
**RELIGIOUS MODERATION:
AN APPROACH OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN INDONESIA**

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Abstract

Religious moderation in Indonesia is one of the choices that can be taken as an effort to reduce religious radicalism which greatly disturbs the stability of the state's security. The pluralism of Indonesian society demands the right attitude in living a religious life, meaning that every religious follower is required to practice his religious beliefs correctly while respecting the existence of other religious followers. Religious moderation provides new choices and is in the middle axis in living a religious life, namely between religion's radicalism and religion's liberalism.

Keywords: Approach, Religious & Moderation

INTRODUCTION

The term Religious Moderation is echoed by the former Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia who served in the 2014-2019 period, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin. Awareness of diversity within a nation should be understood as a great power that can be the main asset for the development of the nation itself, like what is in Indonesia. This nation has diversity and rich cultures and beliefs held by its people so that it should be the main asset for national development.

When the founders of the nation formulate the nation's ideological basis, they seemed to be aware of the diversity of cultures and religious beliefs of every citizen. That led to the emergence of the slogan that unites all of them, namely: *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is a sentence that is listed on the symbol of the Republic of Indonesia and comes from Sanskrit, which means: "Unity in Diversity" which refers to the diversity of Indonesian society amounting to 260 million people and consist of 714 tribes that inhabit more than 17 thousand islands, but in one unitary, The Unitary State of Republic of Indonesia.

The founding fathers of the nation are well aware of the sizeable potential of the diversity, if not regulated properly can cause

problems in the future. That is why, the nation's ideology basis, Pancasila and the state constitution, UUD 1945 formulate how the Indonesian people live their lives; and the country which was proclaimed on August 17, 1945, has strived to maintain unitary and unity within the framework of The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and even introduced the slogan *NKRI Harga Mati* (The Unitary State of Republic of Indonesia is Undisputed)

Surely, with the awareness to build the life of a nation and a dignified state, amid the plurality of the people within, then all components of the nation must strive for constructive dialogue, and mutual respect for one another.

Natural wealth and demographic advantages also ideology; has guaranteed a bright and sustainable for Indonesian people. However, it must be acknowledged the existence of diversity in various lines, if not well preserved then the threat of disintegration of the nation opens wide before the eyes.

Indonesian has diversity in terms of culture, beliefs, and religion; which should be proud of as a wealth that is second to none on earth.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is using a qualitative method and is done in a descriptive form and tends to use analysis. The sources of data used in this study are from the literature review. The research began by describing religious moderation as an approach to religious life in Indonesia. Qualitative data collection as a process of on-going research is carried out through a series of stages which include: data collection and processing. The type of qualitative research used is phenomenology.

ANALYSIS

The diversity of the Indonesian people on one hand can be a great force as a unifier of the nation and asset in developing this country, but if not managed properly then it will cause problems that can threaten the nation's disintegration. Conflicts related to diversity can take the form of disputes between groups, ethnicities, and races; and it is undeniable that the most common horizontal problem in Indonesia is a conflict between religious communities.

Some disputes related to SARA arose in various parts of the country, such as Inter-religious conflict in Ambon, which began in 1999, conflict in Poso, also Intra-religious conflict, including the problem between Ahmadya and Syiah in 2000, and inter-ethnic conflicts that occurred in Sampit, Central Kalimantan in 2001, as well as several disputes related to SARA. Fortunately, the three major conflicts are over.

Followers of religion are obliged to live a life of a religious belief correctly and intact, and in religious practice, people are often trapped in an extreme side that endangers their lives. On one side there are fundamentalists and on the other hand, there are liberals. Living religious life deeply and rigidly will cause a person to be trapped in religious fundamentalism which leads to radicalism. On the contrary, when a person lives his religious life freely and ignoring the basics, he tends toward religious liberalization and leads to

secular-religious beliefs. Both are dangerous, so that middle ground is needed, which came to be known as religious moderation, or moderate religion; that is, not inclined towards fundamentalism and vice versa to liberalism.

