

Transformation of the Education of Moderate Muslim Society: A Thought Study of Nahdlatul Ulama

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Abstract

Indonesia is a country which not only consists of various tribes, ethnicity and religions, but also established on multi-cultural element. The plurality, on one hand, is a social strength and a wonderful aspect of diversity if each of those aspects makes synergy and works together to build the nation. On the other hand, the plurality, if it is not managed and nurtured properly, will trigger and ignite a conflict and violence that could destabilize the joints of the state and nation. In this case, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has a strategic role in building a moderate Indonesian Muslim community because NU offers a model of integration, namely the integration of Islam into nationalism. It is the integration of Islamic visions of life into the main objectives of the establishment of nation-states. The idea departs from the principle of *al-Ghayah wa al-Wasail* (the objectives and the methods) that NU puts the state as an instrument for achieving the goal of Islam. Thus, since the aim of Islam is *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (welfare of the universe), the state that leads to the goal can be accepted, though not in the form of Islamic state. NU's concept in the transformation of education among moderate Muslim society accentuates on the principle of *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and *i'tidal* (just). These three concepts will form the Indonesian Islamic community that is tolerant, peaceful and *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* for the life of the nation.

Keywords: Transformation, Moderate Muslim Society, Nahdlatul Ulama

Abstrak

Indonesia merupakan negara yang tidak saja multi suku, etnik dan agama, tetapi juga multi budaya. Kemajemukan tersebut pada satu sisi merupakan kekuatan sosial dan keragaman yang indah apabila satu sama lain bersinergi dan saling bekerja sama untuk membangun bangsa. Namun, pada sisi lain, kemajemukan tersebut apabila tidak

dikelola dan dibina dengan tepat akan menjadi pemicu dan penyulut konflik dan kekerasan yang dapat menggoyahkan sendi-sendi kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara. Nahdlatul Ulama berperan strategis dalam membangun masyarakat Islam Indonesia moderat. Sebab NU telah menawarkan model integrasi, yakni integrasi Islam ke dalam nasionalisme. Integrasi visi Islam tentang kehidupan ke dalam tujuan utama pendirian negara-bangsa. Hal ini berangkat dari kaidah *al-ghayah wa al-wasail* (tujuan dan metode) bahwa NU menempatkan negara sebagai alat bagi pencapaian tujuan Islam. Maka, karena tujuan Islam adalah *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (kesejahteraan bagi semesta), negara yang mengarah ke tujuan tersebut bisa diterima, meskipun tidak berbentuk Islam. Konsep NU dalam transformasi pendidikan masyarakat Islam moderat dengan menekankan pada prinsip *tasamuh, tawazun dan i'tidal*. Tiga konsep ini yang akan membentuk masyarakat Islam Indonesia yang toleran, damai dan *rahmatan lil 'alamin* bagi kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara.

Kata Kunci: *Transformasi, Masyarakat Muslim Moderat, Nahdlatul Ulama*

Introduction

A society will always experience a transformation, but the expected transformation of course is a move to a better and more useful condition for human's life. Indonesia as a Muslim majority country is expected to emerge a moderate Muslim society which shows the values of Islam called *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (welfare of the universe). It is because Indonesian is a multicultural nation which consists of different religions, ethnicities, languages and cultures. Thus, a moderate Islamic society is inevitably needed in supporting the nation.

A transformation of education of moderate Muslim society is needed to build a society reflecting the noble values of Muslim, having high moral and upholding values of justice within the framework of a democratic state based on Pancasila to emerge a prosperous society life, safe and secure.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as one of Indonesian Islamic elements which play a strategic role in developing a moderate Muslim society in Indonesia is a large organization. The organization was established on January 31, 1926 and is engaged in education, charity and economy. The goal is to uphold the teachings of Islam according to Ahl Sunnah Waljama'ah in the middle of people's lives, in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.¹

¹ Muksin Jamil and dkk., *Nalar Islam Nusantara Studi Islam Ala Muhammadiyah, Al Irsyad, Persis Dan NU* (Diktis Kemenag RI, 2007), 277.

NU asserts Pancasila as the essence of Islamic values so that there is no longer cause for concern. If there is a problem relating to Pancasila, it is not about Pancasila itself but the people who do not understand the meaning and the essence of Pancasila. Formal Islamic state in Indonesia is not necessary to form because Pancasila as part of Islamic values that characterize the state in the spirit of Islam which protects all citizens without discriminating religion, race, color and so forth.

Over the last few decades NU has begun to engage in many areas of services especially in education. As a traditional Islamic organization, NU has been transformed, gradually evolved and developed following the dynamics and the need of the era. Issues of education, nationality, Islamic law, violence-terrorism, modernism, globalization, environment and pluralism, gender and democratization are discourse being inseparable from NU as *Jamiyyah Islamiyyah* which characterizes moderate society in Indonesia.

NU was established by leaders (*Kyai*) who uphold the principles of moderate life, justice and peace. They are known as moderate and tolerant leaders. When entering the headquarters of the NU (July, 2016), there were some of those leaders' photographs along with their thoughts of peace and tolerance, for instance: (1). "If it is difficult to find a reason to respect other religious adherents, that he/she is a human beings which Allah creates, the reason alone is enough" (Habib Muhammad Luthfi bin Yahya); (2). "Pancasila as the basic philosophy of Indonesia should be embraced, should be carried out, should be maintained, and should be preserved (K.H.R. As'ad Syamsul Arifin); (3). "Pancasila and Islam are things which can be consistent and mutually supportive. Both of which are not contradictive and should not be opposed (K.H. Achmad Siddiq); (4). "The basic value of democracy is humanity and the spirit on how to manage the relationships of people so that they can respect diversity and be able to work together, thereby creating shared prosperity" (K.H. Abdul Wahab Chasbullah). In line with the thought of NU's *Kyai* above, K.H. Said Agil Siradj in an interview with NU Online, on November 8, 2008 said, "Ahlussunnah does not recognize violence and terrorism. We are a modern people, full of tolerant and moderate, in order to be an example for other people".

