

Madrasah Diniyah and Ma'had Al-Jami'ah-Based Religious Moderation Policy in State Islamic University in Indonesia

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Abstract:

This article seeks to elaborate the ma'had al-jami'ah-based religious moderation policy at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. This issue is interesting because religious moderation is a government policy that must be implemented by government institutions, including Islamic religious universities. The problem is that there are no nationally formal technical-operational guidelines for implementation so each tertiary institution has an interpretation for making policies to strengthen religious moderation by their respective contexts and considerations. The current study used in this article is qualitative with data mining techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. The data that has been obtained is then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Sa Ldaña model which divides the stages of data analysis into data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion. This article argues that UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah made interesting policies for religious moderation in the form of madrasah diniyah and ma'had al-jami'ah learning policies. Madrasah diniyah and ma'had al-jami'ah are designed not only as an activity to provide religious knowledge to students but also as a strategy for internalizing religious moderation and prevention of radicalism ideology.

Keywords: Madrasah Diniyah, Ma'had Al-Jami'ah, Policy, Religious Moderation

INTRODUCTION

The policy of religious moderation is a policy that is considered appropriate in the context of the life of a multicultural Indonesian society (Akhmadi, 2008). Multicultural reality requires a shared awareness of mutual tolerance and respect. Without this kind of awareness, diversity in a multicultural society can lead to conflict and social friction. Each group that feels the most right is the point of conflict (Mundra, 2013). Usually, the beginning of a religious conflict is triggered by blaming each other's interpretations and understandings of the religion, feeling righteous, and resisting other people's religious

interpretations and views (Pomalingo, Idrus, Basir, & Mashadi, 2021). At this point, religious moderation as knowledge, understanding, and respect for diversity is very important to be developed.

The significance of religious moderation is not only in the personal or institutional context but also in the national and state life context. Another aspect that marks the significance of religious moderation is the emergence of increasingly massive radical groups after the fall of the New Order era. Radicalism is a phenomenon understood in various ways by experts, including a security approach and a structuralist approach (Jati, 2013). This difference in understanding actually confirms that radicalism exists and becomes a threat to the lives of Indonesian people. In addition, the religious understanding of the community does not appear naturally. It deals with aspects of developing culture, history, and political construction (Schilbrack, 2012). When the construction of people's religious understanding develops in the direction of radicalism or liberalism, appropriate thoughts, efforts, and policies are needed because it is against the Indonesian religious construction which is in line with the conditions of Indonesian society.

Indonesian Islam has so far been widely known as moderate Islam. However, recent developments have begun to raise questions about this. The emergence of violence in various forms, ethno-religious conflicts that still occur frequently, and the rise of Islamist groups that often display violence have made the polite face of Indonesian Islam begin to change (Zainul Hamdi, 2020). Intolerant behavior still occurs in many cities in Indonesia (Damanik, 2020); (Sari & Samsuri, 2020); (Wirawan & Sugiarta, 2020); (Kusuma, 2019); (Arakaki, 2011). When Islamist groups are getting stronger and carrying out their various agendas in various forms, on the other hand, groups that have so far been considered representatives of moderate Islam have been relatively passive. Hilmy stated that this passive attitude is related to the theological construction that is owned and adhered to. Two organizations representing moderate Islam in Indonesia, NU and Muhammadiyah, have inadequate theological constructions to provide answers to the challenges of the times. The challenge faced now is that both organizations are expected to build a stronger moderate argument vision for a moderate vision "from within" (Hilmy, 2012).

There is a lot of research on the challenges of moderate Islam and religious moderation in Indonesia. Its scope is quite broad, starting from aspects of media analysis (Salik, 2019), literature review (Qodir, 2016), and political analysis (Umar, 2016), to anxiety over the decline of moderate Islam in Indonesia (Akmaliah, 2020). Equally important, an aspect that cannot be ignored is linking religious moderation with educational institutions. Educational institutions can become laboratory bases for internalizing knowledge, understanding, and attitudes that are in line with the spirit of religious moderation (Sutrisno, 2019). Many steps can be taken to internalize religious moderation in universities. One way is to fill in and strengthen religious moderation content in the digital platform (Hefni, 2020). This is important because the digital platform is not neutral. Contents, including religion, in the digital space are loaded with certain ideological interests. Religion, thus, is the result of social construction. Religious moderation can also be designed

practically through the curriculum (Siswanto, 2020), philosophically through strengthening the basis of rational epistemology (Prasetia, Asrohah, Najiyah, & Arif, 2021), through the paradigm of applied Islamic science (Salamah, Nugroho, & Nugroho, 2020), through madrasah in student boarding schools (Mukaffa, 2018), and programs carried out in an intrinsically institutional manner (Suharto, 2018).

