understanding of aqidah, sharia, da’wah, and the state (Qardawi, 2000).

Nata mentions 10 basic values in moderate Islamic education: 1) respect for peace, human rights, and unity between races and religious groups; 2) a potential for entrepreneurial efforts and partnerships; 3) attention to the prophetic vision of Islam as humanization and liberation for social change; 4) the teaching of tolerance in religion; 5) the teaching of Islam as a moderate mainstream religion; 6) a balance between intellectual, spiritual, moral, and skilled insights; 7) the production of intellectual scholars; 8) a solution to modern educational problems; 9) an emphasis on a high quality, comprehensive education; and 10) a mastery of foreign languages (Surawardi, 2011).

Moderate Islamic education is the dominant culture for opposing radicalization (Susilo & Dalimunthe, 2019) because the three teachings of urgency form the basis of moderate Islamic education. First, Islamic aqeedah is the firm belief, without doubt, that the obligations and obedience of individuals are based on reason, revelation, and nature about Allah SWT as support for all problems that are beyond the ability of the human mind. Second, Islamic law (sharia) is an integral guide for

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regulating all aspects of human life. Third, Islamic morality (khuluk) means having a character that regulates actions and attitudinal patterns in a way that manifests in good deeds without considering oneself first (Ismail et al., 2021).

While several theories related to religious moderation are taken from the book of the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, "Mainstreaming Religious Moderation and Implementation of religious moderation in Higher Education". Religious moderation is defined as views, attitudes, and behaviors that always maintain a neutral attitude, always act fairly, in a balanced manner, and are not extreme in religious practices. The general standard contained therein is that every individual who adheres to a religion, regardless of national origin, culture, ethnic origin, religion, and political choices, must be willing to listen to other people. And learn from each other to practice the ability to manage and overcome differences in religious understanding between them (Dirjen Pendidikan, 2020). Several principles of religious moderation related to the Islamic concept of wasathiyah include; (a) Tawassuth (taking the middle way), (b) Tawāzun (balanced), (c) I’tidāl (straight and firm), (d) Tasāmuh (tolerance), (e) Musāwah (Egalitarian), (f) Shurā (deliberation) (Litiloly, 2020).

Based on that reality, the attitude of manifesting religious understanding with tolerance, and national commitment, and seeing forms of religious expression that adapt to local culture and anti-radicalism and violence is proposed as an indicator of religious moderation (Duryat, 2020).

Table 1. Indicator of religious moderation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Religious Moderation</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>Be open to face differences</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accepting attitude</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respect for others, and</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>National Commitment</td>
<td>Religious views and expressions of national ideology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accept Pancasila as the basis of the state.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Accommodating to Local Culture</td>
<td>Indigenous Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Anti Radicalism</td>
<td>Creating harmonious conditions in society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A balanced and fair religious attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Justice, respect,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding the reality of differences in society.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Islamic Higher Education (PTKI) organizes Islamic tertiary education as an extension of secondary education to prepare students to become loyal, dedicated, virtuous, and academically qualified members of society, professionals who can apply, develop, and/or create science, technology, and/or art, both in the field of Islamic religious sciences and in other sciences that are integrated with Islam (Rijal et al., 2022). Formally, PTKI is under the direction of the Ministry of Religion through the Directorate General of Islamic Education at the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education.

In Decree 102 of the Director General of Islamic Education Year 2019 concerning Religious Standards for Islamic Higher Education it is stated that attitude qualifications, PTKI graduates have skills which include, (1) Behave based on Pancasila values and the 1945 Constitution and Islamic
norms that are tolerant, inclusive and moderate; (2) Worship properly and by the provisions of the Islamic religion; (3) Having a noble character that is actualized in social life (Salamah et al., 2020).

Some of the keywords related to the development of religious moderation in the Director General of Islamic Education Decree No. 102 of 2019 are the words 'inclusive', 'tolerant', and 'moderate' (Anwar & Muhayati, 2021). Religious moderation is indeed an orientation in the implementation of education within Islamic Religious Higher Education institutions. In the Islamic Higher Education environment, students have received Islamic education or material that is quite comprehensive by their respective majors or study programs (Selvia et al., 2022).

The implementation of religious moderation in PTKI faces challenges that come from outsiders. Students are students who interact with parties and rightly so (Mundakir, 2021). It is impossible or not ideal if students are isolated from the outside world or do not interact with strangers to develop. However, this is where the challenge lies, because, at the same time, some outsiders have an immoderate understanding of Islam (Maskuri et al., 2020).

Extra-campus Muslim student organizations are organizations with a student background that were established outside the authority of the campus. Even though the location is outside the campus, extra organizations play a role in assisting policies set by the campus and may not leave traces of the main duties and functions of higher education institutions, namely "Tri Dharma PT", without losing critical power and continuing to fight on behalf of students, not individuals or groups (Yunita, 2022). The Tri Dharma of higher education is education and teaching, research and development, and community service. This is inseparable from the vision and mission of off-campus student organizations that welcome students in various aspects. As for PTKIN, there are four extra-campus organizations as forums for Islamic students, including the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM), the Indonesian Islamic Student Movement (PMII), the Islamic Student Association (HMI), and the Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union (KAMMI).