NU concept in the transformation of education is necessary to implement a moderate Islamic society. Studies on NU's thought in

transformation of moderate Muslim's education in Indonesia have offered a model of integration, namely the integration of Islam into nationalism, the integration of Islamic visions of life into the main objectives of the establishment of a nation-state. It departs from the principle of *al-Ghayah wa al-Wasail* (objectives and methods) that NU puts the state as an instrument for achieving the goal of Islam. Hence, since the aim of Islam is *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, a state which leads to that goal can be accepted, though not in the form of Islamic state. As a result, Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (NKRI) which "social justice" is its purpose of the constitutional state is accepted by NU though it is not a formal Islamic state.

The discourse on the importance of education transformation of moderate Muslim society in Indonesia is motivated by the fact that Indonesia is a country which has a lot of programs on the social existence, ethnicity, and religious groups all of which are diverse. In the midst of the rise of religious violence and terrorism in the name of religion, NU presents thought which can be discussed in dealing with this crucial problem. Particularly religion which is supposed to be media to raise spiritual welfare, peaceful soul and social glue turns into a trigger of conflict, a source of conflict in various regions. In addition, religion appears in a scary face and becomes a source of legitimacy of violence.

A research carried out by Syarif Hidayatullah on the development of multicultural in boarding schools showed that it is needed to develop cultural values in educational system of boarding schools through concrete actions such as organizing scientific discussions, dialogue with non-muslim leaders, establishing interfaith organizations such as FPUB, Toya Mili, and the consortium of Palm. Those programs based on the thought that humans should be seen as a creature of God who must be respected whatever her/his position and her/his entity.²

According to the study above, the transformation of a moderate Muslim education can be done through formal and non formal education. In fact, boarding schools which are inspired identically with NU's thoughts and cultural traditions begin to teach traditions and cultures outside NU even

² Syarif Hidayatullah, "Developing of Multiculturalism in the Pesantren: Study on KH Abdul Muhaimin and the Pesantren of Nurul Ummahaat," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* Volume 5, Nomor 2 (December 2016), doi:10.14421/jpi.2016.52.299-318.

outside Islam. It shows that the transformation of moderate Muslim education is indispensable in the country its ideology is Pancasila.

A previous study conducted by Maragustam about educational reform of boarding schools; a thought study of Abdul Wahid Hasyim suggests that it is important to make a transformation in boarding school educational system which was originally dominated only by traditional system so that its students cannot think freely. Thus, the system begins to be revised by motivating and supporting the boarding schools' students to think more open and free but not against the command of the teacher.³

The other study was also conducted by Zully Qodir about Islam Nusantara developed by NU shows that Islam Nusantara is an Islamic practice which is unique to Indonesian natives emerging unique characters such as accommodative, tolerant and enabling to make dialogue with the fact that Indonesia is a pluralistic country. In fact, there are many cultures derived from Islam and become Muslim wealth. On the other hand, many cultures influence Islam thought so that Islam becomes pliable as a symbol, but not as a substance.⁴

The latest study emphasizes that the form of Indonesian Islam is moderate and tolerant. As a result, this Islamic form rejects violence, expulsion, and destruction towards other religious traditions existed before the coming of Islam in Indonesia, the era when the so called Indonesia had not been established. In addition, the accommodative characteristic of Islam in *da'wah* (preaching) was employed and developed by the preachers named Wali Songo in Java, the preachers of Middle East as well as post- Wali Songo preachers such as preachers of Muhammadiyah and NU. Islam never discredits other religions because the culture bringing out by Islam is moderate and tolerant culture though its main goal is to revise any substantial values out of the doctrines of Islam.

³ Maragustam, "The Reformation of Pesantren Education System: The Study on Abdul Wahid Hasyim Thoughts the Perspective of Islamic Education Philosophy.," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* Volume 5, Nomor 2 (December 2016), doi:10.14421/jpi.2016.52.325-346.

⁴ Zuly Qodir, "Islam Nusantara as Moderatand Tolerant Islam: A Literature Research," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* Volume 5, Number 1 (June 2016), doi:10.14421/jpi.2016.51.69-84.

The phenomena of violence, terrors and radicalism in Indonesia have continuously been happening. In fact, according to Mun'im A. Sirry⁵ regarding to various aspects, Indonesia has wide possibility to become a breeding ground of terrorists. Initially, the political situation after the collapse of the "Orde Baru" regime is so wide open for the growing numbers of religious radicalism. It can be seen from the encouragement of various interest groups to institute religious doctrine into public life. Consequently, it is not only be able to be seen from the number of political parties based on certain religion, but also from the radicalization of the masses whom are "fooled" by promised heaven. In addition, the lack of leadership can also lead Indonesia trapped into a global terrorist network.

Al-Asymawi, an Egyptian scholar, in his book entitled *al-Islam al-Siyasi* (political Islam) argues that in fact Islam is a religion, but the majority of Muslims dragged it as politics. As a religion Islam appears in a humane face, upholds humanitarian values and becomes an adhesive tool of primordial split. In contrast, as political vehicle, Islam becomes a separating variable and often tends to drive conflicts.⁶

This research is expected to offer a solution for the life of the nation. The finding that the concept of NU in the transformation of education of moderate Muslim society which punctuate on the principle of *tasamuh*, *tawazun*, and *i'tidal*. These three concepts can form the Indonesian Muslim society which is tolerant, peaceful and *rahmatan lil'alam* in the life of the nation.

