Intelligent of Literacy Through Moderate Interpretation Strengthening Religious Moderation

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Abstract: *Another big problem worrying the Indonesian nation at this time is not only the Covid-19 pandemic. The reason is, when this epidemic hit, there were still acts of radicalism and terrorism. Unfortunately, this understanding that is vulnerable to infecting the younger generation is increasingly rampant in the midst of a pandemic. An individual becomes radically influenced by reading and experience. This enthusiasm was triggered by a wrong understanding of the verses of jihad. Radical behavior arises because of interpreting the meaning of the Qur'an and hadith which tend to be textual. Content that smells of religion but is wrapped in intolerance and radicalism is increasingly widespread. Meanwhile, millennials who are actively using social media are not literate yet. In this study, we used library research and a thematic method. We delve into and associate the ayat of the Qur'an to resolve the problem. It shows that the reading material and experience gained determines a person's understanding to be radical or moderate. This is in line with the opinion of experts that understanding the verses of the Qur'an to be more in-depth is understood by means of a contextualization approach. This approach does not only study from the aspect of language but from the socio-cultural aspect so that the verses of the Qur'an can be understood as a whole, not partially. Which is strengthening digital literacy through schools and colleges, socializing for the young generation, and holding training and discussion about it in schools and colleges.*

Keywords: radicalism, religious moderation, intelligent of literacy, contra narrative

INTRODUCTION

Another big problem worrying the Indonesian nation at this time is not only the Covid-19 pandemic. The reason is, when this epidemic hit, there were still acts of radicalism and terrorism (Alexander Rodde, 2020). This extreme movement uses the pandemic issue as a trigger to legitimize their actions. As explained by the Head of the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), Boy Rafli Amar, during the pandemic, radical groups have become increasingly massive in spreading their views, especially in cyberspace (Detik, 2022). The proof is, that throughout 2021 the BNPT found 600 accounts spreading radical content on social media. This shows that radicalism and terrorism still exist and are more rampant even in a crisis.

In addition to the increasingly widespread transnational Islamic ideology (Ridwan, 2019; Muhammad

Syaoki, 2017) above, an individual becomes radically influenced by reading and experience. This enthusiasm was triggered by a wrong understanding of the verses of jihad (Nuhrison, 2009). As explained by Abdurrahman Wahid (2006), radical behavior arises because of interpreting the meaning of the Qur'an and hadith which tend to be textual. In addition, religious emotions and ethnic issues also become triggers. Therefore, understanding the reading carefully and interpreting jihad verses with a contextual approach really needs to be done.

Furthermore, in the radicalization process, the person do not immediately act radically, but start from an attitude of intolerance (Omar Ashour, 2009). Then because of the various backgrounds experienced by individuals, be it their beliefs, knowledge and experiences that will form ideological radicalization (CSIS, 2017). This understanding seems to be able to explain the injustice experienced by making the wrong system a 'scapegoat'. It is this stage that influences radicals to normalize violence and make it commonplace. This thought has encouraged radicals to carry out various acts of terror and suicide bombings.

This distorted understanding and way of religion leads individuals to be dragged into extreme views. Unfortunately, this understanding that is vulnerable to infecting the younger generation is increasingly rampant in the midst of a pandemic. Especially in the era of digital disruption, so that the group 'moved stalls' to the digital space to carry out their actions (Nele Schils, 2017; Jawa Pos, 2022). Content with

religious overtones but wrapped in intolerance and radicalism is increasingly widespread. Meanwhile, millennials who are actively using social media are not literate yet. The proof is, according to data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OICD), Indonesia is in 43rd place out of 43 countries and UNESCO data is in 60th place (Christoforus Ristianto, 2021). This shows that a person's literacy ability greatly influences his thinking, whether radical or moderate.

Following up on this increasingly mushrooming extreme understanding, the Government through the Ministry of Religion has implemented religious moderation. This 'middle way' religious perspective creates a non-violent religious life (Badan Litbang Kemenag RI, 2019). However, this effort is not optimal when the propaganda of radicalism is continuously being intensified while the people, especially the millennial generation, have no deterrent power due to their weak ability to study readings including interpretations of jihad verses. Because of this, this paper will discuss the substance of the concept of *iqra'* as a basis for literacy skills so that it is not easily dragged into radicalism. Then put forward interpretations of verses of the Koran that are relevant to the Indonesian context so that people have a moderate understanding.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, we used library research and a thematic method. The thematic approach is considered more attractive because is goes directly to the problem of religious moderation is

which strenghten by intelligent of literation especially in the era of digital disruption. In the other words, we focus to discussions how radicalism massive to share more content of religion but wrapped by intolerance in social media. We delve and associate the ayat of Qur'an to resolve the problem. Then the conceptual solution transform to aplication solution especially for young generation.