This article begins with the argument that religious moderation is not just a discourse but must be translated into practical steps so that it can be internalized in understanding, attitude, and action. One step that is quite effective in the process of internalization is in the form of policies. Well, this aspect has not been studied by previous researchers. Other existing research only discussed the internalization of religious moderation in public tertiary institutions (Purwanto, Qowaid, Ma'rifatani, & Fauzi, 2019), religious moderation as a learning approach (Husna & Thohir, 2020), and the development of learning approach (Harto & Tastin, 2019). In particular, this article discusses the policy of religious moderation that is implemented at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. The data were obtained through a series of interviews, observation, and documentation techniques. The data collected was then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña analysis method which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

DISCUSSION

The policy of strengthening religious moderation in tertiary institutions is important in the context of building academic community knowledge, understanding, and awareness of the reality of actual religious social life. This kind of policy is important as an attempt to give serious attention to the formation of quality human beings. Education in the 21st century emphasizes improving human quality. The expected ideal human characteristics are those who are intellectually superior, morally stable, masters in science and technology, and have a high commitment to various social roles. This humankind is considered as the ideal man. Still, the reality may not be the same or even contradictory. At this point, educational policies are needed to bridge the area of ideality and reality (Hasbullah, M, 2015).

From a theoretical standpoint, there are five educational policy theories. One theory is the radical theory. The emphasis point of this theory is the freedom of local institutions in formulating a policy. In this context, local institutions have wide opportunities to develop policy initiatives. The aim is that the policy can strengthen the existence of the institution. Typical regional conditions and understanding of the leaders of each institution are driving factors for policies within the framework of radical theory (Hasbullah, M, 2015).

Madrasah Diniyah Significance in Tulungagung, East Java

UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung has an important policy to internalize religious moderation in two forms, namely *madrasah diniyah* and *ma'had al-jami'ah*. This policy is integrated into the lecture system. All first and second-semester students carry out

lectures at the madrasah. The lecture system is different from general lectures because it adopts learning that is usually carried out in *madrasas*. The system used is *sorogan* and *bandongan* (Abd. Aziz, 2022).

Madrasah diniyah material is given by religious knowledge that has been mastered by students. In the early stages, an assessment was carried out to determine the ability of students in the field of religion. The results of the assessment serve as the basis for grouping students into certain classes.

The *madrasah diniyah* policy at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah did not appear suddenly. This policy is the result of an analysis of existing developments. Transfer of institutional status took place several times. In 2013, STAIN Tulungagung changed its status to become IAIN. In 2021, IAIN Tulungagung changed to UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. This institutional change is a strategic choice to bring the institution to be more advanced. However, other aspects require serious thought regarding this change (Abd. Aziz, 2022).

Nationally, there has been a growth in the development of radical religious sects. These religious sects are developing in many places, including in universities. Their target is the young age group who usually do not have adequate religious knowledge. This group is easy to invite to join because radical groups usually use strategic methods based on the needs of the younger age group. On the other hand, the transfer of institutional status provides a wide opportunity for the opening of new study programs. The implication is that student input is also increasingly diverse. They not only come from religious schools and have adequate religious knowledge but also come from public schools with minimal religious knowledge.

The transformation from STAIN to IAIN has implications for the increasingly varied backgrounds of students. When the campus transformed into UIN, there were even more variations. Consequently, students' religious knowledge also varies. Mapping conducted by academics showed that not all students have the same religious knowledge. For students whose religious knowledge is good, of course, it will not be much of a problem, but for those whose religious knowledge is inadequate, appropriate strategies are needed to increase their religious knowledge. This is one of the backgrounds of *madrasah* policy at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung (Maftukhin, 2021).

Madrasah diniyah is a unique policy. Not a single State Islamic Religious College (PTKIN) has a program like this. At an applicable level, semester 1 and 2 students are required to take part in the *madrasah diniyah* program. For a year they receive religious lessons every Monday to Thursday starting at 07.00-08.40 WIB. Intensive learning of Islam in *madrasas* is expected to be able to provide sufficient capital for religious knowledge to students.

Madrasah diniyah is a very important program. This is based on the consideration that UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah must build students' understanding of religion and internalize these religious values into living values which are the spirit and norms of campus culture. The *madrasah* which is the policy at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung is expected to be a medium for realizing this goal (Maftukhin, 2021).

