

# Muhammadiyah making Indonesia's Islamic moderation based on *maqāṣid shari'ah*

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## Abstract

Muhammadiyah, as an Islamic organization together with Nahdatul Ulama, are two Islamic organizations that oversee Islamic moderation in Indonesia. The role of Muhammadiyah in developing the idea of Islamic moderation has been manifested in educational institutions, social services, almsgiving, and health institutions such as Muhammadiyah hospitals. This research used qualitative methods based on manuscripts from journal articles, books, and interviews with expert narrators as material for analyzing the themes studied. This article is based on the theory of *maqāṣid shari'ah* put forward by Jasser Auda, which provides a framework for understanding Islamic law based on multidisciplinary obedience and paying attention to the main purpose of Islamic law, not to its legal consequences. The study found that Muhammadiyah, an Islamic organization, is the guardian and propagator of moderate Islam in Indonesian society. Muhammadiyah activities for all citizens have no limits to religion. However, there were considerable obstacles to spreading Islamic moderation by Muhammadiyah. These obstacles come

from internal Muslims who consider that Islamic moderation promoted by Muhammadiyah can weaken the Islamic creed of Muslims. They are less familiar with applying *maqāṣid shari'ah* in understanding and practicing Islamic law in Indonesia. They are textualists towards the Qur'an and hadith.

Muhammadiyah, bersama Nahdatul Ulama, merupakan organisasi Islam yang mengawal moderasi Islam di Indonesia. Peran Muhammadiyah dalam mengembangkan gagasan moderasi Islam telah dimanifestasikan dalam lembaga pendidikan, layanan sosial, sedekah, dan lembaga kesehatan seperti rumah sakit. Muhammadiyah tidak cenderung ke ekstrem kiri atau ekstrem kanan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yang mendasarkan pada naskah-naskah dari artikel dalam jurnal, buku, dan melakukan wawancara kepada nara sumber ahli sebagai bahan melakukan analisis atas tema yang dikaji. Artikel ini mendasarkan pada teori *maqāṣid shari'ah* yang dikemukakan oleh Jasser Auda yang memberikan kerangka bahwa dalam memahami hukum Islam berdasarkan pada pendekatan multidisiplin dan memperhatikan tujuan utama dari hukum Islam bukan pada akibat hukumnya. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Muhammadiyah, sebuah organisasi Islam, adalah penjaga dan penyebar Islam moderat di masyarakat Indonesia. Berbagai kegiatan dilakukan tanpa menutup diri hanya untuk warga Muhammadiyah dan umat Islam. Namun demikian, ditemukan adanya hambatan yang cukup besar dalam penyebaran Moderasi Islam yang dilakukan oleh Muhammadiyah. Hambatan tersebut berasal dari internal umat Islam yang menganggap bahwa moderasi Islam yang diusung oleh Muhammadiyah dapat melemahkan akidah keislaman umat Islam. Mereka merupakan kaum yang kurang menerapkan *maqāṣid shari'ah* dalam memahami dan mempraktekkan hukum Islam di Indonesia. Mereka merupakan kaum tekstualis terhadap al-qur'an dan hadist.

**Keywords:** *exclusivism; Islamic moderation; Islamic reform; maqāṣid shari'ah; Muhammadiyah*

## **Introduction**

Muhammadiyah, founded by KH Ahmad Dahlan on November 18, 1912, in Yogyakarta, is known in Indonesia as an Islamic social organization engaged in Islamic *da'wah*. The Muhammadiyah version of Islamic *da'wah* enjoins good. It forbids evil and spreads Islam to the community by inviting good deeds and preventing crimes in society in a good way too. Muhammadiyah's Islamic *da'wah* does not scare fellow human beings, let alone threaten them. Muhammadiyah's *da'wah* is carried out wisely and confirms blurry matters in society, which is the identity of Muhammadiyah's Islamic *da'wah* that moves in the community without exception. Muhammadiyah *da'wah* accommodates local culture (Qodir *et al.*, 2021).

