

Actualization of Religious Moderation in Islamic Fatwas in Mainstream Online Media in Indonesia

Asa'ari*

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kerinci
asy.busein@gmail.com

Nuzul Iskandar

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kerinci

Hainadri

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kerinci

Abstract:

In the context of Indonesia's digital public sphere, Islamic fatwas disseminated through mainstream media play a pivotal role in shaping religious narratives. This study investigates the actualization of religious moderation within Islamic fatwas published by Republika Online, a prominent media outlet known for its Islamic orientation. The research aims to analyze how the values of religious moderation—as defined by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs—are reflected in fatwa content, particularly in the areas of national commitment, tolerance, anti-discrimination, and cultural accommodation. This study employs a qualitative-descriptive design, combining media text analysis with field research and applies Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to unpack ideological structures behind fatwa discourse. The findings reveal that Republika's fatwas tend to support religious moderation, especially in relation to national and anti-violence commitments. However, indicators such as cultural inclusivity and the recognition of latent forms of discrimination are frequently underrepresented. Furthermore, references to diverse Islamic legal traditions and local wisdom remain limited. This study contributes to understanding the dynamics of Islamic discourse in media and highlights the strategic role of fatwas in advancing religious moderation. It also offers critical insight for policymakers and media practitioners seeking to strengthen inclusive and context-sensitive religious communication.

Keywords: Religious Moderation, Fatwa, Online Media, Islamic Discourse, Mainstream Media

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary Indonesia, the digital transformation of media has brought significant changes to how religious discourses, particularly Islamic fatwas, are constructed, disseminated, and consumed. The once-exclusive role of religious institutions in controlling the transmission of Islamic knowledge has gradually shifted, now including mainstream media and online platforms. In this context, *Republika Online* emerges as a major actor, actively publishing fatwas to respond to public concerns regarding religious matters. This development is driven not only by technological expansion but also by the increasing demand for accessible religious guidance in the pluralistic and rapidly modernizing Indonesian society (Utomo, 2010). Fatwas that once circulated within scholarly councils or mosque gatherings are now produced, curated, and transmitted through the logic of journalism and digital algorithms. Consequently, religious texts in the media are shaped by institutional interests, audience demands, and the ideological orientation of editorial boards. This shift raises fundamental questions regarding how religious authority is reconfigured in public discourse and whether the values of religious moderation—as part of Indonesia's national religious policy—are meaningfully incorporated into the formulation and framing of fatwas. Understanding this shift is critical to ensuring that fatwas disseminated through public channels do not undermine religious tolerance but instead serve as instruments for fostering peaceful coexistence in a diverse society.

The concept of religious moderation in Indonesia has gained substantial prominence as both a normative framework and a strategic policy response to counter radicalism, sectarianism, and exclusive truth claims. Endorsed and institutionalized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, religious moderation is articulated through four core indicators: national commitment, tolerance, anti-discrimination, and accommodation of local wisdom (Kementerian Agama, 2019; Bimas Islam, 2022). These indicators are designed not only to regulate the theological and social behavior of religious communities but also to shape the discourse of religious elites and institutions, including those involved in issuing fatwas. Fatwas, unlike Qur'anic verses or Hadith, are non-binding legal opinions issued by religious scholars (muftis) and are thus susceptible to contextual influences, ideological predispositions, and discursive negotiations (Mudzhar, 1993). In the digital era, issuing fatwas through online platforms becomes even more complex, as it must mediate between traditional legal reasoning and modern demands for inclusivity, national unity, and public relevance. Given this dual pressure from religious tradition and state moderation policy, the role of media in shaping how moderation is interpreted and articulated in fatwas becomes increasingly significant, warranting critical inquiry.