Transformation of the Islamic Society

Issuing on transformation of education of moderate Muslim society means discussing about social transformation (social change). Selo Soemardjan argues that social transformation is a number of changes occurred in social institutions which affect the social system of a society, including values, attitudes and patterns of behavior among groups of the society. In addition, Kingsley Davis suggests that social change is changes that occurred in the structure and functioning of a society. Moreover, Robert

⁵ Mun'im A. Sirry, *Membendung Militansi Agama: Iman Dan Politik Dalam Masyarakat Modern* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2003), 10–11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

McIver asserts that social change is changes in social relation or changes in the sustainability of social relations.

According to the definitions above it can be underlined that the essence of the education transformation of moderate Muslim society is the changes occurred in the society which are indicated by the changes in people's attitude while having interaction and communication which reflect the values and patterns of behavior among the groups of people.

In the case of Indonesia, the transformation of education of moderate Muslim society is meant to the education which can form a society holding inclusive view. Indonesia, compared to other countries, is a country which has not only multi tribes, ethnicity and religions, but also multi cultures. The plurality on one hand is a social force and a wonderful asset of diversity if each of elements makes synergy and work together in building the nation. On the other hand, if it is not well managed and nurtured properly the plurality can be a trigger and an ignition button of conflicts and violence which could destabilize the unity of the state.

The transformation of education of moderate Muslim society is widely influenced by several factors such as a religion which frequently is the foundation of a society. Islam, in this case, exceedingly influences the transformation of a society because Islam regulates its adherents in all aspects of life. How people can communicate well and fair is the principle of the transformation of Islamic education.

Moderate Term

The word "moderate" is derived from the *latin* meaning to reduce or to control. The American Heritage Dictionary of The English Language defines moderate as "not excessive or extreme". The initial conclusion from the etymological meaning implies that moderate is objective and not extreme. Hence, moderate Islam can be defined as the Islam values built on a straight mindset and just (*i'tidal* and *wasath*).

According to Syaikh Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, *wasatiyah* (moderate understanding) is one of the characteristics of Islam which is not shared by other ideologies. The quran explains:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا

Meaning: “Thus we have made you a just community” (Al-Baqara: 143)

Yusuf Qardhawi is one of Muslim scholars who calls on the moderate Islamic propaganda and opposes all forms of liberal and radical thinking. Liberal, in this case, is meant as every understanding towards Islam based on lust and purely logic which tends to justify everything unscientifically. In addition, the term “radical” is defined as interpreting Islam in a textual level which eliminates the flexibility of its teachings. As a result, Islam tends to be stiff and unable to adapt with the reality of life. Though the prophet affirmed:

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْغُلُوفِ فِي الدِّينِ، فَإِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ غُلُوفٌ هُمْ فِي دِينِهِمْ. رواه البخاري

Meaning: “Avoid excessive acts in this religion, the people before you were destroyed simply because of the act (Narrated by Bukhari)

The term above reflects the basic character of the most important of Islamic values distinguishing the *manhaj* of Islam from the other methodologies exist in ideologies, thoughts, and philosophies. In addition, the *wasathiyah* attitude of Islam is an attitude of rejection towards the extremities in the form of injustice and falsehood. It is a reflection of the true *fitrah* (nature) of human unspoiled by negative influences. According to D.R Muhammad Imarah, *wasathiyah* term has been often misunderstood. In his book, entitled *Ma'arakah al-Mushthalahat bayna al-Gharb wa al-Islam* (The Terminology War between Islam and the West), he explains at length the meaning of the concept of *al-Wasathiyah* in Islam. He argues that the term *al-Wasathiyah* in Islam reflects the character and identity exclusively possessed by Islam encompass in thought and life, in view, implementation, and application.

The term “moderate” is more appropriate than the term “modernist”, or progressive or reformist. “Modernist” term implies a group which seeks to overcome the challenges of modernity, while others act reactionary-stuck in the past or want to go back to the past. In fact, the relationship of all Islamic scholars and activists with the past is a complex matter. In addition, the term progressive and reformist are very helpful, but they also have serious drawbacks. Many moderates claim that they represent the true and authentic

Islam. They insist that they not change the religion. Instead, they try to encourage Muslims back to their original faith.⁷

Islam commands all Muslims to be moderate people. In the traditions, the prophet narrates that when faced with two extremes, the prophet always chose the middle way. On other words, the prophet is always portrayed as a moderate figure who tends to resist to extreme side.

Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, the Minister of Religious Affairs, says that a moderate Muslim is a Muslim who still upholds *tauhid* (monotheism), but remains tolerant in practice. In addition, a moderate Muslim must be able to coexist peacefully with other people, not only in Indonesia but also in the world. "A moderate Muslim maintains monotheism, but is tolerant as well, because Indonesia is a country which is so heterogeneous, consists of multi races, religions and cultures. There are three characteristic values of Islam developed in Indonesia which are slightly different with the values of Islam developed in other countries as follows: initially, the moderate value, tolerant, and *tawazun* (balance). Second, Islamic values which maintain the tradition. Third, the Islamic-nationalist values, the so called Islam Indonesia."⁸

The term "moderate" is closely similar to "tolerant" term or it can be said that moderate attitude can be shown by the tolerant attitude. In his writings, Abu Dzarrin al-Hamidy (2008: 255-256), asserts that the definition of "religious tolerance" can be understood in two meanings, namely: (1). the will to accept diversity and freedom of religious affiliations and beliefs internalized by the other parties or groups; (2). the granting of freedom to human beings or to fellow citizens to practice their faiths, or organize their lives, and determine their destinies as long as do not violate and are not contrary to the requirements on building the stability and security in society.⁹

In practical way, the two meanings above can be broken down into some form of tolerance, namely: (1). to recognize the right of every person; the attitude to recognize the right of everyone to make his/her choice in

⁷ Khaled Abou el Fadl, *Selamatkan Islam Dari Muslim Puritan*, Penj. Helmi Mustofa (Jakarta: Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2005), 27-18.