Diversity and National Constitution

In general, states are formed based on the theory of state formation. Studies that provide information about the theory of the formation of a country, including First, the Theory of Natural Law. The state was formed naturally and this happened as a consequence of humans as social beings. The Theory of Natural Law was pioneered by Plato (428-347.BC) and Aristotle (384-322.BC). Second, The Divine Right Theory, which believes that a country is formed by God's will. Those who believe that God wills establishment of a country, including Augustine (354-430) is known through his writings entitled *The City of God*, where the concept of the state is clearly described in the book. The book that originally titled *De Civitate Dei*, conveyed Augustine's ideas about the state and power as a product of dialectical interaction between himself and the powers around him. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) resides in the belief of this theory, and this is evident from his thinking about humans as social and political beings. Also, Friedrich Julius Stahl (1802-1861) believed that a state stood for God's will. Third, Social Contract Theory, that a country is formed because of a shared consensus. A country can be formed if there is a mutual agreement among many people who agree to commit themselves to the commitment to the state. Some figures who believe in this are Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) whose thoughts can be found in his book entitled *Leviathan*. Also, John Locke (1632-1702) as revealed in his book *Two Treaties Civil on Government* and French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) through his book *Du Contract Social*.

At the Preamble of The Constitution of the Republic Indonesia of 1945 (UUD 1945) the phrase: "*By the grace of God Almighty*" besides acknowledging the religious values of

nation's life; The sentence indicates that the Indonesian people believe in God's intervention in the establishment of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). The religious meaning in the 3rd paragraph is manifested as the ideology of the state as revealed in the 4th paragraph, namely "Based on the belief in the One and Only God." This means that the religious statement as written in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution contains a great meaning for every component of the Indonesian nation. There is a big responsibility to maintain the sustainability of this country and the responsibility in question is not just moral but also spiritual.

Indonesia is not only formed from thousands of islands, but also ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. Pluralism as a state reality cannot be ignored, because the pluralism that exists is precisely a beauty that is not possessed by other nations. Many countries have come to learn how Indonesia, which is large and full of diversity, can bind itself as a united and nationalized nation to this day.

Ethnic, racial and religious diversity and culture have colored the history of the Indonesian people, and this has been going on for a long time; at least when it was still in the form of kingdoms, until the period of colonization, until finally it was formed as a unitary state that was fully sovereign. This fact cannot be denied, as stated by John Titeli that it is natural in a life with humans that there is a diversity of tribes, races, cultures, and religions. That difference is natural and cannot be denied because it would deny the human code itself.

NKRI as the Final Consensus

Presenting the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) as a large and respected country of the world has been sought for a long time. It was noted that the efforts on the unity of Indonesia were expressed through the Budi Utomo movement in 1908 and continued with the implementation of the Second Youth Congress which produced The Youth Pledge (Sumpah Pemuda) in 1928. Until finally the nation and state life consciousness spread and made a powerful impact on the Independence of Indonesia.

Indonesia's independence which was proclaimed on August 17, 1945, was preceded by several preparations that gave birth to a national consensus in the form of the nation's ideology and format; agree on a determination to appreciate the real diversity in community life. Many tests that threaten the disintegration of the nation in connection with the efforts to force the will by a handful of people who shake the joints of the country's unity, such as the emergence of the Djakarta Charter, however, this did not lead to conflict because the Djakarta Charter was not enforced because of the generosity of the Muslim leaders to accommodate the feelings of the people of eastern Indonesia who expressed objections to the seven words contained in the charter. Of course, this move needs to be appreciated.

Although a long process must be undertaken since the beginning of the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, it seems that a national consensus has been reached, namely the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The slogan *NKRI Harga Mati* (The Unitary State of Republic of Indonesia is Undisputed) is a matter that is easily found on the street, both in the form of posters or banners, as an effort to remind all parties that the unity of the Indonesian nation is an unquestionable agreement. However, it must be acknowledged that there is some amount of friction at the community level to watch out for.