Muhammadiyah *da'wah* is widely known for spreading Islam through the movement to eliminate superstition (not believing in an absolute God), heresy (additional worship activities and Islamic rituals, and mistic (believing in a power giver to humans other

than God). In spreading Islamic teachings, Muhammadiyah has a moderation approach, called middle Islam, not Islam in particular, that tends to stand between right and wrong. Therefore, Muhammadiyah does not recognize the terms *Wahhabi* and *Salafi*, making an exclusive group and unfaithful versions of Islamic *da'wab*. Muhammadiyah *da'wab* is the principles of authentic Islamic *da'wab* from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Nashir and Jinan, 2018).

Muhammadiyah also has a clear mission engaged in the humanitarian field without discriminating against religious background, ethnicity, gender, or social class. *Da'wab* in education, health, and compensation services needs assistance from Muhammadiyah (Ahmad, 2019). This Muhammadiyah *da'wab* is the hallmark of Muhammadiyah in social services to humanity, known as social generosity (Latief, 2012). Furthermore, Muhammadiyah Movement is a civil society movement from Islamic circles that has been moving for a long time and has been rooted (Hefner, 2000).

Various challenges faced by Muhammadiyah as a Moderate Islamic Movement in mobilizing religious moderation also come from Islamic organizations which are somewhat anti-progressive movements, such as anti-electoral democracy, anti-non-Muslim leaders, anti-women leaders, inter-religious dialogue, and separating power politics from Islam. This issue is a tough challenge for non-moderate Islamic circles, so they often carry out activities that collide with Muhammadiyah as an Islamic civil society organization (Hilmy, 2013). Thus, Muhammadiyah's position as an Islamic organization is vital, with many citizens reaching 40 million people, because Indonesia is a Muslim-majority country.

In Indonesian Islam, the idea of Islamic moderation brought by Muhammadiyah has problems coming from within the Muslim community itself because Islamic moderation is an idea that weakens the creed and faith of Muslims (Donato, 2016). Moderate Islam is considered as the idea of liberal democracy, which makes the power of Islam weaken, and the power of the Muslim Ummah cannot deal with the dominating power of those who are afraid of Indonesian Islam. Factually, in both Muhammadiyah and Indonesian Islam, the idea of moderate Islam is less widely known than political issues and religious radicalism (Wegner, 2016).

This article aims to discuss and analyze the Muhammadiyah Movement in understanding, constructing, and spreading Moderate Islam in society as an authentic Islamic school of

thought as the original character of Muhammadiyah and Indonesian Islam. This article also analyzes the moderate understanding of Muhammadiyah Islam, the challenges of moderate Islam, and the future of moderate Islam as Indonesian mainstream Islam about *maqāṣid shari'ah*. The data from this article is based on articles related to the theme of the study and interviews with Muhammadiyah elites as leaders within Muhammadiyah as reinforcement for the analysis of the articles.

## **Method**

The method used in this research was qualitative research with a case study approach. This study's data sources are secondary and primary data (Ørngreen and Levinsen, 2017). Secondary data were taken from articles related to Islamic moderation, Muhammadiyah, and the challenges of Islamic moderation and Muhammadiyah. Besides, books are taken related to Islamic law, especially *maqāṣid shari'ah* in Indonesia (Auda, 2007). At the same time, primary data were taken from predetermined informants. The informants interviewed by Haedar Nashir included: the general chairman of the Muhammadiyah central leadership, Abdul Munir Mulkhan, a former secretary of the Muhammadiyah central leadership, and Qibtiyah Alimatul, the chairman of the Aisyah Central Leadership and Development Board. They are figures who promote religious moderation in Muhammadiyah. Furthermore, Jasser Auda put forward the theory used in analyzing this research using the perspective of *maqasidu syariah*, who emphasized the need to protect human rights, minorities, and gender equality in a multidisciplinary approach (Auda, 2007, 2013).

