

Islam Nusantara as a Representative Moderate Islam

Islam Nusantara Sebagai Representasi Islam Moderat

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Abstract

This article will discuss matters relating to Islam Nusantara as a representation of Moderate Islam. This term has emerged as a form of implementing and practicing Islamic teachings by considering local traditions and culture. As a religion, there is only one, namely Islam. However, expressing it is very diverse, one of which is Islam Nusantara. Islam in Indonesia has its style and typology. This pattern then gave rise to the term Islam Nusantara. This term is present as moderate Islam to build the harmony of a nation, especially Indonesia.

Keywords: *Islam Nusantara, Moderat, Indonesia*

Abstrak

Artikel ini akan membahas tentang hal-hal yang berkaitan dengan Islam Nusantara sebagai representasi dari Islam Moderat. Istilah ini pada dasarnya telah muncul sebagai bentuk implementasi dan pengamalan ajaran Islam dengan mempertimbangkan tradisi dan budaya local. Sebagai suatu agama, hanya ada satu yaitu Islam. Namun, dalam mengekspresikannya sangat beragam, salah satunya adalah Islam Nusantara. Islam di Indonesia memiliki corak dan tipologi tersendiri. Corak inilah yang kemudian memunculkan istilah Islam Nusantara. Istilah ini hadir sebagai Islam yang moderat guna membangun keharmonisan suatu bangsa, khususnya Indonesia.

Keywords: *Islam Nusantara, Moderat, Indonesia*

Introduction

The term Islam Nusantara is not new because this term has long existed in the archipelago, and in the context of Islam Nusantara is a framework of thought, understanding, and realization of Islamic teachings by taking into account local traditions and culture to be able to express a typical Indonesian Islamic model. that distinguishes it from the others. Conceptually, the identity of Islam Nusantara has been written by several authors, including Azyumardi Azra (2015) with the title *Islam Nusantara Global and Local Networks* and Nor Huda (2013) with the title *Islam Nusantara Social Intellectual History of Islam in Indonesia*.

Indeed, at the 33rd NU Congress in 2015 in Jombang, the term Islam Nusantara emerged and became more popular. The word Islam Nusantara is increasingly popular and widespread among people in remote parts of the country. The issue of the term Islam Nusantara received quite a variety of responses; not a few also rejected it and considered it a heresy. The reason NU chose Islam Nusantara as the theme of the congress is that the image of Islam is always regarded as negative for the emergence of cases of violence in the name of religion, such as hostage-taking, murder to bombings. Recalling the tragedy of the September 11, 2001, World Trade Center (WTC) explosion in New York, the image of Islam has become destructive and stereotypical, Islam is a terrorist religion.

The perpetrators of radical acts in the name of Islam gave birth to the assumption that Islam teaches violence, cruel actions, bloodshed, and other acts of dehumanizing. This generalization causes people to be more afraid of Islam and creates Islamophobia in Indonesia. Whereas Islam, as a religion of rahmatan lil 'alamin teaches about peace, harmony, harmony, and tolerance. But unfortunately, the teachings of conciliation that Islam owns are not highlighted. Meanwhile, the actions taken by a handful of Muslims who prioritize violence get more attention and are ultimately justified as the actual characteristics of Islam.

Even in Indonesia, where most of the population embraces Islam, the phenomenon of Islamophobia still occurs. This is a serious problem because there is also a fear of Islam in the Islamic community. Indonesian culture, which is relatively inclined to collectivity, interdependence between individuals, and maintains harmony, generally avoids open conflict. Thus, latent conflicts between groups can become a potential problem that is dangerous for national peace and unity, as was the case in Ambon and Poso. Other implications will also arise in politics, security, and job opportunities (Moordiningsih, 2004).

Departing from the problems above, the purpose of writing this article is to restore the image of Islam as a religion of rahmatan lil 'alamin and provide an overview of the understanding of Islam Nusantara as moderate Islam to be able to build a harmonious nation, especially in Indonesia.