⁸ Lukman Hakim, "The 16th AICIS Opening Ceremony," 2016.

⁹ Al-Hamidy and Abu Dzarrin, *Toleransi Antar Umat Beragama Sebagai Wujud Penyikapan Pluralisme*, Dalam Perspektif NU", Dalam Sarung & Demokrasi: Dari NU Untuk Peradaban Keindonesiaan (Surabaya: Khalista, 2008), 255-56.

religion; (2) to respect the beliefs of others; do not impose one's believe to be believed by people or other groups; (3). to agree the difference; that a difference should not spawn conflict and hostility; (4). mutual understanding among religious communities, the difference should not spawn mutual hate and competition in influencing other in order to monopolize the truth; (5). awareness and honesty, the attitude and awareness of one's inner soul, and the awareness giving birth to honesty in attitudes and behaviour.¹⁰

Terminologically *Al-Wasathiyah* can be defined as a commendable condition which keeps a person from his/her tendency towards two extreme sides (attitude), the attitude of exaggerated and neglect. *Al-Wasathiyah* can also be interpreted as balanced and equal condition between two sides; where one side/aspect does not go beyond other aspects; so no excess nor neglect, does not exceed the limit nor reduce. However, *al-Wasathiyah* means the attitude to follow the more principal, more just, the better and more perfect thing.

Yusuf al-Qardhawi said, "The term *wasathiyah* is also expressed by the term *tawazun* (balanced). I mean to be just and balanced between two opposing aspects; one aspect does not dominate all influence nor eliminates the influence of the other aspects; and one aspect does not take excessive rights so that narrowing the rights of other aspects".

Fakhrudin al-Razi says there are several meanings which is closed and complement each other. First, *wasath* means fairness. This meaning is based on the verses which convey the same meaning, the tradition of the prophet, and some explanation of the significance of Arabic poems. Narrates by al-Qaffal from at-Thaury from Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudry from the prophet (peace be upon him) that *ummatan wasathan* was a fair nation. Second, *wasath* means the choice. Al-Razi chose this meaning instead of other meanings for several reasons, namely: the word etymologically is the closest meaning to *wasath* and the most in accordance with the verse conveying the same meaning, as found in surah Ali Imran [3]: 110, meaning:

"You are the best nation produced (as an example) for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 257.

only the people of the scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers but most of them are defiantly disobedient”.

Third, *wasath* means the best. Fourth, *wasath* defines as religious adherents who are just which is between *ifrath* (excessive deeds until trumping up the untaught thing) and *tafrith* (lessen the religious taught).¹¹

Moderate people do not mean that they have no opinion because no partiality to one, but for choosing the middle way is the best and fairest choice between two ways which tend to be conservative or liberal. The former one can lead to a setback while the later may also direct to a freedom without any boundaries which result in worse condition. Hence, the reason for choosing the middle way is the best way or the just which provides the best impact for the life of the community and the nation.

The opposite term of moderate is radical. No doubt there is radical Islam in Indonesia which has committed acts of terror so that it has become common enemy as for moderate Islamic societies. All Islamic society organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, Persis and even FPI are against the acts of terror. It can be said that the terror acts are highly influenced by globalization which makes people easy to interact anywhere and anytime with the terrorists of this country. Moreover, the act of terror was done to destroy the unity of Indonesian Muslims. Indonesian Muslims are set against one another.

Through the development of Muslim society in Indonesia, the thought of transnational Islam has also growth. Transnational Islam such as *Wahhabism* intends to purge Islam from cultures of ignorance. The ground is to purify the creed of ignorance cultures. It has been a challenge to the realization of a moderate Islamic society in Indonesia.

The Characteristic of Moderate Islamic Society

Luthfi Hadi Aminuddin¹² classifies the development of logical reason of NU's fiqh to three main categories as follows: (1) Conservative (traditional)

¹¹ Fakhru al-Din al-Razi, *Tafsiri Al-Razi*, Jilid II, n.d., 389-90.

group which is a dominant model of thought. The group frequently solves issues through *madzhab qauli*. Among this group are Islamic scholars graduated from *salaf* boarding school; (2) Modern group which it is they who maintain the discourse of contextualizing Islamic law. The group often tackles problems through *madzhab manhaji*. This group is known as the moderate group; (3) liberal type, is them who think that, or even force to have amendment of the *ushul fiqh*, because the existing *ushul fiqh* is seen as no longer adequate to solve contemporary problems. This type could also be categorized as the most strict one in terms of reducing acts of violence and rupture in the name of religion.

One of figures who influences the transformation of moderate society is Gus Dur and Nurcolish Madjid as one of muslim moderate figures who are able to influence in such hegemonic way to form Islam moderation. It could be traced by looking at their contributions to embrace the notion of Islam that harmonizes with the pace of modernization and development that result in the face of moderate Islam society.