## **Muhammadiyah making of Islamic moderation on *maqāṣid shari'ah***

Muhammadiyah is an Islamic organization based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. As stated by Haedar Nasir, moderation is a mainstreaming process in the movement against radicalism and terrorism in a country with the largest Muslim population in the world (Nashir *et al.*, 2019). Moderation in Islamic value lies in Al Baqarah 143. Therefore, it is the middle people who will be witnesses to life among many human beings. Middle people are people who, in their life activities, benefit other humans regardless of religious background, ethnicity, ethnicity, class, and gender. Moderates' activities are based on humanity for all (Latief, 2016).

As stated by Ibn Kathir, the Islamic understanding of Muhammadiyah above is associated with one of the characters of the best ummah in Surah Ali Imron 110. Haedar Nashir stated regarding Muhammadiyah Moderation:

“This verse is often associated with the Muhammadiyah verse when preaching Islamic ideas in the community in a good way and competing in virtue. Competing in virtue is a well-behaved society. The idealization of the main society is that the best society is the middle society, which balances religious and social views. There is a balance between what happens in this world and the hereafter. Balancing also means being in the middle of various attitudes and actions. Based on Surah Ali Imran verse 110, it means that theologically, Islam is a moderation religion, a middle religion. It means that when we introduce mainstream moderation, it has a solid foundation, rather than promoting other teachings of Islam.” (Nashir, 2022)

Islamic moderation should be emphasized because moderation has a foothold in Indonesian culture. Indonesian people, in general, from various ethnicities are moderate due to the tropical climate, as stated by John L. Esposito. The weather between the rainy and dry seasons is not extreme (Esposito and Voll, 2001). This influence also gives color or pattern to the character of Indonesian society. Besides, the acculturation process of the Indonesian people related to religion is running moderately, as found in the Islamic *da'wah* brought to the land of Java (Woodward, 2011). In ancient times, most of the Indonesian people were Hindus. Several centuries later, around the 13th century, it became a Muslim-majority society. The transition was peaceful and cultural. No process of cultural construction led to cultural conflict (Woodward, 2018).

Referring to the *da'wah* of Islam in Indonesia, the efforts of Islamic moderation, such as those carried out by Muhammadiyah, adjust to the Indonesian culture. The compatibility between Islam and local culture can be observed from a religious perspective, especially Islam, the majority, which can accommodate the culture that developed in society and the religions that came before Islam in the archipelago. There is also compatibility between Islam and culture. Thus, the view of Islamic moderation has a strong foundation between Islam and local culture as the culture of Indonesian society (Ali, 2011).

With *maqāṣid sharī'ah*, Islamic moderation developed is one method to become Islam not only as a “dead” and rigid religious doctrine but as a dynamic and always connected

to ongoing conditions. Therefore, bringing Islamic Shariah closer to reality requires a multidisciplinary approach. Islam is expected to be under public needs and respect for the human rights of various religions, tribes, and genders (Auda, 2007).

In Indonesia, sharia is often a formality even due to practical political encouragement between regional heads and politicians at the central level, regional officials with capital voters, and political parties with legislative members, without considering public needs (Buehler, 2008). Sharia that is applied in such a way makes the position of religious, ethnic, and gender minorities, especially women, marginalized (Buehler and Muhtada, 2016). This kind of thing is not following Islamic law's main purpose, as Jasser Auda stated.

Besides culturally, moderation has a strong footing, politically and ideologically, and has a foundation in Pancasila. Pancasila, as the basis of the state, has been clear that it results from a national agreement which is the meeting point of many religious sects, ideologies, and views (Ichwan, 2012). Pancasila, from the first to the last, is a clear picture of the moderation and implementation of religious values, especially Islam (Latif, 2018). Therefore, the state can construct religious moderation with a strong foundation on Pancasila. Islamic moderation does not make religious understanding or doctrine contrary to the state basis of Pancasila.

Paying attention to what Muhammadiyah is doing in carrying out Islamic *da'wah* calls for virtue and preventing evil with good, non-discriminatory, and discriminatory methods in serving, as a simple form of developing moderate views and behavior in religion. However, Muhammadiyah's religious understanding and religious behavior are often considered by a small number of Muslims as non-militant religious behavior. Muhammadiyah is hindered from within, not only from outside Muhammadiyah (Asyari, 2007; Hilmy, 2013).