Islam Nusantara

Islam Nusantara itself, if interpreted, is quite complex. Before understanding what Islam Nusantara is, one must note two interrelated dimensions, namely, religious and cultural dimensions (Sahal & Aziz, 2015). The dimension here is a form of Islamic compromise with territorial boundaries that have certain cultural roots and cause Islam to completely no longer appear rigid and closed but respect an inequality. The idea of Islam Nusantara is in line with the concept put forward by Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) in 2008, namely the Indigenization of Islam. This is because religion and culture tend to overlap, as stated by Gus Dur:

"Religion (Islam) and culture have their respective independence, but both have overlapping areas. It can be compared with the freedom between philosophy and science. One cannot philosophize without science, but one cannot say that science is philosophy. Between the two, there are overlaps and, at the same time, differences (Wahid, 2001)"

Gus Dur tried to have a dialogue between the existing texts (shari'a) and local culture. In the sense of understanding the texts associated with the problems in Indonesia (Wahid, 2001). Starting from this statement then raises several questions about Islam Nusantara. Is it Islam in the Archipelago or Islam, which is Nusantara? The first question, of course, refers to the territorial area, while the second question refers to the unique values. In other words, there is still ambiguity regarding the meaning of Islam Nusantara itself (Azra, 2015).

Azyumardi Azra, in his essay entitled "Sustainable Indonesian Islam," explained that the term Islam Nusantara in academia refers to the meaning of "Southeast Asian Islam," namely Islamic regions found in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Pattani (southern Thailand), and Mindanao. The Islamic Archipelago is known as "lands below the wind" in pre-colonial literature. Whereas in Arabic literature, since the sixteenth century, it has been called "bilad al-Jawi" (the Muslim land of Jawi). Because the Islamic Archipelago itself is part of the eight religious-cultural domains of Islam, namely: Indonesia, Arabic, Persian (Iran), Turkey, the Indian Subcontinent, Sino Islamic, Black Africa, and the Western World. Although all of them hold the same basic principles and teachings of faith and worship, each domain has its own religious and cultural character.

In addition, furthermore, KH. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus) explains the term Islam Nusantara. According to him, if it is understood from the nature structure (na'at man'ut), which means "archipelagic Islam," it will be wrong. However, if it is placed in the structure of the designation of the place (idhafah) it will mean "Islam in the Archipelago." It should be underlined that the title of a place also means revealing the elements contained in an area. Meanwhile, in his essay on the Poetic and Cultural Dimensions of Islam Nusantara, Teuku Kemal Fasya defines it as a process of appreciation and practice of the locality of the people living in the archipelago. The success of Islam as a peaceful Nusantara religion cannot be separated from the adaptation and resilience of local knowledge, arts, and culture (Fasya, 2015). It can be concluded that the terminology of Islam Nusantara is not a new sect formed in religious life.

Islamization Process

There are several related theories from which Islam Nusantara got much influence. The first theory states that Islam originated in Gujarat, India. Supporters of this theory are C. Snouck Hurgronje, Prof. Pijnappel and also S.Q. Fatimy, their opinion is based on evidence of the tombstone of the first Sultan of the Samudra Pasai kingdom, namely Malik as-Saleh. The reliefs in the monument are Hinduistic, which have similarities with the tombstones in Gujarat. This information is reinforced by the existence of the oldest

inscription in Sumatra in 1297, five years after Marcopolo's arrival. The form of the inscription is a tombstone bearing the name of Sultan Malik as-Saleh.

The second theory reveals that Nusantara Islam is heavily influenced by Islam originating from Arabia (Mecca). Hamka was a supporter and, at the same time, who gave birth to this theory in his speech at the 8th Anniversary of PTAIN (State Islamic College) in Yogyakarta in 1958. Hamka based his views on the role of the Arab nation, followed by Persia and Gujarat. Hamka stated that Gujarat was only a place to stop; while Mecca was the center, Egypt was where Islamic teachings were taken. Hamka's analysis differs from that of Western historians or orientalisks through his observations about the problem of the Shafi'i school as a particular school in Mecca and having the most significant influence in Indonesia. In addition, Hamka rejected the opinion that Islam only entered the archipelago in the 13th century because in the 13th century, the political power of Islam was established (Dalimunthe, 2016).