Several studies have explored the relationship between Islam, media, and digital culture, showing how online platforms are reshaping religious authority and practices. Bunt (2003) highlighted how networks of jihad, fatwas, and online Islamic activism have created new modes of engagement between Muslim publics and religious elites. Building on this, Chawki (2010) emphasized the emergence of interconnected religious authorities in cyberspace, while Muttaqin (2020) introduced the phenomenon of *ngaji online*—a form of religious learning that bypasses traditional institutions. These works collectively demonstrate that the internet facilitates new dynamics of religious communication and spiritual affiliation. However, most of these studies remain general in scope, focusing on the expansion of religious communities and ideological dissemination rather than the structural and interpretive shifts occurring in specific religious texts, such as fatwas. In particular, little attention has been given to how religious moderation is operationalized

within fatwas published by mainstream media—especially in Indonesia, where fatwas often intersect with pressing issues such as politics, interreligious relations, and civil rights. Addressing this gap requires a closer look at how online media mediate both the authority and content of fatwas in ways that align—or potentially conflict—with the national religious moderation agenda.

Other research that directly engages with online fatwas includes Sunarwoto's (2012) analysis of fatwa programs in radio broadcasting, showed a shift from formal fatwa institutions to mass-mediated question-and-answer formats. While valuable, this study neither provide insight into the interpretive processes used by fatwa producers nor examined how moderation is framed in the answers provided. Similarly, Abdullah and Osman (2018) investigated how conservative Islamic groups use the internet to spread ideological fatwas and counter Western political hegemony, but they did not analyze the discursive strategies employed by mainstream media. Rusli and Nurdin's research further examined the role of the internet in producing Islamic knowledge but did not investigate how legal rulings are generated or contextualized through online platforms. In sum, while previous research illuminates the structural transformations of Islamic knowledge production in the digital era, it does not critically assess the ideological function of fatwas published in media spaces, nor does it examine their alignment with state-promoted values of moderation. This gap is especially relevant when fatwas deal with sensitive issues such as interfaith coexistence, religious violence, or democratic governance.

In order to address this gap, this study investigates how religious moderation is articulated in fatwas disseminated by *Republika Online*, a media outlet with an Islamic orientation and public legitimacy. The central research question guiding this inquiry is: To what extent do the fatwas published by *Republika* reflect the four key indicators of religious moderation, particularly in the domain of *siyāsah fiqh* (Islamic political jurisprudence)? By focusing on *siyāsah fiqh*, this study examines fatwas addressing issues of state, politics, civil liberties, and interreligious relations—issues highly relevant to national integration and religious diversity. The analysis pays close attention to how the media not only select and frame fatwas but also act as intermediaries in translating religious texts into public knowledge. Thus, this research aims to contribute both empirically and conceptually to the study of Islamic legal reasoning, media discourse, and religious policy in contemporary Indonesia.

This study adopts a qualitative-descriptive approach by integrating media text analysis with fieldwork, following the principle that understanding religious discourse requires attention to both textual content and sociopolitical context. Media text analysis focuses on the publication of fatwas in *Republika Online* from 2019 to 2022, examining both the form and content of fatwas published in the Islamic law section. Field data are collected through in-depth interviews with editors responsible for religious content to understand the institutional logic, editorial policy, and decision-making behind the fatwa publication process. The methodological foundation is grounded in Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which offers a powerful framework for examining how power, ideology, and social structure intersect in the production of discourse. CDA enables this research to go beyond surface-level interpretation and analyze how moderation is framed, limited, or contradicted within the texts. In combining these methods, the study aims to offer a comprehensive picture of how media-mediated fatwas construct public meanings of Islamic moderation.