### **The future of Islamic moderation in Muhammadiyah and Islamic law reform**

Muhammadiyah and NU, as the largest religious organizations in Indonesia, have an important role in building Islamic moderation as a preventive effort to prevent radicalism from terrorism in Indonesia. However, many citizens of these two organizations are vulnerable to fragmentation because other groups often target them. Radical terrorist groups can undermine the large population of these two organizations concerning worship

practices, such as *tarāwih* and *qunūt* duas. All of this can be avoided at the elite level, but we are still discussing TBC-related matters (superstition, inappropriate and mystical) at the grassroots level (Burhani, 2018; Sila, 2020). Therefore, both Muhammadiyah and NU need a wide and open discussion space to discuss the issues of superstition, heresy, and superstition so that they do not become obstacles in the future when developing Islamic moderation.

As an Islamic organization known as a reforming Islamic organization, because it provides a spirit of renewal, Muhammadiyah reinterprets various Islamic doctrines that develop in society (Pisani and Buehler, 2017). The interpreted Islamic doctrine is related to creed and worship and to sharia, in which internal laws are applied. Muhammadiyah does not base on any one school of Islam, such as the Maliki (Imam Malik), Shafii, Hanafi, and Hanbali schools, but emphasizes the legal basis taken from the basis of the Qur'an and *hadith*, then *tarjih* and gives *qiyas* to the Islamic law (Buehler, 2017).

In this aspect, Muhammadiyah seems to have gained a place as a modern Islamic organization that does not belong to the madhhab but restores the legal foundations of the Qur'an and *hadith* with varied approaches (Buehler, 2013). Therefore, Muhammadiyah, at the beginning of the renewal movement, was challenged by most Indonesian Muslim communities who had long understood that Islamic law was guided by the imam of the madhhab (Buehler, 2009). In this context, it seems that Muhammadiyah can be categorized as applying Jasser Auda's *maqāṣid sharī'ah* principles with a multidisciplinary approach (Auda, 2007).

When Muhammadiyah was actively mobilizing the idea of Islamic moderation, it turned out to be very clearly faced with the phenomenon of radicalism and terrorism that was spreading in the world, including in Indonesia. Terrorist radicalism is not a monopoly of one religion, but exists in all religions, exists in all groups, and even potentially in every individual human being so that it becomes a global threat that needs public attention (Snider, 2008; Tichý, 2019; Kiffi *et al.*, 2020).

This article focuses on Islamic moderation to counteract or reduce radical terrorism as a challenge to the ideas and Islamic moderation movement within Muhammadiyah, which has a motivation or background that is wanting to seize power and replace state ideology and the state system in the name of religion.

“Radical terrorism in the name of religion is slander for Islam. Therefore, radical terrorism in the name of Islam is slander to Islam because its principles and actions are contrary to Islam which is *rahmatan lil ‘alamin*. Thus, religious moderation is very appropriate, especially since Islamic moderation should become mainstream in religion because Islam itself is moderate. As the holy book indicates, God has instructed Muslims to become moderate. Therefore, God does not command Muslims to incline to the right or left” (Mulkhan, 2022).

In such a context, Muhammadiyah and Indonesian Muslims must make Pancasila a unifying, ideological, and moderating nation. With various ethnicities, races, religions, and groups, Indonesia can unite into a great country with Pancasila. The values of Pancasila foster the spirit of nationalism as a unifier of the nation. Many studies found no conflict between Islam and nationalism, even though Islam strongly supports the idea of nationalism, love for the homeland, and maintaining national unity, not dividing fellow citizens (Woodward, 2017; Bourchier, 2019; Kusmana, 2019).