RESEARCH RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Definition of radicalisme and massive content on Social Media

The emergence of radicalism is usually a form of dissatisfaction with the social and political problems faced. As a result of dissatisfaction with the existing system, radical groups have encouraged radical groups to replace it with a new and comprehensive (*radic*) order (Jaja Zarkasyi, 2014). In line with that, Adeed Dawisha, as covered by Azyumardi Azra (2010) in his book , describes radicalism as an attitude of the soul that leads to actions that weaken and change the established political based and replace it with a new system. Therefore, the term radicalism is intrinsically related to the concept of political and social change in various actions.

Examined from the root word, radical comes from the Latin *radic*, which means root or something fundamental. In politics, radical is defined as a character that is very strong in demanding changes related to laws and government regulations (Nur Khamid, 2016). Meanwhile, in *the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Learner Dictionary* (2003), radicalism is a thought and behavior with extreme

nuances, including in a political context. Therefore, radicalism is always seen as a threat to the integrity of society.

Omar Ashour in his study explained that the process of radicalization did not just happen. Generally starting from the stage of intolerance (CSIS, 2017). This radical stage has a complex background. Among them is the sense of injustice that a person gets from the surrounding environment that affects his emotional side. Feeling unappreciated and ostracized leads them to a saturation point and is infiltrated by intolerance. Then the exposed individuals strengthen the ideological doctrinal narrative with religious arguments. As if they feel that ideology is able to explain their sense of injustice so that they use the wrong system as a reference (Khairul Anam, 2017). The irony is that this understanding and behavior seem to normalize acts of violence.

According to Dawam Raharjo (2011), among the factors that cause a person to be infected with radical and terrorist views are the influence of transnational movements. This ideology is interpreted as a global ideology that crosses state and nation boundaries. Propaganda of this radical understanding arose during the protracted war conflicts in the Middle East so they were tough and wanted to change their political order. However, this ideology is considered incompatible with Indonesian Islamic culture which is polite, peaceful, and tolerant (Zaimul Asroor, 2019).

The difference in the socio-cultural context shows that this ideology is full of violence, not peace.

Furthermore, another factor that triggers the proliferation of radical and terrorist views is the reading material and experience gained. Although the form of reading and experience that becomes a factor for someone to become radical is still being debated, according to the former terrorist of the Bali Bomb I incident, one of the things that prompted him to join the group was because of religious narratives, especially verses about jihad which are understood textually only (Mujib Ridlwan, 2020). Their well-known doctrine is *that isy kariman aw mut shahidan* (live gloriously or die a martyr) has always been the spark for the group's enthusiasm.

The spread of radicalism today is not only in the real space, but has massively penetrated into the digital space. Radicalists narrate and even twist religious studies according to their subjective wishes. Often the dissemination of ideas, ideas and religious symbols deviate from substantial values (Wildani Hefni, 2020). The content that is disseminated is wrapped in intolerant and radical narratives. In fact, they used the pandemic issue as a *trigger* to legitimize this action. Especially in the midst of a pandemic, everything is done in the digital space, so it has the potential to infiltrate and spread this understanding.

Based on the release by the United Nations during the lockdown, radicalization practices in various parts of the world, including Indonesia, occurred on social media. In Indonesia alone, in April 2021 the Ministry of Communication and Information has blocked 20 thousand radical content on social media (Kominfo, 2021). In line with that, the Head of BNPT, Boy Rafli Amar has warned about the spread of radicalism and terrorism in cyberspace during the pandemic. Unmitigated, terrorist groups maximize their online activities with propaganda and recruitment of members (Antara, 2021). Unfortunately, the majority of internet users are young people who are very vulnerable to exposure.

Al-Chaidar, a terrorism researcher from Aceh's Malikussaleh University, said the main target for radical groups is the millennial generation who are actively using social media. The Wahid Foundation reports that young people are very intensive with social media such as *Instagram*, *Twitter*, *Facebook* and *Telegram* as much as 77% (Zuly Qodir, 2016). This group realizes that young people are not only passive consumers but have the potential to become prosumers and active cadres in spreading this ideology. This is because the younger generation is still unstable and experiencing confusion about their identity (Rahma Sugihartati, 2020). This is because the younger generation is still unstable and experiencing confusion about their identity (Komaruddin Hidayat, 2015), has high energy, enthusiasm and creativity.

Furthermore, low literacy skills are exacerbated by the ease with which *threading messages* to have the smell of religious understanding that deviates from Islamic teachings. The wrong reading will affect their beliefs and thoughts and behavior. Therefore, it is very important to reinterpret the verses about jihad and religious moderation in order to be able to counter radical interpretations. This interpretation is relevant to the socio-cultural conditions

of a peaceful society, not in a state of turmoil.