**Islamic Student Organizations**

Student organizations, as the name suggests, are organizations of student members to accommodate their talents, interests, and potentials through co- and extra-curricular activities (Jamilah, 2021). According to Conyne (Antasari et al., 2022), the introduction of student organizations is a way to intentionally develop students. Such organizations can be intra-campus, inter-campus, extra-campus, or regional, with the latter type generally having cross-campus members. In general, students who join such organizations get more involved in campus life and the wider society (Febriansyah et al., 2019).

Islamic student organizations, meanwhile, seek to develop Islamic academics with a noble character, public speaking skills, and leadership abilities while also deepening their knowledge of Islam and appreciation of the nation (Antasari et al., 2022). Student movements within Islamic student organizations also engage in social activities and concrete actions to respond to the nation's issues and strengthen ties with, and networks of, Islamic organizations. It is an expression of student idealism for religion and nationalism in the state (Muhammad Riza Chamadi, 2019).

In essence, a student organization is a forum in which students can gather for a common goal in ways that are approved by all members of the organization and its management (Pratama et al., 2017). It, therefore, follows that a student organization must not operate outside the main rules and aims of the college or university. This study therefore positions Islamic student organizations as a strategic tool for moderate religious education, because they are a medium for transmitting religious thoughts between activist members through cadre-based education and group discussions (Maskuri et al., 2020).
Nationalism

Nationalism, in a narrow sense, is a feeling of love and pride for one’s nation, but it can be so excessive that one looks down on other nations. In a broader sense, it is still a feeling of great love or pride for one’s homeland but without looking down on other nations (Brubaker, 2004). Indeed, nationalism is a determinant of identity and attitude within a country (Meier-Pesti & Kirchler, 2003). This is reflected in favorable attitudes toward the state as a manifestation of ideals and goals that are bound by political, socioeconomic, and cultural attitudes based on the principles of freedom and equality in social and state life (Oguilve, et. al., 2021).

Nationalism can be considered a consequence of national identity that represents a positive evaluation of one's group, but it implies that there are different social goals (Thomson, 2020). A nationalist population is characterized by 1) the existence of national unity and integrity; 2) the existence of an organization with a modern, national form; 3) the aim of liberating the country, such that the ultimate power is in the hands of the people; and 4) the importance of education in elevating the life of individuals and the state (Aktürk, 2022). However, the characteristics of a nationalist attitude proposed by Hafnidar, Karina, and Meurah Hadiah (2021) include a willingness to sacrifice, a love of the homeland, a desire to uphold the values of the nation, pride in being a native citizen, obedience to the rules, and discipline (Widiana et al., 2021). A positive nationalist attitude can foster harmony within a nation, but excessive nationalism can become a means for creating divisions between different nations (Jamilah, 2021).

One form of nationalism is called civic nationalism, which arises out of superior liberal democratic values (Brubaker, 2020). Other forms include ethnic nationalism based on the origin or ethnic culture of a society; romantic/organic/identity nationalism based on what unifies people according to the spirit of romanticism; cultural nationalism based on a shared culture rather than ethnicity; and religious nationalism based on a shared religion and its politicization (Aydoğan, 2021). The literature mentions that a nation-state is often vulnerable to ethnic nationalism because it faces problems related to the neutrality of the state and the construction of a multicultural nation (Widiani & Jiyanto, 2020).

DISCUSSION

Dissemination model of religious moderation

The dissemination model of religious moderation implemented at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta has its advantages, with a model of integration of moderate values integrated with other scientific fields and internalized into all existing courses, making religious moderation color all courses or at least become one of the chapters or subject matter, which can be articulated with issues that exist in all existing courses. The Core values used in mainstreaming religious moderation in UIN Surakarta carry the theme "Islam and Javanese culture". This was conveyed by the Chancellor of UIN Surakarta, Mudofir Abdullah that religion and culture are value entities capable of moving the thoughts and actions of each adherent. So the concept of cultured and religious human beings appears, this shows that humans experience civilization (Mudofir Abdullah, 2019).

Departing from the dissemination model of religious moderation at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, of course, there will be a process of internalizing the values of religious moderation among the academic community, including activists from Extra-Campus Islamic organizations. Then what about the reaction, implementation, and implications of the policy of religious moderation among PMII, HMI, IMM and KAMMI activists at UIN Surakarta? The following is data related to religious moderation among Muslim student activists at UIN Surakarta.

The main theory that will be used in this study is the theory of social construction. This theory was introduced by Peter L Berger and Thomas Lucmann (1990). Both describe social processes through their actions and interactions, in which individuals continuously create a reality that is
subjectively owned and experienced together. This social construction process is divided into three; internalization which creates subjective reality, externalization which creates objective reality, and objectivation which creates symbolic reality. These three processes are very relevant to be used to analyze the social construction of religious moderation among college students.