Next is the Persian theory, which focuses on its review of the culture that lives in Indonesia, which has similarities with Persia, including the 10th anniversary of Muharram (Ashura) as the anniversary of the martyrdom of Hussain by the Shia group. In Minangkabau, the month of Muharram is also called the month of Hasan-Husein. Then there are similarities between Sheikh Siti Jenar and the Sufi teachings of al-Hallaj. Although Al-Hallaj had died in 310 H/922 AD, his teaching continued to develop in the form of poetry, allowing Sheikh Siti Jenar, who lived in the 16th century, to study it. The founder of Persian theory in Indonesia was P.A. Hoesein Djajadiningrat, Prof. A. Hasjmi and Prof. Aboe Bakar Atjeh.

It can be seen from these opinions that it proves that Nusantara Islam is not only influenced by a homogeneous culture, but Nusantara Islam has become rich in culture. In Java itself, Islamization has been going on since the 11th-13th centuries AD. Especially in the latter half of the Majapahit kingdom, Islamization in the ports took place. From there stood the first Islamic kingdom of Java, namely Demak, followed by Cirebon and Banten in West Java. The clerics who played a significant role in Islamization in Java were Wali Songo.

The da'wah methodology applied by Wali Songo in spreading Islam in the archipelago is to adhere to the wasathiyyah (moderate) principle. The concept of moderate, in this case, has several meanings, one of which is realistic. Realistic here does not mean opportunistic or does not mean surrendering to the circumstances that occur but is interpreted as not turning a blind eye to the existing reality while still trying to achieve the ideal state. We can see from the method used by Sunan Kalijaga, which uses wayang and Suluk as a means of spreading Islam (Syauqi, 2015).

Islamophobia and Its Implications

Islam teaches the values of peace, harmony, tolerance, and openness, which are not only aimed at fellow Muslims but also applied in everyday life, including the wider community. This means that applying Islamic values is also aimed at non-Muslim

communities. The 2001 World Trade Center (WTC) explosion in New York carried out by a radical Islamic group caused the image of Islam as a religion that spreads the values of peace to shift finally. There are negative sentiments toward Muslims as a "violent ideology," which is more dangerous than communist ideology (Khotimah, 2003).

In addition to the tragedy of the WTC explosion in New York, in Indonesia, there were also explosions, especially in Bali in 2002, carried out by radical Islamic groups. Acts of terrorism in the name of Islam ultimately impact all Muslims in the world. In substance, Islam is only one, but in expressing it is very diverse, with the emergence of acts of terrorism and understanding of radicalism affecting Muslim communities who are not included in this group and the term "Islamophobia" appears among non-Muslim communities as an understanding that hates and fears Islam. Daniel Pipes, a New York historian, called the movement of Muslims who carried out suicide bombings at the WTC and the Pentagon with the term "Islamism is fascism" (Khotimah, 2003).

Islamophobia is a combination of the words "Islam" and "phobia." Islam is a divine religion in which, in its teachings, there is a command and prohibition to associate partners other than God (Allah SWT). At the same time, the word "phobia" comes from the English "phobia," which means fear and hate. So Islamophobia implies an understanding that hates and fears the existence of Islam. This understanding is inherent in both Muslim and non-Muslim communities due to many things, including Islam seems to be an extreme religion and understands radicalism (Aziz, 2016).

Islamophobia arose based on a new phenomenon that needed a name. Anti-Islam understanding has developed significantly in the last few years, requiring new vocabulary to identify it. Islamophobia is directly related to the problem of prejudice against Muslims and those who are perceived as Muslim. Anti-Muslim bigotry is based on a claim that Islam is a lowly religion and a threat to society's values (Moordiningsih, 2004).

Radicalism is a serious and sensitive issue many countries face, especially in Indonesia. The emergence of radicalism is due to religious understanding in a powerful way. There is an assumption that someone who does not have the same experience needs to be changed with violent actions, such as the tragedy of bombings in several places of worship. This group also wants society to be ruled following the Qur'an and Islamic law, so it is not surprising that a movement emerged that aspires to build an Islamic caliphate by carrying out the themes of God's sovereignty, jihad, and Islamic revolution, and so on (Abdullah, 2016).

This understanding will impact the harmony of the Unitary State of Indonesia because Indonesia has a social structure with a complex socio-cultural system. Differences in ethnicity, customs, and religion make Indonesia a pluralistic society.