Those two aforementioned figures are also seen as liberals by other parties, but at least their ideas are able to inspire the transformation of moderate Islam society in Indonesia. Both become the key figures to the ideas of having tolerance and open-minded mind towards different opinions in society. Those disagreements are seen as not the source of conflicts, but it is definitely the way to deal with such differences that often rises conflicts.

People can learn about being moderate from one Imam figure of one jurisprudence school named Imam Syafii who ever mentioned a very popular statement: "I believe my opinion to be right, but I acknowledge the possibility that I could be wrong. And I believe that my opponent, to be wrong, but I acknowledge the possibility that it is right." The statement has such moderate moral value. The past scholars underlined the inevitability of disagreement and the contextualization of Islamic comprehension. They struggled passionately in order to understand the Islamic primary texts, and in the end the most valid comprehension is turned over entirely to Allah SWT.

¹² Luthfi Hadi Aminuddin, *Nalar Fiqh NU Dari Tradisional, Modern, Hingga Liberal*, Dalam, *Sarung & Demokrasi: Dari NU Untuk Peradaban Keindonesiaan* (Surabaya: Khalista, 2008), 49.

No one can claim that her/his opinion is the most right one. Every human being must have limitation no matter how excellent s/he is. Therefore, what should be emphasized here is that sincerity and modesty are necessary. Every scholar is in fact just a common man on their own journey sailing across the ocean of God's infinite knowledge.¹³

Moderate here means not radical. The nature of radical act is in fact intolerances which includes intimidation, aggression, and oppression, that make public feels more and more insecure, and as if it validates that violence is an integral part of religion. In one hadith, it is said that later in the future, there will be one group that is completely out from the substance of religion, just like an arrow out from its bow.

According to Khaled Abou el-Fadl, cited by Zuhairi Misrawi, at least there are two prominent tendencies in their ideology. First is the claim over the sovereignty of God. They believe that the most valid sovereignty is only God's sovereignty. While man's sovereignty is considered deviant in religion. Even they also consider their group as the representation of the aforesaid claim over God's sovereignty. Second is that they are identical with violence. To uphold God's sovereignty is their goal, although to do that, they consider violence or radical as *halal* to do.¹⁴

The term extremist, fanatic and radical, have offered logical alternatives. Linguistically, extremist is the opposite of moderation. Radical groups and extremist consistently and systematically adopt absolutism, dichotomical way of thinking, and even idealism. Fundamentalism as conception signifies three elements; first, religion phenomena, second, rejection towards world as reaction to social and culture shift perceived as crisis, and third, defensive reaction with their effort to maintain or to restore the past social order idealized or imagined as the most authentic and the truest.¹⁵

Hasyim Muzadi said that Moderate Islam society must show Islam in the way like what Wali Songo, Islam kings, and clerics had struggled for: not

¹³ Nasarudin Umar, *In His Preface for "Pandangan Muslim Moderat: Toleransi, Terorisme, Dan Oase Perdamaian,"* Written by Zuhairi Misrawi (Jakarta: Kompas, 2010).

¹⁴ Zuhairi Misrawi, "Pandangan Muslim Moderat:Toleransi, Terorisme, Dan Oase Perdamaian," *Kompas*, 2010, xxx.

¹⁵ Sirry, *Membendung Militansi Agama: Iman Dan Politik Dalam Masyarakat Modern*, 4.

in the formalistic way, but the substantive Islam. For instance, Raden Ja'far Shadiq in Kudus built a mosque of which edge has similar form with temple, even because Hindu respect cow deeply, when it was Idul Adha, muslim were suggested to sacrifice buffalo instead of cow. It includes the muslim women that do not wear burqa because Indonesian natural environment is different from Arab – Arab women wear burqa because the natural condition is dusty with very high temperatures. In Indonesia, clerics emphasize that men and women must cover the *aurat* with their cloth – within the shape and model that suit to each customs. The aim is not to clash between religion and culture, so that religion, state, and culture are able to become umbrella and basis in building the nation's character.

Islam developed in Nusantara has a balance character; its position is at center – it patronages; it does not take side for the extreme – it is tolerance and just. Within this principal, Islam is able to color all basis in people's life, just like philosophy in society, art, literature, cultures, tradition, knowledge, and such. Hence Islam can be accepted and become ingrained in life. This is exactly what people refer as Islam *wasatiyah*, as the character of Islam Nusantara.

In *sirah* Nabi, there has been found facts that beyond religion matter, The Prophet is a leader that listens to suggestion and opinion from his companions. Prophet's idea sometimes were criticized, and he accepted the critic, then followed it as in the case of Hubâb ibn Mundzir towards strategy for Perang Badar (read *Sirah Ibn Hisyâm*, pp. 296). Sometimes also The Prophet rejected the critics, but then he was being warned by Allah, that saw the companion's argument was right – just like in the case of Umar ibn Khatthab RA in terms of having looting which was stated in Surah al-Anfâl: 67-68 and in the case of Abdullâh ibn Ubay ibn Salûl which was stated in Surah at-Taubah: 84 dan Surat al-Munâfiqûn: 6.¹⁶

Avoiding the Clash between Islamic and the State Law

There are some Islam communities who think that Islam is the *syumûl* (comprehensive) religion. All aspects in life has been regulated by Islam and all has reference in Qur'an text, or *sunnah* (utterance, deed, and decision of

¹⁶ Al-Qurthubi, *Tafsir Al-Qurthuby*, Juz 8 Pp. 47, n.d., 200-201.