The *madrasah diniyah* program does not just provide Islamic teachings to students, but there is a substantial aspect, namely the material being taught is religious moderation. It is a characteristic of Indonesian Islam. This program principal so that UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung students and academics have good religious knowledge, understanding, and behavior. Religious lessons that are systematically designed and taught intensively for a year are a serious endeavor to build an understanding of moderate Islam (Zuhdi, 2018). This confirms the opinion which states that educational institutions have a role that is quite effective in carrying out the task of internalizing the values contained in moderate Islam. This is in line with the perspective which mentions three things that determine the effectiveness of educational ideology, namely: (1) educational policies and objectives. (2) hidden values or hidden curriculum. (3) curriculum (Suharto, 2017).

The *madrasah diniyah* at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung is the actualization of a strategic policy for the internalization of religious moderation. Formally, there are no explicit words of religious moderation, but the lessons given are the embodiment of religious moderation values. This shows that the *madrasah diniyah* curriculum is in line with the religious moderation character. This combination of policies, values, and curriculum makes the *madrasah* at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung a unique program and presents a new model for the internalization of religious moderation in Indonesia.

This *madrasah diniyah* program is a means to carry out the mission and practice of the *tafaqquh fiddin* values developed at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. *Tafaqquh fiddin* means endeavor to understand religion. This is the substance or core competence to be achieved in the implementation of Islamic Religious Higher Education in Indonesia. *Tafaqquh fiddin* in this context is manifested in the curriculum developed throughout PTKIN which includes the basics of Islamic religion and other sciences that support Islamic knowledge (TM, 2017).

The focus of *madrasah diniyah* as an Islamic educational institutions is traditional Islamic sciences (Education, 2017). The formation of the *madrasah* program at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung is a unique and “special” program. Not a single Islamic religious university in Indonesia has such a program. *Madrasah* are a model of a learning system that adapts the *pesantren* education model. This kind of system has historically proven capable of producing humans who have a moderate character. The long history of Indonesian Islam is closely related to *pesantren* (Mujahid, 2021). If Islamic boarding schools teach radical values, it is unlikely that Islam can survive for so many centuries. Moderate values allow Islam to survive centuries with all its dynamics.

Implementation Strategy

One of the characteristics possessed by radical groups is the permissibility of using violence. Vice-rector of UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung emphasized that the campus made a non-violence policy. He emphasized this on various occasions, and stated that non-violence is an important value in religious moderation. In further, Aziz explained

that religious moderation is a social capital in building the nation's civilization precisely because of that social capital must be properly maintained (Aziz, 2022).

One way to maintain this is to make religious moderation an important part of the institution. Religious moderation will only be a discourse when it is not turned into a policy. Its because religious moderation requires an instrument to turn it into a strategic program (Aziz, 2022). Adopting the principle of religious moderation of Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama), the National Medium-Term Development (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional/RPJMN) reads that, "Religious moderation is a strategic effort in order to strengthen tolerance and harmony within diversity. Indonesians who embrace diverse religions need to develop insights and attitudes toward religious moderation in order to build mutual understanding, maintain diversity, and strengthen unity among different religious communities" (Zuhri, 2023). This social capital at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung is actualized at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah*. The design of religious moderation policies in this context is a follow-up to policies at the national level. Central government policies, in this case the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kementerian Agama) are interpreted by *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung in various activities whose spirit is in line with religious moderation. In this context *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* takes care of religious traditions that are in line with local culture, such as *yasinan* and *tahlilan*.

Another important concern is national commitment. The actualization is by singing the national anthem *Indonesia Raya* and *Yalal Wathan*. Learning for *mahasantri* also emphasizes the importance of national commitment. Another priority that is always repeated in many ways is what is abbreviated in the acronym PBNU, namely Pancasila, Unity in Diversity (Bhineka Tunggal Ika), NKRI, and the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945). PBNU is emphasized as a pillar of nationality (Nasaruddin Umar, 2015).

Thus, its strategy is aligned with the doctrine of nationalism, as the project constructs, is the "consensus" of Indonesian Muslims that should be maintained and protected from any threat of transnational ideologies, particularly the Islamist transnational ideologies and groups. Thus, as the manifesto of *moderasi beragama* tells, Indonesian form of nationalism contradicts to Anderson's conception of "secular-mode of nationalism" which ignores religion. Indonesian form of nationalism is exclusively religious and reverberates what Jeremy Menchik calls "godly nationalism"- "an imagined community bound by a common, orthodox theism and mobilized through the state in cooperation with religious organizations in society" (Zuhri, 2023).

