RELIGIOUS MODERATION
(Epistemological Perspective)

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Abstract: This article examines religious moderation from an epistemological perspective. One thing that needs to be studied in religious moderation is to properly recognize the doctrine of religious beliefs, sects or specific religious groups to formulate the system of communication and cooperation. Islam has a solid foundation in embodying religious moderation both from the Quran, hadith, the experience of the Prophet Muhammad, and the system of government that existed in history. Religious moderation is a demand that must be embodied in a safe and harmonious community, nation, and state among individuals and social groups. Systematic and planned steps are needed to embody religious tolerance by effectively using the available facilities. The operational pattern of religious moderation has alternative offers with habitus and arena patterns, supported by thorough research. The arena was used to identify the approach method.

Keywords: Religious moderation; Epistemological

I. Background

Religious moderation needs to be studied from several perspectives so that the conceptualization of religious moderation becomes more solid as a scientific construction. The epistemological perspective reinforces religious moderation as a scientific phenomenon so that its practical application is accepted as truth; it is a theory of knowledge. Epistemologists study the nature, origin, scope of knowledge, epistemic justification, the rationality of belief, and various related issues.[1]

Religious moderation is part of religious studies and its implementation in social reality, in the form of social relations, social interaction, and social communication towards social harmony in the life of nation and state. The reality of Indonesian society is that they have various religions, ethnicities, races, cultures, and languages that require a social order in the form of socio-religious norms that mutually agree to be a reference in cooperation, interaction and broader social interaction.

Nowadays, various phenomena have emerged and identified as exclusivism, extremism, intolerance, radicalism, and terrorism that make life unsafe and uncomfortable, both national and international. Schwedler explains that:

> *"...that exclusion increases radicalism, and inclusion increases moderation – are frequently conflated. Inclusion and exclusion are often posited as a continuum, with*

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[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemology

moderation greatest in democratic, pluralist, and politically inclusive societies, and radicalism greatest in exclusive, repressive, and authoritarian societies.”[2]

Inclusive correlates with moderation, democracy, and pluralism. In contrast, exclusive correlates with extreme, repressive and authoritarian even though it can be a "continuum" if specific variants change, but the relationship could be accountable.

Religious life is supposed to provide comfort in harmonious social relations, but exclusivity creates a rift in relations and provokes social conflict. The rift in the social relations of certain religious groups must be overcome immediately to embody the unity and stability in the life of nation and state. To formulate a communication and cooperation system, one thing that needs to be studied in religious moderation is to properly recognize the doctrine of religious beliefs, sects, or specific religious groups.

II. Epistemological Perspective

The epistemology of religious moderation can be inductive or deductive. The deductive analysis is a part of Islamic studies; it is based on general or absolute truths such as general laws and theories from the holy book. The facts in socio-historical life are described in detail.

Scientific epistemology is integrated and does not ignore or lose substance (ontology). Epistemology focuses on the structure and flow of thought in the study; the beginning and the end. Therefore, the construction of the epistemology of religious moderation can be summarized as follows: (1) Originates from the Quran, (2) the Hadith of the Prophet, (3) the experience of the Prophet Muhammad in the implementation of religious moderation, (4) historical facts of the reality of religious moderation after the Prophet period, and (5) Alternative of the Epistemology implementation of modern religious moderation.

a. The Quran Bases

Some verses of the Quran guide the necessity of religious moderation aimed at neutralizing and mediating the differences and disputes in society. In Surah Hud 118-119 it is explained:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ ٱلنَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةًۖ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ (١١٨) إِلَّا مَن رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ

وَلِذَٰلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْۗ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ ٱلْجِنَّةِ وَٱلنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

"If your Lord had pleased, He would have made all people a single community, but they continue to have their differences. (118) Excepting the ones on whom your Lord has mercy, He created them for that (end), and perfected has been the Word of your Lord. "Indeed I will fill Hell with jinn and mankind all together." (119)

In this verse, Allah supposes that if He wills, thus humans can be united as one community; become one personality, one character, one orientation and purpose and one

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[2] Jillian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2006, p. 3.

religion, but in reality, humans have different personalities and characters, so the conflict occurs. The difference in personalities and character is sunnatullah which aims to create harmony. So this verse aims to say that sunnatullah in humans that He created with various characters can be immediately changed as He wants. Still, He does not do it because the various characters can lead to harmony and be a touchstone. The way humans' personalities and characters accommodate and socialize in their social communities creates harmony in human life and avoids them for the clash, disunity, and conflicts? Then the next verse says __illa man rahima rabbuka__ (excepting the ones on whom your Lord has mercy). This verse means that only by the grace of God people with different personalities and characters can adapt to one another and adopt a moderate and tolerant attitude in their social environment.