The Prophet). Hence, there is no need to add or to subtract because these are considered *bid'ah*. For NU, this assumption is incorrect, because Qur'an is the general book of guidance, that regulates principal matters, and does not include the technical details. The order to pray is repeated many times, but the way to do it is not listed in Qur'an. There is also no detail explanation about how to fast, how to *zakat*, as well as how to do pilgrimage – let alone how to conduct nation/state. Furthermore, what originated from Prophet does not always relate to religion. The lifestyle of Prophet, such as clothes, diets, and other Arab culture, are not absolute things to follow. What must be adopted is religious *sunnah* (*sharia*). What must be copied is his moral values, not his cultural expressions. What relates to worldly matter is better to be submitted to the weights of good and bad of his *ummah*. The command is clear. It can be found in hadith narrated by Muslim: "I am human. When I command you with something regarding religion, follow it! But when I command you with something from my own opinion, then I am only a human being." (HR. Muslim dari Rafi' ibn Khudayj)

For NU, Pancasila law is Islamic law as Islamic law does not always require formally to be there, yet the Islamic values has been reflected on Pancasila. It is supposed to be no clash between Islamic law and Pancasila. As moderate Islam society, they have to be able to synergize both and there is no need to clash each other. It is indeed not all Islam community in Indonesia agree to this view. Some of them still approve Pancasila as long as it has no contradiction with Islamic law, as it is higher than the worldly law. Islamic law is Allah's prerogative while Pancasila, or other worldly laws are man-made. It infers that a clash between Islamic laws and Pancasila happens very often.

In Pancasila and laws that regulate this country, it is stated that everyone is protected and respected without seeing their ethnicity, race, group, and religion. Although majority people in Indonesia take Islam as their religion, the people show the moderate and tolerance behavior towards people with other religion. There is nothing to worry about muslim regarding their moderateness and tolerance.

Here are problems that often come up concerning the clash between Islamic law and Pancasila. *First*, the election of certain leader. In Islamic law, this is written on QS. Al-Maidah: 51, that there is prohibition for a muslim to

elect one leader not from her/his group. While state law based on Pancasila embracing all religions in Indonesia said that everyone has right to be the leader, as long as s/he can show the Indonesian ID card/KTP.

This has been quite a case in many periods of general election. For some muslim community, the command in QS. Al-Maidah: 51 is an absolute prohibition that must be obeyed by a muslim so that s/he will not elect the non-muslim candidate. And for some other Islam group, they try to accept that this plural nation can be led by a person with different religion. And so there is always conflict between muslim that agrees with QS. Al-Maidah: 51, and those who follow the state law.

As a nation that take entirely Pancasila as the foundation of the country, society should accept this condition, because non muslim have the same right to elect and to be elected as a leader – anyone who is so willing to be the leader in this country, including them who have become Indonesian citizen even though non muslim. Most of muslims do not agree on this because historically this nation was built by the struggles of Muslims at the past, particularly the clerics with their pupils, in order to achieve independence.

In this case, NU does not try to divert muslims from their Islamic law, yet they see that the heart of Islam, which is the Islamic values, are able to be implemented in this plural country. Hostility or violence cannot be the first thing to bring up when there is clash between Islamic law and Pancasila.

For moderate Islamic society, there has to be many ways to overcome the clash between these two without any conflict happening among the people. Serenity and peace must come first because we as muslim love peace and compassion. Indonesian muslims are still able to practice the Islam sharia without any interruption, and the non muslim also have the same right and responsibility as Indonesian citizen.

Second, the criminal law in Islam with Pancasila law. This case is not as complicated as the first problem, but this one is also able to interfere the stability of this nation if people always try to bring up the clash to the surface. One of the causes of radicalism, terrorism and anarchism acts in this country is that because this nation has not applied the criminal law.

For NU as moderate muslim, criminal law is implemented on the Islamic values, that one *jarim* (the perpetrator) has to be punished to make sure s/he will not repeat the crime in the future. Hence, any form of punishment has the same goal, which is to be deterrent for the offender.

Muslims in Indonesia are not just NU, but also many other organizations that probably have the same or different views from NU. However, as Indonesian muslims, people should agree upon the criminal law that applies in the country, even though this criminal law is man-made and can be changed within long period of time.

Indonesia is one of countries that keeps the death penalty in its positive system,¹⁷ even in many of its constitutions. As a plural country, Indonesia deals with the death penalty in a particular, cautious, and selective way.¹⁸ The application of death penalty is philosophically approved and accommodated by the concept of state of Pancasila law.

As public law, Indonesian criminal law is supposed to be oriented for protection over wider society and the victims, although it by no means can forget the condition of the perpetrators. In this sense, the death penalty is meant to give shock therapy effect to society.

Therefore, moderate muslims do not need to radically impose the Islamic criminal law into this nation's law, because this nation has approved to have Pancasila as its ideology that covers all religion, ethnicity, and race. Thus, there is no need to clash these two things. If Islamic criminal law is desperately needed, someday this society will realize it. We first shall see that there are people so against the death penalty, yet many countries in this world still apply it for such harmful crime like towards drug trafficking.

Third, sharia-based transaction and *ribawi* transaction. Statement in Qur'an has forbidden usury/interest, yet the design and the application of the command still need more elaboration. For NU as moderate muslim community, *riba* is one kind of deviation, misappropriation towards property that has bad consequences for the economy of certain society. There is no

¹⁷ J.E. Sahetapy, "Suatu Studi Khusus Mengenai Ancaman Pidana Mati," n.d., 75.