The selection of *Republika Online* as the unit of analysis is not arbitrary. The outlet is recognized as a mainstream Islamic-leaning publication with strong historical and institutional affiliations to Muslim intellectuals and policymakers. Prior research has acknowledged its role in promoting moderate Islamic narratives and balancing radical discourses in the digital space (Rohman, 2020). In contrast to other media outlets that may sensationalize religious issues, *Republika* is often viewed as responsible and representative of the broader mainstream Islamic voice. Furthermore, its editorial leadership actively engages in framing religious content that aligns with state policies and pluralist values (Wazis, 2017). For these reasons, *Republika* serves as a valuable case study for understanding how religious moderation is operationalized within the editorial and discursive practices of online Islamic media. Studying how fatwas are curated and contextualized in such a setting offers insight into the broader negotiation between religious orthodoxy, public interest, and state ideology.

This study is limited to a focused set of fatwas that deal explicitly with political and sociocultural themes—particularly those related to democratic values, minority rights, and interfaith harmony. The operational definition of religious moderation is drawn directly from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, thereby providing a normative framework for analysis. Although this may limit engagement with alternative discourses on moderation, it allows for methodological clarity and policy relevance. By narrowing the corpus to 15 fatwas and contextualizing them through interviews and CDA, this study aims to provide a depth-oriented rather than breadth-oriented analysis. The findings are expected to inform both academic and practical efforts to ensure that the production of Islamic legal knowledge in the digital realm is consistent with the principles of moderation, pluralism, and democratic integrity. Furthermore, the study contributes to ongoing conversations regarding the role of religion in the public sphere and the evolving landscape of Islamic authority in the digital age.

DISCUSSION

Islamic Law Fatwas and Religious Moderation

The position of religious moderation in the fatwa discourse on Islamic law can be seen through the moderation values that are part of *Maqashid Syariah*. The latter term serves as a bridge connecting fatwas, law, and Islamic jurisprudence. The values in question include *rahmatiyah* (affection), *insaniyah* (humanity), *adliyyah* (justice), *mubadalah* (balanced), *mashlahah* (goodness), *mua'hadah wathaniyah* (national commitment), *dusturiyah* (constitutional), *tasamubiyah* (tolerance), and *urfyah* (culture oriented) (Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Bimas Islam, 2022). These values are presented through four main indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, anti-discrimination, and respect for tradition. Although it does not deny the existence of other indicators to demonstrate moderation in religion, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia stated that these four indicators are sufficient as a minimum standard to assess the level of moderation and vulnerability of religious activity (Moderasi Beragama, 2019).

It does not stop there; for the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, the position of fatwa is also crucial in the development of religious moderation in Indonesia. By interpreting the values of moderation, scholars not only present strong religious views but also contribute to the advancement of the nation and state, which is the ultimate aim of religious moderation itself (Tim Kelompok Kerja Kementerian Agama RI, 2020).

From this relationship, it is evident that the fatwa of Islamic law and religious moderation are interconnected (Rouf, 2020). The former requires the latter as an instrument to bring it closer to achieving the goals of *sharia*, while the latter, as both a value and a religious conception, necessitates fatwas from religious agents and authorities as its praxis. This interrelated relationship then determines how the fatwa is constructed and how the moderation objective can be achieved and realized.

Overview of Fatwas in *Republika Media*

The development of media in the digital age has not only affected worldly life but also the religious life of religious communities. New media—following the term “new media” used by several scholars—has fragmented the social order, displacing traditional religious authority (Turner, 2007). In Muslim societies, for example, the dissemination of Islamic studies is no longer limited to face-to-face lectures but also occurs virtually, making it accessible to the wider public (Muthohirin, 2021).

However, with the broader dissemination of religious studies, traditional religious authority—previously concentrated in the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Islamic boarding schools, and independent traditional clerics—has begun to be diminished and shift toward a new, essentially abstract, anonymous and non-institutionalized authority (Jinan, 2012; Marwantika, 2019). Traditional religious institutions and preachers have started to adapt and utilize digital tools to enhance their studies in response to this trend (Islam, 2022; Safriadi, 2020). A similar potential is utilized by various mainstream mass media to participate in spreading Islamic studies, especially fatwas, in their online media networks. One of the media outlets considered quite representative in this context is *Republika*.