In this context, the vice-rector's policies in the form of *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* and *madrasah* are very important. Through this policy students gain knowledge of the Islamic religion in a systematic and methodological manner. This learning provides important capital for students to gain adequate knowledge of the Islamic religion (Aziz, 2022).

In addition to providing religious knowledge capital, the policy has another strategic objective, namely as a hidden curriculum with the *madrasah* program. This term is mentioned because the *madrasah* program is implemented seriously. The learning process is

carried out by Islamic boarding school teachers. Their religious ability is unquestionable. For example, for a *madin ustaz* who teaches classes at the BTQ level, they must at least have an *an-nahdliyah* training certificate. As for the *ustaz* who teaches at the elementary level (*ula*) at least has said the *kitab* of *Mabadi Fiqh*. While at the middle level (*wusta*) the *ustaz* must have completed the *kitab Fathul Qarib*. Last, for the advanced level (*ulya*), the *ustaz* have at least read the *kitab Fathul Muin*. Their daily activity is teaching students at Islamic boarding schools or *madrasah diniyah*. Their religious understanding is more moderate compared to pure ones from universities, especially those whose religious understanding does not go through a systematic learning process as in *pesantren*. This program is expected to provide sufficient provision of religious knowledge to students so that they are not easily invited to follow along with radical Islamic teachings (Maftukhin, 2021).

The policy of religious moderation is an important part of the dynamics of life at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. As a national policy, the management of *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* has made various efforts to implement this policy. This is done as an attempt to develop moderate thoughts, attitudes and behavior among female students, both living and non-resident students (Aziz, 2022).

One perspective states that the future of Indonesian Islam is moderate Islam, although now it has to face tough challenges with the presence of radical groups (Zuhdi, 2018). Radical groups have made various attempts to control places of worship and recruit new members. They attempted a “crawling coup” to achieve their goals (Yakin, 2022). The existence of radical groups in general is getting stronger because the mainstream groups are relatively silent and do not make active and creative efforts as radical groups do. Cyberspace becomes a tool that is put to good use to spread ideology, expand networks, conducting contests, demonstrating existence, and recruiting new members. In general, radical groups are still quite dominant compared to moderate groups, although recently there have been attempts by moderate groups to make full use of cyberspace. This is a challenge for moderate Islamic groups to present Islam in a more attractive form to the public (Muhtada, 2020).

Another interesting aspect is that cyberspace is a means of communication and militancy between members of radical groups. The dynamics of the digital age are maximally utilized by radical groups. The direct communication model is less effective and dangerous for the existence of their group. The choice of cyberspace is quite rational with a clear target, namely young people. Young people make up more than half of Indonesia's population. Young people are also very familiar with cyberspace. Weak knowledge, little experience, and unstable psychological conditions make many young people join radical groups (Muthohirin, 2015).

The presence of radical groups is a challenge, especially for moderate Muslims. At this point it is important for educational institutions to learn from Abdurrahman Wahid's work when leading Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif when leading Muhammadiyah. The two figures are not only active at the theoretical level, but are also active directly in many moderate Islam dissemination activities. The emergence of radical

groups became one of the inspirations for Abdurrahman Wahid and Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif to persistently disseminate moderate Islam. The results of their hard work can be seen—among other things—by the establishment of organizations engaged in moderate Islam, namely the Wahid Institute and the Ma'arif Institute (Akmaliah, Sulistiyanto, & Sukendar, 2022). Earning Islamic teachings through Ma'had Al-Jam'iah carries the ideology of *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* or Aswaja. From a historical perspective, Aswaja has a local dimension inspired by Wali Songo (Sunoko, 2020). Walisongo is an important figure in the history of Indonesian Islam (Nugroho, Choeroni, & Rohman, 2020) and it is even a milestone in the history of Indonesian Islam. The rapid development of Islam in Indonesia cannot be separated from Walisongo's work in carrying out Islamic *dakwah* (preach). The *dakwah* carried out is tolerant, peaceful, and appreciates local culture. This is possible because the Islam construction is the harmonization of elements of theology, *fiqh*, and *tasawuf*. In reality, this harmonization has formed a consolidated, well-established and dominant religious tradition since the Bintoro Demak Sultanate until now (Kasdi, 2017). Another factor is the chosen *dakwah* method. According to Alwi Shihab, the main method of preaching Walisongo is exemplary. This is in line with the essence of Sufism which emphasizes knowledge and charity to produce noble character (Alwi Shihab, 2009).

An important aspect that can be learned from the history of Indonesian Islam above is the choice of the right strategy and the support of power. The strategy is the key to the success or failure of a program. The right strategy allows a program to achieve great success, perhaps even exceeding expectations. Inappropriate strategies make the program not only unsuccessful, but can create resistance. It is not acceptance that is obtained but rather rejection.

