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The Role of Islam Nusantara and Religious Moderation

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INDEXING	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Keyword 1; Role Keyword 2; Islam Keyword 3; Nusantara Keyword 4; Religious Keyword 5; Moderation	Islam Nusantara can be characterized as a distinctive and empirical manifestation of Islam that has emerged in Indonesia through interactions, localization, adaptation, translation, and assimilation of local social, cultural, and literary elements. This study utilizes a literature review with the objective of examining the interpretation of Islam Nusantara and its correlation with Religious Moderation within the present context of Indonesia. Islam Nusantara represents a concept that embodies religious moderation in Indonesia, demonstrating a balanced approach that is neither radical nor liberal in its ideology. It encourages the nurturing of indigenous knowledge that holds social, cultural values, and promotes religious tolerance.

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INTRODUCTION

Islam, being a revealed religion, upholds the vision of 'Rahmatan li al-'alamin' and places great importance on societal traditions, provided they are not in conflict with Islamic principles (Kisworo, 2017). It is regarded as the ultimate religion that guides humanity until the end of time, incorporating the advancements and complexities of civilization (Al-Jayyousi, 2016), including the cultural and traditional practices of local and national communities in every historical context.

Islam Nusantara can be described as a unique and empirical form of Islam that has developed in Indonesia through interactions, localization, adaptation, translation, and incorporation of local social, cultural, and literary elements (Setiawan and Stevanus., 2023). It originated in the Java region through the efforts of Walisongo and has gained significant popularity, particularly on the island of Java (Kato, 2021). According to the 2010 population census (Anata *et al*, 2015), more than half of Indonesia's Muslim population resides in Java, with a total of 130,651,037 Muslim residents out of a national total of 207,176,162. Moreover, the followers of Nahdlatul Ulama, known as the Nahdliyin, alone account for approximately 143 million people in various regions, representing around 75% of the overall Muslim population in the archipelago.

The problems faced by Muslims in this modern era are increasingly complex. They do not only concern theological aspects but have spread to various aspects of life, one of which being the political aspect (Nurdin, 2020). Meanwhile, the theological problems faced by Muslims today include the clash between various Islamic

understandings, such as radical and liberal interpretations (Sahin, 2018). This clash creates internal conflicts within the Muslim community itself. The impact of these conflicts can be seen in the destruction of Arab countries due to wars in the name of Islam.

Clashes between groups in the Middle East occur because of conflicting claims to truth (Huntington, 2020). Radical adherents claim that the Islamic teachings they follow are the most correct, while liberal adherents believe that the liberal version of Islam is the most correct because it suits current conditions (Ab Rashid *et al*, 2020). This article examines the role of Indonesian Islam and religious moderation in promoting tolerance between religious communities and groups in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islam Nusantara represents an expression of Islam that has originated from the rich Indonesian traditions and cultural heritage. Indonesia is renowned for its cultural diversity and local customs, each encompassing a distinct set of values and principles. With its multicultural society, encompassing various ethnicities, languages, customs, cultures, and religions, Indonesia has managed to foster unity and promote peaceful coexistence (Darajat, 2019). These differences among individuals are perceived as a divine blessing, as they have cultivated a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect among the Indonesian people.

Islamic moderation is considered a distinguished trait of Islam. It promotes an approach to Islamic preaching that emphasizes tolerance and discourages any form of liberal or radical ideology. Those with liberal perspectives tend to analyze Islam based on personal desires and logical reasoning, often disregarding scientific justifications. Radicals, on the other hand, interpret Islamic texts rigidly and reject any flexibility in its teachings, failing to acknowledge the complexities of real-life situations. Islamic moderation serves as a unifying force among Muslims, embracing diversity and mediating between different interpretations that lean towards either liberal or extreme understanding. The perceived advantage of this approach is the establishment of global security and peace.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a literature review, which is a fundamental and exhaustive examination of existing writings pertaining to a specific topic or research question (Fink, 2019). The literature review constitutes an essential component of academic and research writing, commonly included in research papers, theses, and other scholarly works (Okoli and Schabram, 2015). The primary objective of a literature review is to provide a summary, synthesis, and evaluation of the existing knowledge and research pertinent to the chosen subject (Cooper *et al*, 2019). The paper aims to investigate the exegesis of Islam Nusantara and Religious Moderation in the context of Indonesia's now.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Islam Nusantara

The extensive history of the dissemination of Islam in the archipelago is inseparable from the pivotal role of Wali Songo as proponents of the Islamic faith (Sumarsam *et al*, 2023). The Walisongo are revered figures who fervently propagated Islam throughout Indonesia, particularly on the island of Java (Woodward, 2017). Linguistically, the term

Walisongo is derived from two syllables, namely Wali, signifying proximity, and songo in Javanese, denoting the number nine (Antonio, 2022). The term Wali carries the connotation of devout Muslims entrusted with the duty to disseminate the teachings of Islam and are revered as beloved individuals of Allah, possessing karomah, profound knowledge, and supernatural powers far surpassing those of ordinary humans (Omar and Samah, 2012). The interpretation of the term Songo, however, remains a matter of ongoing debate. Some contend that it originates from the Arabic word "Tsana", which shares the same meaning as "Mahmud", signifying praiseworthy or noble.