Threat of Disintegration of NKRI

Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution are the foremost defenders of the Republic of Indonesia and for this reason, any attempt to overthrow it must be firmly opposed by all elements of the state and nation of Indonesia. It must be recognized that each group or class has a desire to be considered as important and that is normal, but do not sacrifice the interests of the nation, of course. In general, the disintegration threat usually came from SARA conflicts, namely Ethnicity, Religion, Race, and Intergroup Relations. The potential conflicts in this field may occur in Indonesia due to the multi-ethnic and religious sociology condition of Indonesian society.

In the religious field, it needs to be examined more deeply because this aspect is one of the aspects that must be watched out for, relating to conflicts in society. Census data released by BPS in 2010 noted that there were 1,340 ethnic groups, and there were also recorded the number of citizens who are Muslims (87.18%), Protestant (6.96%), Catholic (2.9%), Hindu (1.69%), Buddhist (0.72%), Confucian (0.05%), other religion (0.13%), and the unknown amounted to 0.38%. Don't forget that there are still many Indonesian people who stick to the original beliefs of the local population, such as Wiwitan in West Java, Kejawen in Yogyakarta and Central Java, Marapu in Sumba-NTT, Ugamo Malim in the Toba region, North Sumatra and Kaharingan in Kalimantan.

Roland Robertson (1988:63) said: Religion is a system of beliefs adopted and actions that are manifested by a group or community in interpreting and responding to what is felt and believed to be magical and sacred. Hendropuspito (1998:34) said: Religion as a type of social system created by followers who proceed to the non-empirical forces that are trusted and utilized to achieve safety for themselves and the general public. This religious belief contributes greatly to the lives of humanity. However, some do not put their lives in religious aspects. Emile Durkheim sees religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices relating to sacred things, beliefs, and practices that unite into a single moral community. But Durkheim himself did not believe in religion, because he thought that religion did not exist, but on the other hand, he also did not believe in the supernatural reality that had become the guidelines of the religion referred. As a sociologist, Durkheim argues that society is only guided by himself and they consider God only as a symbol or formality. Whatever people's opinions about religion, in reality, religion is seen as one of the causes of conflict in society. This needs to be emphasized not on the nature of religion as a source of

conflict in society, but when religion is implemented in people's lives.

When diversity in Indonesian society is not properly maintained, what arises is friction in the life of the community itself, and this friction will lead to open horizontal conflicts. At least it appears in some events that take casualties and property. The threat of disintegration of the nation is wide open when the conflict that occurs is then ridden by intellectual actors for a momentary interest.

Religious Moderation in the NKRI Frame

Religion becomes a thing that should be held well at the level of national and state life because pluralism in religious life often produces friction which often leads to horizontal conflicts. Indonesia needs to learn from SARA-based conflicts that have occurred and even frictions in society such as a prohibition on the worship of religion by followers of other religions.

Paul F. Knitter (1982:37) said: "*Deep down, all religious are the same-different paths leading to the same goal.*" Knitter conveyed the message that all religions are the same, even though there are things that make it different. This means that differences in each religion do not have to be a long-standing problem because they can meet points of similarity. If religion's followers see similarities in every religion that exists, then it should not need to create conflict between them. All religions teach good things, where aspects of morality are related to humanity. But in practice, this is not the case because there are still many cases that reveal how religious adherents make a difference as a reason for not recognizing the existence of other religions. This can be found in various events that occur in society, related to friction between religious followers in Indonesia.

To lead a religious life and living side by side with other religions' followers. A moderate adult attitude is needed because narrow thinking about his beliefs will lead to contention. Religion must be practiced correctly and responsibly to give value to

yourself and also of course to other people with different beliefs.

The challenge to moderate religion in the NKRI frame presents its challenges because in religious pluralism and the condition of majority-minorities is often used as an excuse to reject the existence of other religions. One of them is the religious radicalism that exists in almost every religion. As explained earlier that the SARA conflict that had occurred in Ambon and Poso a few years ago should be valuable learning for all parties. Religious radicalism is a very serious matter. Without accusing certain religions, when discussing radicalism in Islam, Muhammad A. S. Hikam (2016:1) stated that this movement generally originated from Wahhabism which emphasized the purity of religious life per religious law; on a global scale it understands the NIIS and Al Qaeda movements, there is also a danger to religious life in Indonesia, namely religious liberalism. At present, religious liberalism is a frightening ghost for religion because it can make dogmatic values normative. Religious liberalism is also a threat to religions that will be dragged down by the purity of the religion itself.