Since its inception, *Republika* has been closely associated with Indonesian Muslims. The establishment of *Republika* was initiated by a group of young journalists led by Zaim Uchrowi, a former *Tempo* journalist, and fully supported by the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), which was led by BJ Habibie. The media was first published in January 1993, and its online version, *Republika.co.id*, followed two years later (Utomo, 2010).

In 2000, the ownership shares of *Republika*, which were originally held by PT Abdi Bangsa (a company owned by the foundation under ICMI), shifted to PT Mahaka Media, a company with minimal religious affiliation. This transition triggered several changes, one of which was the shift of *Republika* from a political newspaper to a professional business newspaper. Political news began to diminish, replaced by business-economic coverage. Interestingly, however, Islamic themes are maintained, in fact, more relaxed Islamic-themed content emerges (Fanani, 2011).

Republika's Islamic commitment is evident in the ideology it upholds, its vision and mission, as well as its rubrication and content. This media carries the ideology of nationalism, democracy, and Islam. Its vision is to be a modern, moderate, Muslim, national, and populist media outlet. Among its missions are upholding the *amar ma'ruf nahyi munkar*, defending, protecting, and serving the interests of the people; and educating and enlightening. Since its inception, *Republika* has consistently aimed to present Islam as a moderate, inspirational religion, advocating for social justice, inclusivity, and technological literacy (Hamad, 2004). This ideology, vision, and mission are reflected in content rich with Islamic themes, including the *Friday Dialogue*, *Umrah and Hajj*, *Islam Digest*, the *Islamia* sub-section, and *Iqtishodiah*.

The fatwa that is the focus of this research is found in the *Friday Dialogue* sub-rubric. This fatwa rubric features popular scientific writings that address or discuss certain

issues. Most of the writings lead to conclusions, decisions, or provisions on how an issue should be resolved according to Islamic law. Like the fatwas delivered by the ulema, the writing also directly mentions the primary sources referred to by the author to build decisions or conclusions.

However, not all authors in this Fatwa section are conventional scholars or muftis; some are editors who serve as rubric caretakers or permanent contributors, as designated by the editorial board. Erdy Nasrul, the editor of *Republika*, emphasized that these individuals, including writers and editors, possess a solid understanding of Islamic principles, supported by their educational backgrounds and further training provided by *Republika* (Interview with Erdy Nasrul, Editor of *Republika*, July 2022). In the editorial process, articles in the Islamic rubric undergo thorough and repeated checks. Specifically, this means that the editor's role is to verify whether the arguments, information, and references used in the writing are derived from authoritative sources. The process is repetitive, with articles being reviewed by several editors before publication to ensure that the articles submitted to readers is accurate and unbiased (Interview with Erdy Nasrul, Editors of *Republika*, July 2022).

Characteristics of Fatwas in Islamic Law in the Media

Several articles have been found that characterize Islamic fatwas (hereinafter referred as to fatwas) in the *fiqh siyasah* (political jurisprudence) aspect in *Republika Online* media. The management of these fatwas is published using two models. First, a fatwa is presented as an answer to a public question. In this model, media editors first present public questions and provide answers from experts or figures deemed authoritative. This model is highly characteristic of a fatwa, as a fatwa specifically addresses a particular question (Hallaq, 2004; Mudzhar, 1993). Therefore, if it is not preceded by a question, a religious opinion can only be classified as *fiqh*.

Second, the fatwa is not preceded by any questions. At first glance, this article does not align with traditional fatwa model, as it is not preceded by a question. However, it can still be categorized as a fatwa, since the article is published within the fatwa rubric. By placing this article in the fatwa rubric, it can be inferred that the rubric manager or editor has received implicit questions on this matter from the public. In terms of rubric management, the first model can be included in either the fatwa rubric or other rubrics, whereas the second model is exclusively placed in the fatwa rubric.