**Figure 1. Peter L. Berger’s Theory of Social Construction**

According to Berger and Luckmann, social reality is constructed through externalization, objectivation, and internalization processes. Social construction in their view does not take place in a vacuum but is full of interests. This social construction process is divided into three stages, which consist of; first, externalization which creates objective reality; second, objectivation which gives birth to symbolic reality; and third, internalization which creates subjective reality (Sulaiman, 2016). These three processes are very relevant to be used to analyze religious moderation among activists in extra-campus Islamic student organizations that focus on reaction, implementation, and implications.

The reaction here is a process of externalization, namely adjustment to the sociocultural world as a human product. The process of externalization is through building a formulated vision and mission and plans for extra-campus student organization programs, cadre processes, and habits related to the formation of moderation values.

The implementation itself is a process of objectification, namely social interaction in an intersubjective world that is institutionalized or undergoes an institutional process. Objectification in the institution is through the implementation of the vision and mission, written plans, and extra-campus student organization programs that have been initiated in the process of forming the character of religious moderation in students at PTKIN.

While the implication here is an internalization process, namely individuals identify themselves with social institutions or social organizations where individuals are members. Real experience from the education and cadre process that internalizes the value of moderation in extra-campus student organizations will be constructed into ideas and principles.

**Construction of religious moderation**

It can be understood that religious moderation among extra-campus organization activists at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta is a process of social interaction that is carried out continuously. Not something static in one time period. Students actively and continuously accept and respond to issues and social events related to religious moderation that occur on campus. It includes the process of externalization, objectification, and internalization.

First, the process that occurs is externalization, namely adjustment to the sociocultural world as a human product. For example, at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta with the core values characteristic of "Islam and Javanese Culture" and the integration of moderate values which are integrated with other scientific fields and internalized in all existing courses. From the existence of a policy that is characteristic of religious moderation in each of these campuses, then there is a process of externalization or self-adjustment by activists in their respective extra-campus organizations. The
process of externalization is through building a formulated vision and mission and plans for extra-campus student organization programs, cadre processes, and habits related to the formation of moderation values. This externalization process also answers how activists react to religious moderation. In general, the majority of activists, both PMII, IMM, HMI, and KAMMI, support this policy.

Second, the process of objectification, namely social interaction in an intersubjective world is institutionalized or undergoes an institutional process. This objectification process will answer the implementation of religious moderation among activists in extra-campus organizations. The objectification here is through the implementation of the vision and mission, written plans, and extra-campus student organization programs that have been initiated in the process of forming the character of religious moderation among students at PTKIN. For example, each of the extra-campus organizations such as PMII, IMM, HMI, and KAMMI carry out cadre programs, coaching, and training for their members by internalizing the value of religious moderation in cadre materials. In addition, it also carries out programs such as seminars, national dialogues, joint moderation seminars, discussions, and collaborative activities between OMEK and community-based activities.

Third, the process of internalization, namely the individual identifies himself with social institutions or social organizations where the individual is a member. This is where the implications of religious moderation among activists will be seen. The implication here is that the process of internalizing real experiences from the education and cadre process which internalizes the value of moderation in extra-campus student organizations will be constructed into ideas and principles. This internalization stage then forms the understanding and knowledge of the activists so that they will respond and react to the policy. In the end, a subjective reality is formed. Reality is understood and understood by students. Starting from the most basic form, such as understanding the key concepts of religious moderation and its application. Associating the value of religious moderation with surrounding social conditions, to position the relevance and urgency of religious moderation. For example, activists acknowledge that religious moderation, which is defined as religious understanding and attitudes that are not extreme, tolerant, and just, is the key to managing Indonesia's diversity. This can be seen in the differences and diversity of activist organizational backgrounds. Respect and tolerance between activists in different extra-campus organizations by carrying out collaborative activities between OMEK indicate that the internalization and implications of religious moderation are realized.

CONCLUSION

Religious moderation must be actualized by all elements of society, including extra-campus Islamic student organizations. As a forum for Islamic students, extra-campus Muslim student organizations such as KAMMI, HMI, PMII, and IMM, have a moral burden and responsibility to create a harmonious society through religious moderation. The results of this study indicate that there are three processes of social reality related to religious moderation among student organization activists. First, the reaction of activists from extra-campus Islamic student organizations to the policy of religious moderation at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, the majority accept this policy. Second, the implementation of religious moderation among activists from extra-campus organizations at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta can be seen in various programs, both in cadre training, discussions, national dialogue, seminars on religious moderation to collaborative activities between organizations and community activities. Third, the implications of religious moderation among extra-campus organization activists at UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta can be seen in the mutual respect for differences between OMEK, tolerance, mutual assistance to cooperation in various inter-organizational collaboration activities, and support for religious moderation activities on each campus.
which has its characteristics. UIN Surakarta with core values "Islam and Javanese Culture" and internalized in all subjects.

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