This kind of aspect is important for anyone who runs a program to think about. Strategy is key. The choice of strategy must be analyzed carefully by considering various aspects comprehensively. It looks simple but is actually quite complex. The implications of success or failure are long-term in nature and related to the future in a broad sense. Power is a determining factor in the success or failure of an activity. In the legal context it is stated that law without power is wishful thinking, while power without law is arbitrary (Juanda, 2017). Substantively this statement means that law and power have a reciprocal relationship. That is, law and power are interrelated. Each of them needs the other for the sake of upholding justice.

A good program will not be able to run optimally without the power support. Moderation of religion as a discourse has been going on for a long time. The practice of religious life in Indonesia since the beginning of the history of the arrival of Islam has actually been dominated by moderate religious practices. So if there is currently a policy of religious moderation then it is actually not a strange thing anymore. It is just that between the conceptual framework and the practice that has taken place requires dialogue and clarity so that the concepts and practices can be compatible with each other.

This kind of perspective is relevant if it is used as a perspective for reading religious moderation policies. As long as it has not become a policy, religious moderation has

developed into a subject of lengthy discussion among various circles. There are those who agree, there are those who agree with the notes, and there are also those who refuse. Each dialogue in spaces that are sometimes not conducive for discussion. Sometimes it also leads to blasphemy.

The estuary of this perspective is what in contemporary scientific discourse is called the relationship between religion and the state. There are several theories of the relationship between religion and the state, namely integralistic which argues that religion and the state are one unit; secularists who argue that religion and the state are two different things; and symbiotic which argues that religion and the state are two different entities but between the two have a functional relationship (Muhammadiyah, 2015). Among the three types of relationships, the third type is the most relevant for the Indonesian context. The third type means that religion provides “deep spirituality”, while the state guarantees the continuity of the religious life of its citizens. Indonesia is not a religious state, nor is it a secular state. Indonesia is a country based on Pancasila. It can also be called a religious nation-state that protects and recognizes all adherents of religions (Murtadlo Muhamad, 2021).

This relationship in reality provides many benefits in the context of socio-religious life in Indonesia. The policy of religious moderation, for example, in this context is an attempt to regulate religious social life, but it is not homogeneous in nature. This is interesting compared to what is happening in countries based on Islam. Brunei Darussalam, for example, has made *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* the official state school of thought. Consequently, it must be implemented in a planned, systematic manner, and using adequate facilities. It is rigid in nature. There is no room for interpretation or difference with what the government decides. Understandings other than *Ahlu al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* are prohibited from growing and developing in Brunei Darussalam (Naim, 2020).

The policy of religious moderation raises several thoughts regarding implementation strategies. There are those who argue that religious moderation is carried out using an isolated subject model or with separate subjects. But there are also those who argue that the model that can be developed is an integrated subject, that is, it becomes part of an existing course. So it do not stand alone. This shows that each PTKIN has academic and social considerations related to religious moderation policies (Rosyid, 2022).

The religious moderation policy implemented at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung was carried out in an integrated subject model because it was made an integral part of the ongoing program. Learning in the *madrasah* program is inserted by important aspects of religious moderation. The implementation of learning at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* in general is a medium for strengthening moderate Islam. Substantially the material taught is a legacy of Islamic orthodoxy. The moderate character that is developed through the learning process is in line with the principle of *almuḥafaḍatu 'ala al-qadīmi as-ṣāliḥ wa al-akhdu biljadid al-aṣlah*, namely maintaining the legacy of good old traditions and adopting new, better traditions. Learning at *Ma'had Al-Jami'ah* is based on the Al-Qur'an

and *Hadith*. The whole learning process essentially aims to produce students who have moderate character.

CONCLUSION

Religious moderation requires policy support so that it can be implemented effectively. It is important as a basis for selecting an implementation strategy. The right policy allows its implementation to provide maximum results as expected. The policy of religious moderation in UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung is realized in the form of both *madrasah diniyah* and *ma'had al-jami'ah*. This policy is appropriate with radical policy theory which provides opportunities for local institutions to choose policies that are in accordance with local considerations.

The implementation of *madrasah diniyah* and *ma'had al-jami'ah* has increased students' Islamic religious knowledge and also provided a more comprehensive and moderate religious insight. The supporting of *civitas academica* in UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung made this policy related to religious moderation work as expected. However, it does not mean this article is final. There should be a follow-up study that takes a broader landscape of multiple aspects that this study might have missed, for example from the point of view of obstacles or deviations from student ideology.

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