Within this framework, fifteen articles were identified (as of August 2022) containing fatwas published in *Republika Online* over the past four years. The oldest these articles were published on November 15, 2019. The fatwas cover four categories within the scope of national *fiqh* studies: democracy (*shura*), nationalism, including laws and regulations (*siyasah qaumiyah*), human rights (*huquq al-insan al-dharuriyah*), and international relations between countries (*siyasah dauliyah*).

Issues surrounding human rights (HAM) dominate the fatwas within the *fiqh siyasah* field. *Republika* does not address all religious issues or respond to every religious question raised by the public, as the editorial team has established specific criteria for the religious content to be published. This is a common practice in media, as each media operates with its owned character and target audience. The editor of *Republika* filter religious content based on the following criteria: 1) reflecting contemporary religious issues; 2) representing the viewpoint of the majority Islamic group in Indonesia, namely Ahlussunnah Waljamaah; and 3) emphasizing the moderate stance (*wasathiyah*), including accommodating local wisdom.

Each fatwa includes legal reasons (*dalil*) derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. Most fatwas incorporate both sources, while only a few rely on just one of them. No fatwa, however, omits these sources altogether. Despite this, the arguments presented in these fatwas are confined to the Qur'an and Hadith. According to the study of *ushul fiqh* which serves as the foundation of Islamic legal methodology, the sources of Islamic law are not limited to Qur'an and Hadith but also include *ijma'* (consensus of scholars) and *qiyas* (legal analogy). Sunni scholars universally agree that these four sources are valid and authoritative for delivering Islamic law (Al-Zarkhasyi, 2008; Zahrah, 2010).

In addition, several other methods are employed by certain scholars who are considered authoritative within their respective school of thought, but not necessarily by scholars of other schools. For instance, *istihsan* (juristic preference) is predominantly used in the Hanafi school (Ota, 2008), *Maslahah Mursalah* (concerned with public interest) is applied by some scholars within the Maliki school (Al-'Ijy, 2008), *Istishab* (presumption of continuity) is a method utilized in the Shafi'i School (Al-Ghazali, 1992; Muhaimin, 2017). However, of the fifteen fatwas examined in the *Republika Online* media, only one incorporates *ijma'*, namely the fatwa entitled "Using Violence During Interrogation" (a human rights issue). None of the fatwa employ *qiyas* or other methodologies, aside from the four widely accepted methodologies.

Most fatwa articles, reflecting the Sunni majority perspective, rarely discuss differences in schools of thought or the opinions of individual scholars. Among the fifteen fatwas reviewed, only one, titled "Reviewing Calls to Prohibit Interfaith Greetings," addresses such a difference of opinion. This fatwa pertains to a disagreement between the East Java Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), which opposed interfaith greetings, and the Center for the Study of the Qur'an, which argued that the opposition was premature. The Center cited Quranic verses, Sunnah references, and the actions of the Prophet's companions as evidence supporting the legitimacy of greetings with non-Muslims (Kurnia & Hafil, 2019). The differences between the two groups do not arise from distinct legal methodologies rooted in separate schools of thought but are instead based on varying interpretations within the same school, specifically the East Java MUI's adherence to jurisprudence of the Shafi'i school.

Meanwhile, when referencing scholars and books, the editorial team of *Republika* limits its sources to those scholars who reflect the religious character of the majority of Muslims population in Indonesia. Scholars deemed more authoritative on contemporary issues often come from Al-Azhar University in Egypt and al-Ahqaf University in Yemen. These two universities are widely recognized as prominent centers for the study of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah*. Although references to scholars from other countries and institutions are included, they are relatively limited and only in specific instances. For example, scholars from Ummul Qura University in Mecca, the Islamic University of Medina, and Islamic universities in Malaysia.