Many acts of terrorism were found in Indonesia, including the 2003 bombing in South Jakarta led by Noordin M Top at one of the JW Marriott hotels. The explosion in Surabaya in 2018 targeted three places of worship, including the Santa Maria Church, GKI Diponegoro, and the church. Central Pentecostal Surabaya, which killed 28 people, still in the same year in Surabaya, a terror attack in front of the Mapolrestabas gate was carried out by a family using a motorbike involving a small child from a suicide bomber. In the 2021

bombing at the Makassar Cathedral Church, the alleged perpetrator was part of the Jama'ah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) network (Wardhani, 2021).

Acts of terrorism will divide the social structure of society in maintaining the unity of Indonesia because there are differences in ethnicity, customs, and religions that make Indonesia a pluralistic society. Although the majority of the population is Muslim, in maintaining the values contained in Pancasila, the involvement of non-Muslim communities also has a vital role in realizing a unified Indonesia. Harmony will never be achieved if every society, especially Muslims and non-Muslims, is divided.

Islam Nusantara as a Religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*

An understanding of the formulation of Islam Nusantara is essential to map the identity of Islam in Indonesia. Islam Nusantara is intended as an understanding of Islam that struggles, dialogues, and integrates with culture. Islam Nusantara is an Islam that is friendly, open, inclusive, and able to provide solutions to significant problems of the nation and state. Seeing the face of Islam in the world, the presence of Islam Nusantara is very much needed, because its characteristic is promoting a middle way that is *alumat* (moderate), not extreme right and left, always balanced, inclusive, tolerant and able to coexist peacefully with adherents of other religions, so that they can accept democracy well (Bizawie, 2016).

According to Zainul Milal Bizawie in his book entitled *Masterpiece Islam Nusantara Sanad and the Ulama-Santri Network (1830-1945)*, he mentions one of the masterpieces of Islam Nusantara, namely the establishment of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and Pancasila. In the view of Islam Nusantara, Indonesia is the *dar Islam* (Islamic area) and Pancasila as the essence of the teachings of Islam *ahlussunnah wal jamaah*. So it can be said that defending the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and practicing Pancasila is a manifestation of the efforts of Indonesian Muslims to implement Islamic law.

It should be emphasized in this case that understanding Islam Nusantara does not mean anti-Arab culture but rather protecting Islam from Arabization by understanding it contextually. Islam Nusantara remains based on the creed of monotheism as the essence of Islamic teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad. Arabization is not the essence of Islamic teachings, and the presence of the characteristics of Islam Nusantara emphasizes the importance of harmony and contextualization of local culture as long as it does not violate the essence of Islamic teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad (Bizawie, 2016).

Since the beginning, Indonesian Islam has had its style and typology, namely, friendly and moderate Islam and is a middle-line Islam that adheres to a moderate ideological and philosophical foundation. The great current brought by NU and Muhammadiyah has become a patent label for moderate, modern, inclusive, and constructive Islamic movements (Qomar, 2015). Moderate Islam has a mission to balance two kinds of extremities, especially between fundamental and liberal thoughts, understandings, and movements. So moderate Islam maintains and develops holistic peace,

namely peace among Muslims and other people. So that moderate Islam can free people from fear of Islam or in other terms called, Islamophobia.

Thus, Islam Nusantara can be used as an alternative in building a peaceful and harmonious Islamic world civilization in any country. However, it does not have to be named and shaped like Nusantara Islam because Nusantara Islam does not recognize Islam or other cultural archipelagos.

Congclusion

Islamophobia is an understanding that hates and fears the existence of Islam. This understanding is then embedded among Muslim and non-Muslim communities due to many things, including Islam is impressed as an extreme religion and understands radicalism. The emergence of violent cases in the name of religion, such as hostage-taking, killings, and bombings, has shifted the image of Islam as a religion of peace. Negative sentiments are aimed at Muslims as a "violent ideology," which is more dangerous than communist ideology. Substantially, Islam is only one, but it is very diverse in expression, one of which is Islam Nusantara. Islam Nusantara is present as a moderate Islam to build the harmony of a nation, especially in Indonesia.

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