One verse in al-Anbiyaa 92 explains:

$$إِنَّ هَٰذِهِۦٓ أُمَّتُكُمۡ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً وَأَنَا۠ رَبُّكُمۡ فَٱعۡبُدُونِ)$$

"Indeed this nation of yours is one nation, and I am your Lord, so worship Me."

This verse clearly explains that all humans are one ummah, not a supposition, but emphasizes that the people of the Prophet Muhammad are one ummah because it concerns the worship command. Humans are one ummah in worshiping; they have one God, one Prophet, one book, one Qibla, one religious feeling, one sharia and one rule. So this verse is not a general sociological context but describes the unity of the people in worship.

b. Hadith Bases

Some of the Prophet's hadiths become the basis for religious moderation, namely the hadith in the form of a Latin transcript as follows:

"An ibnu Abbas qala, qila lirrasuli llahi SAW ayyul adyan ahabbu ilallahi, qala: al-hanafiyatus samha."

Ibn Abbas stated: I said to the Prophet Muhammad: What religion does Allah like more? The Prophet said: al-hanafiyatus samha (forthright and tolerant religion).

Hanafiyatus samha is also often interpreted as an attitude of openness, an open-minded attitude in accepting differences. Another hadith that explains not complicating matters in making a decision:

Anna rasulallahi SAW qala: rahimallahu samhan idza baa'a, samhan idza isytara wa samhan idza qadha.

The Prophet Muhammad stated: Allah loves those who are easy to sell, buy and decide matters.

Some hadiths explain the need to have good relation between humans, to become friends and cooperate even though they differ in religion, culture, ethnicity, and race. All of them need to be studied in the implementation of religious moderation.

c. The Practice of the Prophet Muhammad in Religious Moderation

The Prophet's preaching in Mecca was carried out secretly by the people until the revelation of Surah al-Hijr 94, which ordered them to preach openly. The reaction of the polytheists of Mecca was getting louder to the point of persecution that they planned to kill the families of the people who converted to Islam, so the Prophet Muhammad decided to emigrate 60 friends to Habsyi, and about 80 people migrated to Yemen. Five years

later, the Prophet decided to emigrate to Yathrib (Medina) with the Muslims in the 12th year of his Prophethood. In Medina, the Muslims interacted with the Jews with three Jewish tribes: the Banu Nadhir, Banu Qainuqa, and Banu Quraidzah.

The attitude of the Jews in Medina, who were not entirely familiar with the Prophet, is in contrast with the natives of Medina who welcomed the arrival of the Prophet and Muslims, so the Prophet immediately decided to compose a text of a social cooperation agreement with the Jews and other tribes around Medina. The agreement was compiled systematically and known as the Medina Charter. The Medina Charter consists of 47 clauses; the core can be summed up in five points, namely:

1. Equality of the people in Medina, regardless of religious or racial background.
2. Religious freedom for the people in Medina.
3. Peace; where every citizen is obliged to create national security and against the despotic who do damage.
4. Tolerance and pluralism to strengthen the unity and union of Medina society.
5. Every resident pays the *diat* and frees the captives.[3]

The five core points of the Medina Charter illustrate how the Prophet significantly increased the tolerance and unity of humankind in various religions and cultures. However, the Medina Charter was violated by the Jews because of the provocation from Meccan polytheists. A Jew, Banu Nadhir, made a plan to kill the Prophet, so the Muslims expelled Banu Nadhir from Medina. They moved to Khaibar, where the Khaibar war took place in the future because the aggressiveness of the Jews gave resistance to the Muslims. The war of Khaibar was won by the Muslims so that the Jews were completely paralyzed.

d. Historical Facts of Muslims

In its historical development after the Prophet's death, the reign of the Umaya and Abbasids emerged. The two Islamic government systems also adhere to an open system in the management of the state. During the reign of the two dynasties, they used non-Muslims as government laborers to manage government administration. The Islamic world is expanding; interaction with other nations is getting more intense, requiring transparency in the government system.