However, in the fifteen fatwas examined, only one reference to a scholar from al-Azhar University, Egypt, was found, specifically to Sheikh Athiyah Saqar. No references to scholars from other universities were identified. Furthermore, the scholars cited in these fatwas are primarily those who represent mainstream religious groups or organizations in Indonesia, such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, al-Washliyah, and Islamic Unity (Persis), as well as well-known figures who reflect the religious tendencies of the majority of Indonesian Muslims, such as Ustaz Abdul Somad. This is clearly evident in the fatwas presented. Meanwhile, the classic texts

referred to predominantly consist of works associated with the Shafi'i school, such as the book of *al-Majmu'* by Imam al-Nawawi and the works by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani.

Portrait of Religious Moderation in Islamic Fatwa Content

This section examines *Republika's* commitment to religious moderation based on four indicators purposed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. First, in term of national commitment, which refers to perspectives, attitudes, and religious practices that demonstrate loyalty to the foundational national consensus, embodied in the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila, as well as a sense of nationalism (Sugiyarto, 2013). Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia from 2014 to 2019, framed this national commitment by emphasizing the practice religious teachings in alignment with the fulfilment of citizens' duties, stating that fulfilling such duties is an integral part of practicing religious teachings (Kementerian Agama, 2019).

The content of *Republika's* fatwa generally reflects a clear national commitment. However, this commitment primarily pertains to issues governed by state laws and regulations, such as diplomacy, state finances, security, defense, and elections. In areas where legal regulation is absent, such as interfaith social interactions, *Republika's* fatwas do not explicitly demonstrate a national commitment. This bias is evident in the fatwa concerning the distribution of sacrificial meat from Muslims to non-Muslims, reported on 18/10/2020, which states:

Not only the poor, but even non-Muslims may consume the meat of the sacrifice. According to some scholars, there is no prohibition for them to eat it... However, ideally it should be prioritized by Muslims in need, particularly those who face economic limitations (Sakinah, 2019).

The fatwa supports religious moderation by permitting the distribution of sacrificial meat to non-Muslims. However, it does not explicitly encourage linking this practice to the promotion of interfaith harmony among Indonesian citizens, nor does it reference relevant laws that could reinforce this commitment.

Second, with regards to tolerance, which involves accepting differences in opinion, ideas, beliefs, and religious practices, tolerance refers to being open-minded, inclusive, and positively engaging with diversity in various aspects of life. Within this framework, the religious fatwas published by *Republika Online* media do not exhibit any antipathy towards differing opinion. Although several studies suggest that *Republika's* reporting does not always demonstrate an inclusive and pluralist attitude—

such as in its coverage of Chinese New Year celebrations among Indonesia's ethnic Chinese (Santosa, 2016)—this study finds that almost all fatwas demonstrate an inclusive and open attitude towards dissent. The most representative fatwa supporting this is related to interfaith greetings, a topic that frequently triggers debate. *Republika* states the following (15/11/2019):

Is greeting non-Muslims a new practice? He emphasized that it was neither a new practice nor *bid'ah*. He stated that the Salafi scholars practice it. The Prophet's companion, Ibn Mas'ud, used to greet both Muslims and non-Muslims. Another companion, Abu Umamah, greeted everyone, regardless of their faith. Does not religion teach us to spread greetings of peace? (Ichsan, 2019).

On the other hand, certain discussions should not be opened to differing opinions, as doing so would be counterproductive to the values of religious moderation. Examples include fatwas on vandalism laws (Saputra, 2021), racism (Ichsan, 2020a), and violence in the name of religion (Ichsan, 2020b). Allowing space for differing views on these issues

indicates that such fatwas may contradict the spirit of religious moderation. In this regard, the content of *Republika's* fatwa reflects a clear bias. A similar partiality was observed in *Republika's* coverage of LGBT issues, where the sources cited were exclusively figures opposed to the LGBT movement, while pro-LGBT figures were not invited. This led some to argue that the coverage was biased and did not present both perspectives fairly (Suranto et al., 2017).