Historical Facts

Historical facts state that the spread of Islam in Indonesia was carried out in a peaceful, tolerant manner, without coercion, bloodshed, or the destruction of local traditions or culture (Keraseten, 2017). The da'wah method used by Wali Songo is al-hikmah, which is popular, attractive, and sensational in Indonesian tradition and culture. This method of implementing da'wah is used to address the problems faced by the general public who adhere to the teachings of their ancestors (Musfah, 2017). Sekaten is a tangible manifestation of Sunan Kalijaga's focus on fostering tolerance towards community culture in the spread of Islam in Java, as well as described by Zuhdi and Sawaun (2017). Consequently, the local community at that time willingly embraced the teachings of Islam because local cultural values were transformed to align with Islamic law.

This attitude of tolerance is what some Muslims in Indonesia want to reinstate in response to the challenges and conditions faced by the Indonesian state, which is undergoing development in economic, social, cultural, and religious aspects. This gave rise to the term 'Islam Nusantara' as a response to the social and cultural phenomena that are emerging in society (Sahasrad, 2019). It cannot be denied that Islam Nusantara is an ideal and suitable form of Islam for Indonesia, as it is capable of fostering unity among Muslims, promoting peaceful coexistence, and building social harmony with people of other religions. Islam Nusantara has the potential to make Indonesia the epicenter of tolerance in the world, as Indonesia is aptly equipped to maintain harmony and diversity in a positive and effective manner.

Religious Moderation

Religious moderation in Islam is an invaluable asset for global harmony and a vital subject of discussion in contemporary times, considering the prevalent conflicts within the Muslim community. The challenges Muslims confront today are multifaceted, encompassing social, cultural, and religious matters. One social predicament faced by Muslims is a dearth of empathy in coexisting with others (Crabtree *et al*, 2016). Presently, Muslims tend to disregard the existence of diverse communities. In terms of cultural concerns, Islamic traditions no longer attract younger Muslims to engage in its study. The younger generation of Muslims gravitates more towards Western culture, which emphasizes liberalism. Such an inclination poses considerable threats to the future of the Muslim community.

Two problems, namely social and cultural, will give rise to a more complex problem: religion. Religious problems within Muslims have actually existed for a long time, namely since the emergence of the Kalam sect. Erroneous religious understanding then developed until today. The essence of this difference is the difference in understanding

the Al-Qur'an and Hadith, giving birth to two types of groups. The first group understands the Al-Qur'an and Hadith textually with a narrow understanding, while the second group understands the Al-Qur'an and Hadith freely to suit current developments.

Groups that possess a limited comprehension of the Al-Qur'an and Hadith are prone to engaging in radical activities, whereas those with a more liberal interpretation may exhibit actions that deviate from established legal norms (Santoso *et al*, 2023). These contrasting understandings of Islam's religious moderation present an intriguing subject of study, as they can subsequently be applied to social, cultural, and religious spheres. In the social context, Islamic moderation is exemplified by the courteous, amiable, and respectful treatment of all individuals. Within the cultural realm, Islamic moderation is showcased through the acknowledgement and appreciation of local traditions and knowledge. Lastly, this approach to religious moderation is characterized by an attitude that avoids both radicalism and liberalism.

In the Indonesian context, the concept of Islam Nusantara embodies a moderate and peaceful version of Islam that values politeness and respect (Yumnah, 2021). It acknowledges the importance of tradition and culture while remaining steadfast in upholding Islamic law. Islam Nusantara serves as a representation of Islam that promotes mercy and compassion in all aspects of life, including social, cultural, and religious spheres. As the predominant religion followed by the majority of Indonesians, Islam has played a significant role in fostering social, cultural, and religious harmony. Rather than eradicating local culture that aligns with Islamic principles, Islam allows for the preservation and development of local wisdom that promotes human values..

CONCLUSION

Islam Nusantara is a concept that is the embodiment of religious moderation in Indonesia which is a middle way between radical and liberal thinking. Islam Nusantara provides space for the development of local wisdom that has social, cultural values and religious tolerance. In the Indonesian context, Islamic moderation is identified with the two largest Islamic organizations, namely Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, because these two organizations have an important role in the development of Islam in Indonesia. Not only that, Islam Nusantara is able to make Indonesia the epicenter of tolerance in the world because of its respect for the principles of tolerance and mutual respect for all differences.

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