In the Abbasid reign, Yahya Al-Dimaski was a Christian figure who was assigned to translate Greek books into Arabic. Hunain bin Ishaq, a Jewish figure who was entrusted with the task of Caliph Al-Makmum (813-833 AD), managed an educational institution known as Baitul Hikmah. The study areas of this institution are Medicine, Philosophy, Fields of Physics and Chemistry, Astronomy and Mathematics, Historiography/history, Islamic law and ethics, Etc. At this time, many Muslim philosophers and scientists were born there.[4]

The emergence of the Ottoman dynasty (13th century-early 20th century) in its government system was also very concerned with tolerance and religious freedom for citizens consisting of various religions. The government manages religious harmony with each religion making internal norms of each religion and then getting approval from the Sultan. Sometimes conflicts occur in a particular community, but it does not relate to

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[3] https://kumparan.com/berita-update/mengenal-5-isi-piagam-madinah-kesepakatan-rasulullah-saw-dengan-kaum-yahudi-1x3dPk3xbmM/4.

[4] See Romdoni, *Eksistensi Baitul Hikmah Sebagai Lembaga Kajian Keilmuan Pada Masa Pemerintahan Khalifah Al Makmun,* Makalah, p. 9-13.

religious conflicts; the government handles them according to the rule of law.[5] Therefore Norman Daniel said: "… the notion of tolerance in Christendom was borrowed from Muslim practice."[6] [… the view of tolerance among Christians is taken from the practice of Muslims]. The slogan of tolerance in the Islamic world became popular in Europe when there was a religious war between Protestants and Catholics from 1524 to 1648. The climax was in 1618-1648) known as the "30 years war". During the war, European leaders praised the Ottoman Turks so that those involved in the war should learn from Turkey.[7]

e.   Implementation Paradigm of Religious Moderation, Present Day's Alternative

A French philosopher named Pierre Bourdieu proposed a sociological paradigm for implementing religious moderation (1930-2002). Bourdieu explained a paradigm of social change known as habitus and field (arena). Habitus is taken from the word habit. Habitual are easy to do as a habit. In French, it is called habitus. Field means arena. In Bourdieu's theory, the field is social, the arena of social life. Habitus is attached to the person (personal) as capital to enter the arena, whether habitus is influenced or mutual.

What is habitus according to Bourdieu? It can be seen in the following explanation:

"With habitus, Bourdieu tried to access internalized behaviors, perceptions, and beliefs that individuals carry with them and which, in part, are translated into the practices they transfer to and from the social spaces in which they interact. Habitus is thus more than accumulated experience; it is a complex social process in which individual and collective ever-structuring dispositions develop in practice to justify individuals' perspectives, values, actions and social positions. Just as importantly, habitus can be seen as much as an agent of continuity and tradition as it can be regarded as a force of change."[8]

Thus, habitus is a process of "inwardness" of social, cultural, religious and knowledge values accumulated in inner institutions. Habitus is born from the habituation of individuals in their interactions with the world and other humans. Apart from the physical and biological world, the human world is also shared. Individual encounters with physical, biological, and social elements produce traces of influence within themselves that interact and collide with their consciousness as a subject. Various 'equipment' is used in that habituation, mastered skillfully and internalized into the individual.[9] Habitus can also be the "ethos" character in humans. Ethos is values that are inherent in humans and the core part of themselves and become the booster force for spontaneous action. If ethics is still an opinion, the result of thought, ethos becomes the most profound substance of ethics to guide human behavior.

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[5] See Maxime Rodinson, "The Western Image and Western Studies of Islam", in Joseph Schatch and C.E Bosworth, *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1974, p. 29-30.