Contextualization of Interpretation of Jihad Verses and Moderation of Religion

Islam comes with the mission of improving the barbaric human life system towards a civilized life. Islam eradicates all forms of oppression and guarantees equality and equality of people. Regardless of race, ethnicity or nation, even background status is not a benchmark for equality (Quraish Shihab, 2009). Islam is a religion with the best morality for humanity toward a peaceful and prosperous life. The mission of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* is the key to Islamic teachings so that they spread throughout the world.

Likewise in Indonesia, the mission of Islam is mercy to be the key to the success of spreading Islam in the archipelago. History records that the motherland was converted to Islam without being preceded by military conquest. Islamization method through penetration of peace (*penetration Pacifique*) (Budhy Munawar, 2020). Since the beginning of Islam descending on Arab lands, this peace mission has been implemented and is not at all attributed to any particular group. In accordance with the meaning of Islam itself, namely safe and prosperous. Supposedly, Islam is a pioneer of peace and it is impossible to support acts of violence such as radicals or terrorists.

As for the verses of jihad contained in the Qur'an which are interpreted contextually as in Surah al-Maidah verse 54 which means: ...who strive in the way of Allah and are not afraid of those who criticize...

Quraish Shihab in Tafsir al-Misbah interprets jihad not only by taking up arms but efforts to strengthen Islam in the form of brilliant ideas or ideas through writing. Denying the accusations that vilify Islam. And not afraid of the reproaches of detractors such as accusations of intolerance, bigots and fundamentalists. It is different from Sayyid Qutb who interprets jihad here by upholding the *Manhaj* of Allah on earth and proclaiming His authority and enforcing His Shari'at without fear because they are on the path of truth.

In line with the mission of Islam as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* taught by the Prophet, the basic principle aimed at supporting prosperity and peace. The attitudes implied in the Qur'an are tolerance, brotherhood among people to a moderate understanding of religion. This concept is contained in the Qur'an sura al-Baqarah verse 143, namely:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَٰكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُوا۟ شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ ٱلرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا

Meaning: "And so we made you a middle nation so that you may be witnesses to the actions of humans and so that the Messenger will be a witness to your deeds..."

Quraish Shihab (2002), defines *ummatan wasatan* as middle, moderate, and exemplary.attitude *wasath* will put Muslims in a middle position in accordance with the position of the Kaaba which is also in the middle. The middle position makes humans neither left nor right, an attitude that makes humans have a just character. Referring to this interpretation,it can be understood that ideally Muslims

should behave and understand *wasatiyah* (moderate).

Further interpretation was explained by Ibrahim bin Umar al-Biqa'i in his commentary book *Nazm al-Durar* that the word *wasatha* which is composed of three letters has the meaning of good, beautiful, strong, noble, and so on. This word is interpreted as beauty, so it is not surprising that Muslims are also described as *the khayra of the ummah* in Ali Imran's letter (Quraish Shihab, 2020). Furthermore, al-Tabary explained *that ummatan wasatan* shows the concept of the balance of Muslims in religion (Al-Thabari, t. th.).

Furthermore, Muhammad Abduh also explains this meaning in more detail. *Al-wasath* indicates the true identity of Muslims. They are in the middle both in terms of faith, worship, and muamalah (Ilham Muchtar, 2013). As for the interpretation of the output of the Ministry of Religion, Muslims are people who receive guidance from Allah so that they become a just and chosen people. Muslims are witnesses to the disbelief of infidels and must always uphold justice and truth (Kemenag RI, 2008). Therefore, it is not the teaching of Islam for to spread kindness through war which is in stark contrast to Islamic values.

Based on the verse shows moderation as one of the core teachings of Islam. This religious understanding is very relevant in the context of diversity in all aspects, be it religion, customs, ethnicity and the nation itself. Therefore, the understanding of religious moderation must be understood contextually. This means that moderation in religion in Indonesia is not Indonesia which is moderated

but the way of understanding religion must be moderate because Indonesia has many cultures (Muhammad Fahri, 2019). Therefore, religious moderation as a solution to religious problems needs to be optimized for mainstreaming, namely through increasing literacy skills.

Relevant to that, the spirit of literacy in the Qur'an has existed since it was first revealed. The command to read (*iqra'*) is the first revelation which does not only cover the aspect of reading, but includes the meaning of studying and understanding various reading objects. This is contained in the letter al-Alaq verses 1-5 as follows:

$$\text{ٱقۡرَأۡ بِٱسۡمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ ١ خَلَقَ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ مِنۡ عَلَقٍ ٢}$$
$$\text{ٱقۡرَأۡ وَرَبُّكَ ٱلۡأَكۡرَمُ ٣ ٱلَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِٱلۡقَلَمِ ٤ عَلَّمَ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ}$$
$$\text{مَا لَمۡ يَعۡلَمۡ}$$

Meaning: "Read in the name of your Lord who created. He has created man from a clot of blood. Read and your Lord is glorious. Who teaches with a pen. He taught man what he did not know."