¹⁸ Todung Mulya Lubis and Alexander Lay, *Kontroversi Hukuman Mati; Perbedaan Pendapat Hakim Konstitusi* (Jakarta: Gramedia Kompas, 2007), 335.

need to have sharia bank, because in application, sharia is just label while they still practice *ribawi* transaction.

Hendry, et al., revealed that early Islamic banks back before, were different from the nowadays type of Islamic banks. The first Islamic banks were developed to fill the gap in the socio economic sphere and to support the poor by inducing their desire to save their money and to mobilize their resources. Nowadays Islamic banks seem to run under the notion that other banks are forbidden and *haram*, and so they must be replaced by the Islamic banks.¹⁹ The principles of Islamic transaction are justice, honesty, modesty, generosity, and morality.

NU and the Effort for Transformation of Moderate Muslim Education

Indonesia as society that has diverse religion, culture, custom, is supposed to not let this diversity to turn into horizontal conflicts. Moderate muslims must stand on Madinah Charter created by Prophet Muhammad SAW. The contents are *al-ukhuwah bainal muslimin* (brotherhood among muslims), then towards those non muslim with different *aqidah* and sharia, there is *lakum dinukum waliyadin* (for you your religion, for me my religion), and all society elements (whether it is religion, ethnicity, and group) in Madinah must help each other, also that they have to defend the country from external attack. Hence religiosity and nationalism are meant to be the foundation for nation and state.²⁰

As muslim organization, NU has had great role in creating moderate and tolerant muslim community. Since its founding, NU has done many attempts as already stated above. All muslim has agreed that Pancasila has become one part of muslim's strength that must be fought and defended to death.

¹⁹ M.C Hendry and Rodey Wilson, *The Politics of Islamic Finance* (Edinburgh University Press Ltd.: 2004, n.d.).

²⁰ Hasyim Muzadi, "NU Online," n.d., NU Online.or.id.

The idea that NU offers for the transformation of moderate muslim is to build Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, as the basis of thought and action for Nahdhiyin,²¹ which is based on:

1. *Tawassuth dan i'tidal* (Moderate and Persistent)

This means to embrace the middle stance that is not extreme (*tatharruf*) right or left. The middle stance here includes persistence in holding principle, thus applying this stance by no means has no principle. Within this basic attitude, Nahdlatul Ulama will always become role model that is able to treat and be flexible to all groups.

These *tawasuth* and *i'tidal* are expected to have capacity to reduce social and religion conflicts in the plural society. Amin Abdullah offers one design of religious studies in the era of plurality by studying Islam not only from one aspect, such as only from anthropological aspect or even only from the aspect of normative theology, but it should also include the phenomenological aspect that tries to seek the nature or the essence of what lies behind all religion manifestations in human life.²²

The character of 'moderate Islam' has become more relevant to be grateful and to be amplified in the middle of 'furious Islam' raging Tunisia, tearing Egypt, destroying Libya, breaking Yemen, and devastating Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Somalia. Therefore the theme of "Reinforcing Islam Nusantara for Indonesia and the World" is now becoming more and more relevant and applicable.²³

The transformation of muslim moderate education should become the need of Indonesian muslims to establish positive attitudes towards diverse social realities. This stance begins with the understanding to accept, to recognize, and to honor the others that have various backgrounds, as, regardless of the school and the religion, all human beings are God's creature having the same right to live on His earth. The embedding of these attitudes and inclusive values has become

²¹ see "Hasil-Hasil Muktamar Ke 33 NU," n.d.

²² Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama: Normativitas Atau Historisitas?* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1999), 26-27.

²³ Muzadi, "NU Online."

the main bargaining power for education system offered by Nahdlatul Ulama towards Islamic Education in Indonesia.

2. *Tasamuh* (Tolerant)

NU uses *tasamuh* as basis to address disagreement. Tolerance is used to respond differences, including religious differences, especially in terms of those characterized as *furu'* or that become *khilafiyah* matter. The *khilafiyah*, as well as in social and culture, demand tolerance as an attempt in seeking point of agreement, not disagreement. From that point of agreement, there can be developed brotherhood (*ukhuwwah*), whether it is brotherhood based on the same religion, the same nation, or merely the same human being.

The transformation of tolerant muslim-education needs method, or approach, offered by Taha that comes with revolutionary idea and interpretation methods, of which core substance is inviting people to develop new interpretation principles that an-Na'im refers as "Modern and evolutionary interpretation of al-Qur'an."²⁴

The idea that Islam is a tolerant religion can be tracked back in its long journey entering Nusantara through cultural approach, without radicalism or bloodshed. This cultural approach has made Islam possible to gain its place and thus the Islamization run very fast. The three and a half century influences of Hinduism-Buddhism had been set aside in just less than one century. The result is that the Islamization process in Nusantara has become one of the most stunning Islamization legacies in history. This sort of peaceful Islam, that is totally fine submitting itself to live together with local culture, has generated the characteristic of moderate, friendly, and tolerant for the religion.