Third, in the context of anti-violence and discrimination, these terms refer to actions driven by ideologies or understanding that seek rapid change in the social and political system. In this framework, violence committed in the name of religion is often referred to as religious radicalism. Therefore, anti-violence and anti-discrimination represent opposing attitude that aim to prevent or counter such acts of violence. Until now, the fatwas published by *Republika* online have generally exhibited an anti-violence and anti-discrimination stance, as evident in their opposition to acts of racism, violence, the destruction of places of worship, or disbelief towards fellow believers or other religions.

This anti-violence stance is also evident in *Republika's* coverage on cases of violence with a religious background, such as the violence against Ahmadiyah community, the Temanggung Church, and the Shia in Sampang (Ayani, 2013). When it comes to defining terms or concepts related to violence, *Republika* distinguishes itself from other media outlets that also identify as Islamic, particularly in its interpretation of the term "deradicalization." *Republika* tends to adopt the mainstream definition, which contrast with the perspectives of *Arrahmah* media, which interprets the term differently (Fikri, 2013).

However, in some fatwas, *Republika* does not appear to take a firm stance on anti-violence or anti-discrimination. For example, in the fatwa prohibiting interfaith greetings (Ichsan, 2019), the fatwa does not establish clear boundaries regarding what is prohibited, what is permitted, and what should be emphasized to promote harmony between religious communities. Given Indonesia's vulnerability to interfaith conflict, a fatwa like this could inadvertently create space for latent, violence-driven attitudes to emerge, potentially escalating into manifest violence. Hefni's study confirms that, at times, *Republika's* fatwas do not reference indicators of religious moderation as narrative framing, which is essential for managing a moderate religious life (Hefni, 2020). A similar situation occurred when *Republika* reported on the 2018 Surabaya bombing. In this case, *Republika* focused primarily on the government's inaction, while giving minimal attention to the potential violence against individual Muslims (Setiawan & Suyoto, 2020).

Fourth, in the aspect of acceptance of tradition, appreciation for tradition refers to the attitude of accepting religious practices (amaliyah) that have integrated with local culture and traditions, as long as this assimilation does not conflict with the core teachings or principles of religion (Iskandar et al., 2022; Phalet & Fleischmann, 2018). This aspect is not prominently emphasized in the religious fatwas published by *Republika* online, as there are no specific topics addressing tradition and culture. However, among the existing topics, several have the potential to be incorporated into the discussion regarding appreciating tradition. For instance, the topic of building harmony between religions is particularly conducive to being situated within a certain cultural and traditional framework (Forbes & Zampelli, 2014). Additionally, within the methodology of Islamic law, the theory of *'urf* or *maslahah* holds the potential to be applied in framing discussion on the social-religion relationship (Harun et al., 2021). However, these fatwas do not mention this element at all.

One fatwa that can be highlighted in this context is the ruling on travelling to non-Muslim places of worship, which was published by *Republika* on October 7, 2021. It stated that:

There is a consensus among scholars that traveling to non-Muslim places of worship is *baraam* if four conditions are met. First, if the attention is to glorify and elevate those places. Second, if it coincides with their religious celebrations or rituals. Third, if upon entering, one must adhere their religious practices, such as reciting something or paying respects to certain objects. Fourth, if it causes harm to the reputation of Islam, such as creating the impression that by entering, a Muslim is endorsing or supporting that religion (Nasrul, 2021).

This fatwa aligns with the elements of tolerance and portrays an inclusive image (although certain conditions must still be met). However, it addresses this issue solely from a legal perspective (permissible or forbidden), while the cultural aspect is overlooked, despite the potential for this aspect to be developed further to strengthen inter-religious harmony in Indonesia. Yet, these fatwas do not mention this element at all.

There is another fatwa in *Republika* that includes cultural elements, specifically regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On 21/05/2021, *Republika* wrote that: "Making every effort to help families and fellow Muslims, as in Palestine, is a guide, and two things that do not need to be in contradiction" (Ichsan, 2021).