Giving attention to what Muhammadiyah is doing by developing the idea of moderate Islam or moderation Islam makes a big contribution to the nation at a time when the phenomenon of radicalism and terrorism have become inseparable part. The era of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono from 2004-2014 was an era of rapid radical-extreme groups (Vaughn, 2011; Nugraha, 2012). Therefore, Muhammadiyah has contributed by ensuring that the formulation of Pancasila does not conflict with Islam. It contains faith in the first precept, humanity in the second precept, unity in the third precept, deliberation, and cooperation in the fourth precept, and justice in the fifth precept as the ultimate goal of the nation and state (Hakim, Efendi and Mahadika, 2020).

In encouraging Islamic moderation, the Muhammadiyah-Aisyiyah family has the same spirit of principles as Muhammadiyah, called *Ummatan Wasatha* or Islam Wasathiyah, which is not too right or too left; not extreme but not weak. Therefore, the moderate position seeks to reduce the occurrence of intolerance of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism. In addition, the Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah families are constantly on the move. The Muhammadiyah family continues to change the history of humanity, which is closely related to race, by getting to Khoirul Ummah to realize the best people (Nashir *et al.*, 2019).

Aisyiyah’s strategic agenda for the second century was related to the mainstreaming of



Islamic moderation to prevent the development of radicalism and extremism. Aisyiyah had aspirations for the family. Firstly, the family in Muhammadiyah in Aisyiah was strengthened by fostering the Sakinah family. Coaching is a way of making a spiritual base, apart from being a material base, so that the Aisyiyah and Muhammadiyah families become strong. The Head of the Aisyiyah Research and Development Institute, Alimatul Qibtiyah, said:

“If we are asked to make a leadership family module, the Sakinah family, a marriage guidance module, and for a child development module, we make it not only for those who are married, for students who are almost entering the marriage stage, we also do modules for students. Module for families of toddlers who are still married for five years to maintain marriages already old enough for more than ten years. Then we had a progressive female Madrasa in 2018-2019. Therefore, Aisyiyah educates Aisyiyah administrators and lecturers within Muhammadiyah on having strong prospects in Indonesianness. LPPA also responds to the latest issues, which previously had not been responded to by Aisyah in the period under 2018”(Qibtiyah, 2022).

Related to the strategic agenda carried out by Aisyiyah with Muhammadiyah in developing *da'wah* to prevent radicalism and extremism is that Islamic moderation can develop through social science and religious approaches (Abdullah, 2017). Another strategic agenda of Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah is to re-actualize the understanding of Islam so far to follow the changing social context of society. It is a national role regarding religious moderation and Islamic modernism, as well as the development of scientific movements.

Moderation of Islam in Muhammadiyah is also related to the role of universities and students. Muhammadiyah College plays a role as an academic in mainstreaming Islamic moderation by providing stories and humanitarian actions from the prophets, especially Muhammad SAW. At the same time, Abdul Munir Mulkhan, a member of the Higher Education Council of Muhammadiyah Central Executive, said:

“Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah can carry out humanitarian actions based on the PKU (Public Affliction) principle by providing free food to pedicab drivers, carry-on workers, and job-seeking agents as well as home-based employment agents; For example, home ironers, babysitters, lawn cleaners for those who don't have jobs, or they can work only through non-formal means, then with the spirit of the theology of humanitarian jihad, the Faculty of Religion at each Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah College can become an agent with teams from all over the world faculties according to the needs of work and employment in the city and the village” (Mulkhan, 2022).

Therefore, the Islamic moderation movement within Muhammadiyah can be carried out by closing the space for radicalism, extremism, and terrorism. One method that can be done is by practicing the values of Pancasila and preserving the noble culture of the Indonesian nation by placing *maqāṣid shari'ah* in public good as the realization of the five precepts of Pancasila as a reference for the socio-political actions of the nation's citizens. Bridging the culture of strengthening the values of cooperation read social generosity (philanthropy), the function of diversity in the nation's social order by implementing wisdom in daily rituals, eating together at feasts, and traditional values in each region (Kersten, 2015; Makhasin, 2017; Nashir et al., 2019).