The transformation of tolerant muslims is built upon Islam principles as what stated by Rahimi.²⁵ She said that Islam came to build a fair, civilized, peaceful, and tolerant society. There are at least three basic principles of Islam main purposes in the development of society, which are:

²⁴ An- Naim, *Konflik Pemikiran*, dalam Miftahurr Rohim (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, n.d.). 319

²⁵ Rahimi, *Islam & Radikalisme* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Rasyid, 2004), 13.

a. The principle of equality (*al-musawah*)

It relies upon the idea that all men are created equal and thus all men are equal before God, as stated in Qur'an: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you [...]" (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13)

b. The principle of freedom (*al-hurriyah*)

It means that Islam highly respects freedom, be it freedom to have religion, or social and political freedom. Freedom has been an integral part of the human creation. This freedom allows man to run the duty as *khalifah* on earth and makes her/him sovereign and dignified. Allah said: "*There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong [...]*" (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256). This principle of religious freedom encourages us to see that religion is not a purpose, but as the sharia (the way) to reach the goal, which are life truth and happiness.

c. The principle of justice (*al-'adalah*)

This means that Islam highly values the principle of justice in building the society. This is as Allah said: "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness [...]" (QS. Al-Maidah: 8)

These three principles has become the way for a good transformation of moderate muslim expecting tolerant, fair, and prosperous society throughout Indonesia, which are also the purpose of the country's formation. Therefore the Indonesian people, regardless of their religion, have to be able to show their moderate, fair, and tolerant personality.

3. *Tawazun* (Balanced)

This attitude is applied on all fields: balanced in the use of revelation and mind in order to understand the religious texts. Balance in devotion

means harmonizing devotion towards Allah SWT., towards fellow human, and towards the environment. There is also balance on behalf of past, present, and future. And there has to be balance for the fulfillment of rights and obligations as a person, society, citizen, and global association.

The application of this *tawazun* needs sort of multidimensional method and approach in education, especially Islamic studies in Indonesia. This method, according to Nasution, is an alternative way to reduce prejudices which can trigger social conflicts in the plural society. Hence it is such an appropriate method for the agenda of multicultural education.²⁶

Ways to embed the attitude of *tawazun* (balanced) are as follows. First, as muslim, a person must believe that every human – from his/her creation point of view (ontologically) – has dignity (*karâmah*), regardless of race, skin color, ethnicity, and religion. Therefore the right of dignity as the creature of Allah has to be protected and retained, except there is violation towards what has been determined in sharia.

Second, a person needs to honor the fact of diversity and to be tolerant, since difference in belief and religion is inevitable, and it comes from Allah SWT. Thus it is impossible for a muslim to proceed intimidation, coercion, let alone terror towards others in order to convert to Islam.

Third, s/he must adhere to the attitude of reliable and honest in the religious life. Tolerance is by no means an ability to follow rituals and worship outside of the belief of each adherent.

4. *Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar*

The foundation of this attitude is that people always have sensibility to encourage good, useful, and beneficial behavior for the coexistence, also to reject and prevent all that mislead and humiliate the values of life. The conception of *nahi munkar* in NU is applied in *ma'ruf* way, within the framework that keeps retaining the dignity and value of humanity.²⁷

²⁶ S. Nasution, *Sosiologi Pendidikan* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 1994), 49–50.

²⁷ Hasbiyallah and et al., “Deradikalisasi Islam: Konsep Pemikiran Nahdlatul Ulama,” *Lembaga Penelitian UIN SGD Bandung*, 2016, 152.

This NU way of thinking has significant capacity to form moderate, tolerant, and peaceful Islamic society. This capacity is influenced by many factors, such as environment, religious understanding, the impact of religious leaders or clerics in delivering the doctrines, and the paradigm of the people towards the theology and the doctrines.²⁸

For NU, the principle of *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar* means that the command to preaching (dakwah) in Islam has purpose to establish the transformation and change towards benevolence and veracity, be it at personal or at societal level, which is done in persuasive way by good communication – not by indoctrination. It is also accompanied by the comprehension that Allah does not burden us to take responsibility over infidelity of the infidels or over heresy of the heresy. What matters is that we have delivered the dakwah.

From three ideas offered by NU above, there are flourished idea and thoughts stating that Islam in Indonesia is not middle east Islam, and is not also Arabic Islam, yet it is Islam that has mingled with culture and character of Indonesian people whose ideology is Pancasila, and hence Islam Nusantara. Islam Nusantara was born under the notion that Islam is universal teachings accommodated in the particular human custom/culture. The teaching of tauhid, eschatology, prophethood, morality, and the main idea of sharia is universal, yet its practice is always the combination between the universal and the particular. It is said as universal because Islam is samawi religion, which descended from heaven, and what it means by particular is that because the adherents are human being, and man is a creature with culture. The universal teachings are qath'i (categorical), thus must be accepted by all means. However, particular matters are dhonny (hypothetical), must not be copied without adaptation. For instance the command to pray is universal, but the cloth worn is particular. Islam Nusantara sorts which is universal (kulliyah) and which is particular (juziyyah). Universal teachings are accepted as what it is, while the particulars are hybridized with the expression of local culture.

²⁸ Achmad Rois, "Pendidikan Islam Multikultural: Telaah Pemikiran Amin Abdullah," *Epistemé* Vol. 8, No. 2 (Desember 2013).

Conclusion

Based on the elaboration above, it can be concluded that the transformation of moderate muslim in Indonesia is tremendously needed as Indonesia is a great country of which people have different religion, culture, ethnicity, and language. This diversity demands muslims to act and to have stance according to Islamic values as the blessing for the whole world. Hence there will be no terrorism, radicalism, and other violent acts that destroy the integrity of Indonesia.

Four notions offered by NU are *tawassut*, *tasamuh*, *tawazun*, and *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*. These four conceptions generated the conception of Islam Nusantara as transformation of society education within the principles of democracy, equality, and justice; under the orientation towards humanity, brotherhood, and peace; also that develops attitudes of recognizing, accepting, and honoring diversity.

Therefore, the transformation of moderate society education can be pursued by showing Islam as Islam Nusantara that has been able to communicate with local cultures without abandoning the *ilahiyah* Islamic values – within the principles of equality, freedom, and justice.

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