It appears that the cultural content in the fatwa is limited to the context of relations among Muslims with different territorial and cultural backgrounds. The fatwa does not present any aspects of cultural education to the public that could be accommodative towards local culture or religious practices with specific localized values. While the discussion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is primarily focus on themes of geopolitics, defense and security, international law, and religion, these issues could also be examined through the lens of social interaction within a cultural framework. At the very least, the fatwa could provide readers in Indonesia with an opportunity to reflect on the conflict as a consideration in building cultural insights that support the agenda of religious moderation.

Ultimately, the fatwas published by *Republika* have implemented the agenda of religious moderation in proportional manner, but certain aspects remain unclear. Similarly, *Republika* has demonstrated a clear commitment to the campaign for religious moderation. However, when resistance to this campaign arose from certain individuals, *Republika* tended to view this issue primarily from the perspective of the government's weakness and overlooked the role of individual tendencies (Sunaryanto et al., 2022). When several parties raised concerns regarding the potential for radicalism by certain individuals in some tertiary institutions, *Republika's* reporting suggested that this should not be feared. In fact, *Republika* emphasized the role of the state, rather than individuals on campus (Pradana, 2016). These tendencies, which overlook the potential for individuals to act counterproductively to religious moderation, are also evident in some of the Islamic fatwas adopted by *Republika*.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the Islamic fatwas published by *Republika Online* generally reflect a commitment to promoting religious moderation, particularly in political and national contexts. The actualization of religious moderation is evident in their alignment with legal and national frameworks, rejection of explicit violence, and inclusive engagement with public issues. However, the findings also highlight significant gaps. The narratives of moderation often remain formalistic and insufficiently elaborated on nuanced issues,

particularly in the absence of clear legal frameworks. The analysis further demonstrates a tendency toward uniformity and avoidance of interpretive diversity, which may limit critical engagement with plural voices. Moreover, latent forms of violence and exclusion are often overlooked, and cultural accommodation is marginal or absent. These findings collectively suggest that although *Republika Online* attempts to position itself within the religious moderation discourse, its actual implementation remains partial and selective. This underscores the need to critically evaluate not only the content of the fatwas but also the ideological and editorial structures that shape them, in order to fully actualize the goals of religious moderation.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to bridging the academic gap in the intersection between Islamic legal discourse and digital media in Indonesia. Prior studies have addressed the digitization of Islamic authority and religious transmission; however, few have critically examined how mainstream media contribute to or hinder the promotion of religious moderation. This research advances the conversation by situating fatwas within a broader socio-political and discursive framework, offering a more comprehensive view of how moderation is framed, negotiated, or at times, diluted in digital platforms. The findings also challenge the assumption that digital dissemination automatically democratizes Islamic knowledge. Instead, they demonstrate how ideological tendencies and editorial filters shape the religious public sphere in ways that can either strengthen or weaken the moderation agenda. Consequently, this study not only contributes to the understanding of digital Islam but also to the theorization of religious authority, discourse formation, and the role of media as cultural intermediary.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations that should be addressed in future research. The analysis focuses solely on fatwas that address issues directly related to state, politics, and national identity, potentially excluding other forms of religious opinion with significant social implications. Furthermore, the study employs a qualitative-descriptive method, which limits its ability to generalize patterns or identify trends across broader datasets. Future studies may benefit from employing quantitative or mixed-method approaches to measure the frequency, variance, and public reception of moderation values in fatwas across various media outlets. It would also be valuable to explore the editorial logic and institutional culture behind fatwa production in different media outlets to provide a comparative perspective. From a policy standpoint, this study highlights the importance of developing media-literacy frameworks and religious content curation strategies that go beyond formal moderation markers and embrace a more inclusive, dialogical, and culturally grounded approach to the dissemination of Islamic law in digital public spheres.

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