[6] Norman Daniel, *Islam Europe and Empire*. Edinburgh: The University Press, 1974, p. 11.
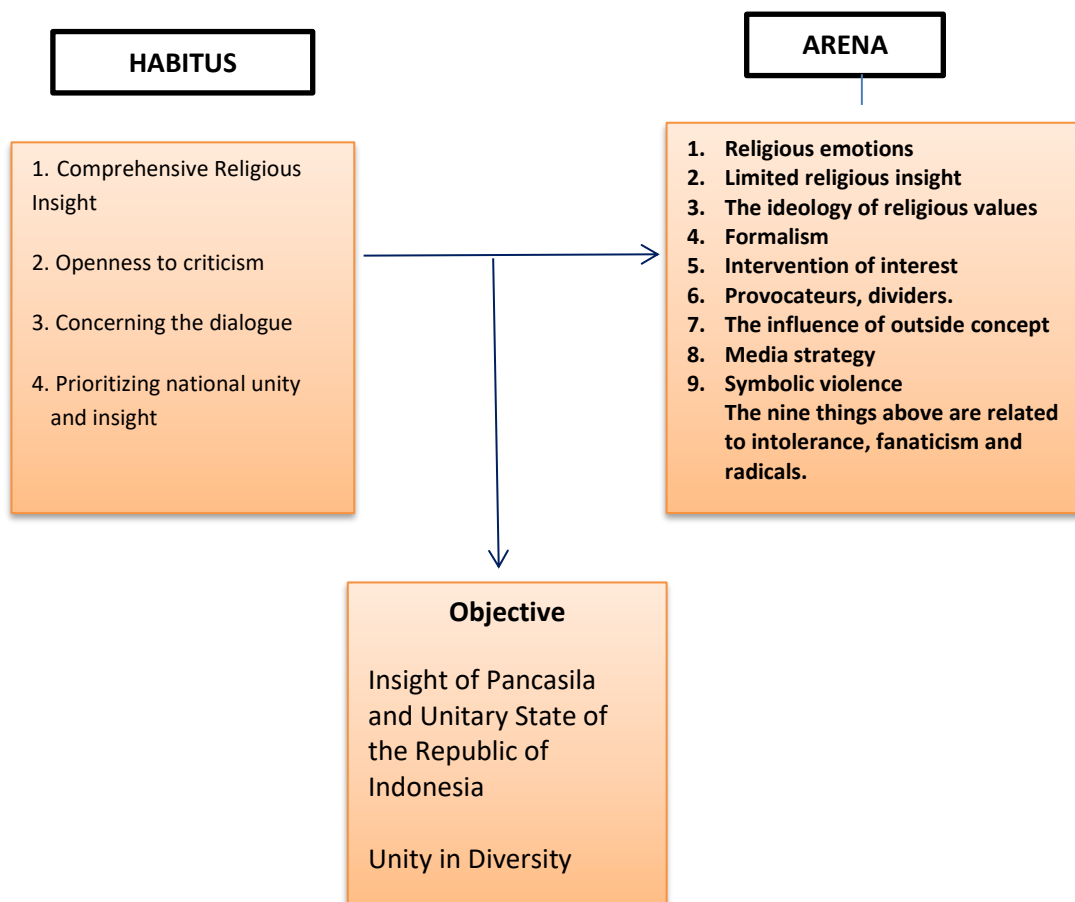
[7] https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perang_agama_Eropa#Perang_Tiga_Puluh_Tahun

[8] Cristina Costa (ed.), *Bourdieu, Habitus and Social Research The Art of Application*, in Cristina Costa and Mark Murphy, "Bourdieu and the Application of Habitus across the Social Sciences". New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 3-4.

[9] https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Bourdieu

Religious internalize the values that contain a habitus as an agent of social change moderation if internalized deeply. Religious moderation as an element of habitus is conceptualized solidly with rational-factual and applicable items.

The second part of the Bourdieu paradigm is the arena (field) as a social scene, the world of social interaction with its almost endless complexity. Habitus entering the arena will be met with the feeling of pleasant, troublesome, surprised, and various mental phenomena, feelings and thoughts that can be experienced. Habitus can change in certain parts; it can affect various things in the arena or the interaction between the two. After being conceptualized and well socialized, religious moderation becomes as part of the habitus. The arena is the object of work of religious moderation; the target is the social reality on the right box and habitus on the left box.

HABITUS		ARENA
1. Comprehensive Religious Insight 2. Openness to criticism 3. Concerning the dialogue 4. Prioritizing national unity and insight	→	1. Religious emotions 2. Limited religious insight 3. The ideology of religious values 4. Formalism 5. Intervention of interest 6. Provocateurs, dividers. 7. The influence of outside concept 8. Media strategy 9. Symbolic violence The nine things above are related to intolerance, fanaticism and radicals.

Objective

Insight of Pancasila and Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia

Unity in Diversity

III. Conclusion

a. Islam has a solid foundation in embodying religious moderation both from the Quran, hadith, the experience of the Prophet Muhammad, and the system of government that existed in history.

b. Religious moderation is a demand that must be embodied in a safe and harmonious community, nation and state among individuals and social groups.

c. Systematic and planned steps are needed to embody religious tolerance by effectively using the available facilities.

d. The operational pattern of religious moderation has alternative offers with habitus and arena patterns, supported by thorough research. The arena was used to identify the approach method.

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