### **Challenges of Islamic moderation and reform Islamic law**

After describing what Muhammadiyah understands about Islamic moderation and what Muhammadiyah has done, this section will present the real challenges faced by Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Muslims in general regarding the spread of Islamic moderation in Indonesia, which will certainly be related to the problems of radicalism-extremism and terrorism that are developing in Indonesia. *First*, radicalism, extremism, and terrorism are universally or globally understood. No religion, racial group, or nation is identical to a radical and terrorist group (Collins, 2007; Hadiz, 2010).

*Second*, stemming radicalism-extremism by strengthening Islamic moderates can be quite difficult because of an influence on the methods used concerning stemming radicalism, which is to continue to fight radicals radically. Some countries, such as Singapore, have changed their approach. As in the Khadijah mosque in Singapore, there is a central place for Islamic moderation, thereby changing how intellectuals and policymakers view Islamic moderatism and radicalism in all religions (Ramakrishna, 2019).

*Third*, there is a need for a reorientation among Muslims, as the majority in Indonesia, in understanding religion. What needs to be done is to provide an understanding of Islam that can lead to the behavior of every person, individual, or certain group, making violence an option in the struggle associated with jihad (Schulze and Hwang, 2019). We do not apply *jihad*, which most of society misunderstands, so it seems that jihad is violence. What needs to be understood is that jihad, in general, is not just war. Moreover, *jihad* is similar to war. It should be understood by referring to various studies that there were aspects of the war at

the time of the Prophet and the Companions as a way to protect themselves in *jihad*. What needs to be understood in the Islamic community and the general public is that the first paradigm of *jihad*, according to the Prophet, is not war but building civilization.

*Fourth*, among the Muslims, deradicalism was born from a fairly strong neomodernism. There is a strong current coming from a group that is often referred to as a liberal current. Therefore, groups stigmatized as radicals are increasingly unable to accept the things put forward by neo-modernists who tend to be said to be liberal. Modernists say it is a deconstruction of certain Islamic teachings, so they are considered to obscure Islamic teachings that are already basic or have a confirmed legal basis. With such a view, the impact on the development of moderate occurs face-to-face between groups that are said to be radical versus liberal, even though basically because of differences in views on *jihad* (Bangstad and Linge, 2015).

To Islamic law reform, especially *maqāṣid shari'ah*, the radicalism movement that developed in Indonesia became one of the obstacles to the contextualization and reform of Islamic law based on the fundamental goals of Islamic law. Islamic legal reforms that lead to respect and respect for ethnic diversity, human rights violations, and the rights of religious minorities are of great importance in *maqāṣid shari'ah* (Maarif, 2018). Moreover, Islamic law, in the sense of being applied to local regulations (Perda Shari'a), often places ethnic and religious minorities in a discriminatory place (George-Betz, 2008). Therefore, Islamic law reform that pays attention to *maqāṣid shari'ah* is the thought of the initiators of Islamic law reform in Indonesia. *Maqāṣid shari'ah* can be said to be a breakthrough in applying Islamic law principles in the modern era under Islamic thought and democracy (SADRI, 2000).

## **Conclusion**

Concerning strengthening moderation in religion together in Muhammadiyah, in strengthening religious moderation, strategies can also be carried out in two ways, namely digital/air and land/territorial. Digital strategy can be done by building discourse and giving positive messages on social media and new media currently in communication. Moderate discourse must be disseminated to cultivate a moderate Islamic culture. Meanwhile, it is

also important to do this at the ground level or face-to-face and conventional because of the control over mosques, schools, recitations, religious pulpits, and lectures on campus, which later became one of the bases for spreading radicalism, extremism, and terrorism.

Regarding Islamic law reform in the *maqāṣid shari'ah* principle, Muhammadiyah in developing Islamic moderation can be said to have received serious challenges from the formalists of sharia, conservatives, and textualists, thus placing Islamic law closer to textualist issues as contained in the holy book and the hadith of the prophet, with little consideration to the revelation of the verses and the hadith, so that the main purpose of the sharia is often ignored. This problem is the strongest obstacle for the moderates of Muhammadiyah and NU in Indonesia when they want to preach and practice moderate Islamic principles that align with the principles of *maqāṣid shari'ah*.

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