The first five verses in surah al-Alaq are the first verses revealed. This verse begins with a reading command. Examining the root word, *iqra'* comes from the word *qara'a* which means reading and collecting (Raghib al-Ashfahani, 2017). In other dictionaries, various meanings are found, namely conveying, studying, reading, exploring, researching, knowing the characteristics of something and so on which leads to the meaning of collecting (Quraish Shihab, 2002). Furthermore, Quraish Shihab, explained that the command to read

includes various objects of reading because the verse does not mention the object of reading. Even though the word *qara'a* is *fi'il muta'addi* which should be accompanied by *maf'ul bih.* Therefore, this sign indicates that the object of reading is not limited to the aspect of revelation but includes various aspects including the universe. This shows that the reading of Muslims is extensive and should be the initial motivation for Muslims to develop knowledge. Famous Indonesian Interpreter, Hamka (2002), explained the command to read in the name of God. This means that Muslims do not read carelessly but begin by mentioning the name of Allah which indicates a request that whatever is read is based on truth and benefit for humans.

Literacy is a rule that develops human abilities and skills in understanding reading and writing. Improving literacy skills so that the younger generation is able to ward off extreme views is the most important thing in the era of digital disruption. Not only the ability to understand what is read but to analyze and criticize something that becomes reading material, especially religious literacy. Increased literacy that can strengthen religious moderation in the digital era is now focused on the ability to analyze and study reading material in accordance with the meaning of *iqra'* contained in the Qur'an.

Based on this explanation, whatever is read will certainly provide a correct understanding in accordance with Islamic teachings. Not religious studies that are fixated on the text without looking at the context, let alone readings that narrate and even twist religious teachings according to

subjective wishes. The distortion of religious narratives that come out of the substantial values of the Qur'anic verses is certainly not in line with Islamic literacy. Therefore, skills in understanding reading material must be improved, especially in the era of digital disruption so that distorted understandings are not easily infiltrated.

Narrative War: Interpretation with Radical and Moderate Nuances

Based on the previous explanation that the reading material and experience that a person gains will shape him in two ways, namely moderate or radical. Because of that, one of the efforts to mainstream religious moderation and counteract radicalism and terrorism is with (contra) narrative warfare. The goal is that the verses interpreted by the interpreters are relevant to the present and heretical context. This is because an interpretation does not appear in a vacuum, but a mufasir writes a book of exegesis as a response to the condition of the people of his time. So that the theory that is suitable to use is the theory of constructivism. Where when issues of intolerance, radicalism and extremism arise, it can be countered by understanding that the interpreters' interpretations are born because of the things behind them.

Propaganda carried out by radicalists by legitimizing verses of the Koran to justify their opinions must be countered by a war of narratives. When verses are interpreted without looking at the context or the interpretation of verses appears when conditions are turbulent. So this interpretation is not necessarily relevant to the context of Indonesianness and diversity. When extreme narratives emerge, it is the

duty of Muslims to spread Islam as a mercy to the universe. Islam cannot be interpreted partially, but as a whole and in-depth.

Among the narrative war efforts between radical or moderate nuanced interpretations are: *first,* educating and explaining to the public interpretations that are highly relevant to the Indonesian context. *Second,* when propaganda is massive on the internet, counter-narratives are also obliged to broadcast their readings or writings on social media. The goal is that Muslims are not mistaken and distorted in understanding Islamic teachings. With the existence of war (contra) narrative will further suppress the rate of spread of these extreme views.

Third, strengthening digital literacy through schools and colleges. Schools and campuses demand and require students to read daily reading materials for at least 15 minutes. *Fourth*, socializing literacy and interpretation of verses of moderation through the role of the Ministry of Religion and community organizations for young people. This task is mandatory task for the Government and Islamic organizations in strengthening digital literacy because it seems that Islamic social media has not optimally shown its 'fangs' in stemming radical and terrorist views.

Fifth, holding training on creating religious moderation content so that it is able to dampen and provide a correct understanding to the younger generation or known as a counter-narrative against these extreme views. *sixth*, holding scientific discussions related to religious moderation at both the school and university levels. Thus religious moderation can be strengthened through the socialization of modern understanding.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it shows that the reading material and experience gained determines a person's understanding to be radical or moderate. This is in line with the opinion of experts that understanding the verses of the Qur'an to be more in-depth is understood by means of a contextualization approach. This approach does not only study from the aspect of language but from the socio-cultural aspect so that the verses of the Qur'an can be understood as a whole, not partially. Radicalism propaganda must be countered with counter-narratives so that interpretations that are irrelevant to current social conditions are countered *by* moderate interpretations. The aim is to strengthen religious moderation both in the real world and digitally. Thus creating a non-violent religious life.

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