If religious radicalism stands on one extreme side, so does religious liberalism on the other extreme side. Religious radicalism forces one to hold on to his religious beliefs radically and resulted in fanaticism; on the contrary religious liberalism resulted on free thoughts of dogmatic hermeneutics so that a follower becomes free and does not have fundamental beliefs so that his religious understanding becomes unclear and not grounded in his religious beliefs. If there are fanatics, then there are also those who are not. Indeed Pancasila exists as an intermediary between these conflicts, where it prevents the growth of religious liberalism by declaring the aspect of God as the main point in a belief. Likewise, Pancasila exists to reduce religious radicalism because of dogmatic perceptions that do not favor certain religions.

Religious people who have an exclusivism attitude are also seen as capable of bringing danger to the efforts of building dialog

bridges between religious communities. Supriyanto said The danger of Exclusivism is the potential to discredit other human beings. This happens when a religion only considers itself true and another does not so that relations with others become unequal relationships. This attitude will in turn produce discriminatory relationships from one to another. As a result, various violence that can occur in the name of God (Supriatno, 2009:159). Th. Sumartana (1996:78) argues that exclusivism is an attitude of closing from the influence of other religions, wanting to maintain his authenticity and purity.

Religion faces serious challenges and has a big impact on the followers and the people around them. The conflict will be even greater if not resolved. Andito said that the challenges that face every religion today are three things, First a matter of moral disintegration and degradation; two, about pluralism and exclusivity; third, about justice. These three problems are difficult to overcome because of several factors, including excessive aggressive attitude towards followers of other religions; misunderstanding of Absolute God's concept; and the existence of interests outside religion, namely politics and economics which also intervene in religion. But if the above factors can be resolved, then these challenges can also be answered. (Andito, 1998:161-162)

It is impossible to turn a blind eye to religious conflicts because this can cause deep wounds to the effort of building the unity of the nation. The people and Government of Indonesia are obliged to maintain the unity of the country to avoid disunity. Religious people will be trapped in religious radicalism when they misunderstand their religious beliefs and resulted in religious violence, which Zuly Qodir (2007:225) said that: Religious violence or sacred violence, in addition to arising from the existence of sacred texts, dogmas, and religious interpretations, is also caused by religion being used as a magical and absolute item. Religion is seen as unable to be interpreted, let alone adjusted to human desires. By making religion new idols, religious people feel that they are in the most perfect variety so

that others must be wrong and must be converted.

It takes the right attitude in living a religious life because living in the context of diversity requires its policies. On various occasions, while still serving as Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin always invites the public to understand good religious attitudes. One of the themes it conveys is: moderate in religion. As a religious person, it would be best if he practiced his religious teachings perfectly, but never understand the beliefs of others based on understanding their religion because it is certainly very contradictory.

Religious moderation prevents radicalism and liberalism in every religion. Understanding of religious beliefs will bring coolness if placed in each portion. Performing religious beliefs and respecting the beliefs of others certainly gives a sense of peace, security and serene. Religious moderation is something that must be lived by every religious community, and it will provide coolness in the life of the nation and state. Thank God that religious moderation is included in National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024. National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) year 2020-2024 is a state document that deals with the direction of national development policy. The RPJMN is the National Medium Term Development Plan which is a national development planning document for a period of 5 (five) years. This RPJMN document contains national development strategies, general policies, strategic priority projects, ministries / institutions and cross-ministerial / institutional programs, regional and cross-regional development directions. The RPJMN can be used as a reference for consideration in determining a policy.

SUMMARY

Religious Moderation in Indonesia is something that must be lived by every religion followers in Indonesia and religious people

should provide coolness in living their daily lives in the midst of this diverse society. Give thanks to God because the Indonesian government has provided space for Religious Moderation aspects, which is included in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) year 2020-2024.

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HALAMAN INI SENGAJA DIKOSONGKAN