

UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS AT *MADRASAH ALIYAH* AND HIGH SCHOOLS IN MAJENE REGENCY

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Abstract

Islamic religious groups, which carry radical ideologies, are not only targeting ordinary people. They also reach religious and public schools through the doctrine of Islamic Religious Education teachers. This study described the understanding and attitudes of PAI teachers in Majene regarding the diversity of religions, ethnicities, and minority groups; PAI teachers' knowledge of the relationship between Islam and the state; and the understanding of PAI teachers on defining the relationship between religion and local traditions. Using qualitative research, data collection was carried out through interviews, observations, and literature studies. Then, it was analyzed through descriptive qualitative. Informants included PAI teachers in Majene, Principal of high schools, Principal of MAN Majene, Heads of the Ministry of Religion in Majene, students, and community leaders. The findings of this study: First, PAI teachers in Majene consider religious and ethnic diversity as sunnatullah, so no need to argue. In contrast, PAI teachers show a lack of respect towards minority Islamic religious groups, especially those often disrupt Indonesian harmony. Second, PAI teachers in Majene consider that the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia has reached the ideal point, and Pancasila has reflected the diversity of life in Indonesia. Therefore, PAI teachers disagree with religious groups who want to establish an Islamic state (khalifah). Third, the local religious traditions in Majene community are traces of the local scholars' legacy and Islam propagators in Mandar, which are not contradicting Islamic law. The religious understanding of PAI teachers in Majene is generally moderate.

Keywords: *islamic religious education teachers, religious moderation, radicalism, local traditions*

INTRODUCTION

In mid-November 2011, an invitation circulated to several schools in Majene Regency, West Sulawesi. It asked the schools to send two to three *Pendidikan Agama Islam* (PAI) or Islamic Religious Education teachers at public/private high schools and Madrasah Aliyah to attend activities at one of the hotels in this regency. The sender also invited Islamic organizations, Islamic study groups, and religious leaders. The invitation did not explain the purposes and objectives. By "keeping the agenda secret," the sender aimed to provoke the curiosity of the invited people. This trick worked, and many people attended, including PAI teachers, who were the primary targets. However, some PAI teachers refused to participate after knowing the names of the invitees listed on the invitation paper. During

this first meeting, the keynote speaker was someone from East Kalimantan.

The first meeting was not successful. One of the PAI teachers at SMAN Majene frankly expressed his distaste for the local speaker in the forum. The dislike towards the speaker, a well-known doctor in this regency, was when the speaker explicitly mentions a bad case of a female student at a public high school, while the issue was still conjectured. Another informant, a PAI teacher, stated that almost all participants admitted to being disappointed and showed negative responses; Moreover, they realized the purpose and objectives of the event was to jointly engage the invitees to establish a caliphate state in Indonesia. The sender was an activist and sympathizer of the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) group in Majene, while the keynote speaker was one of the HTI central administrators specially brought to Majene.

Before the government "freezes" HTI based on Perppu No. 12 of 2017 concerning Social Organizations, HTI had long targeted and included Majene to increase the mass support base because the West Sulawesi province, Majene, is an "education area". This can be seen by the large campuses, including public and state/private religious campuses. In recruiting new members, apart from looking at the general public, HTI also targets universities' students. In many articles, including research by the Makassar Religious Research and Development Agency in several state Islamic and public campuses in Eastern Indonesia in 2015, the HTI wing organization, *Gema Pembebasan*, has attended and recruited many members. They were also very diligent in conducting cadres (BLAM, 2015).

Such invitation has a special purpose. Abu Rokhmad, in his writings, *Radikalisme Islam dan Upaya Deradikalisasi Paham Radikalisasi* (2012), stated that PAI teachers were involved in the agenda wrapped in radicalism because of their strategic position, living in schools and communities, and struggling with students' religious problems (Rokhmad, 2012). PAI's teaching and learning materials containing religious doctrines and dogmas make PAI teachers a "soft" target for religious groups who want to instill their ideology (Rokhmad, 2012). Suppose PAI teachers are successfully recruited, they will transmit their ideology to the students because the task of the teacher is not only to transfer knowledge to students, but also to transfer values (Sardiman, 1996).

Because of the strategic and central teacher's role in influencing and changing students' religious mindsets and thinking patterns, many research institutions have also been compelled to research radical groups targeting teachers. In 2015, the Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace, launched their survey findings, *Persepsi Siswa SMU Negeri di Jakarta & Bandung Terhadap Toleransi di Siswa SMU Negeri di Jakarta dan Bandung*, which a population of 171 high schools and a sample of 114 schools (76 in Jakarta and 38 in Bandung). The findings seem surprising. In the "Theological Dimension", Setara found that 106 (43.8%) or most respondents agreed that Shia and Ahmadiyah were restricted in Indonesia. On other questions, such as the approval of the basic state of Pancasila being replaced with a

certain religious basis, 58 respondents (8.5%) agreed. It shows that 1 of 14 students agreed with the ISIS movement (Institute, 2015).

Another Setara Institute research, *Lampu Kuning Meningkatnya Radikalisme di Sekolah-Sekolah Indonesia*, found teachers, curriculum, and alumni meetings through religious mentoring (*halaqah*) as patterns of inculcating intolerance ideas among high school students. In *halaqah*, alumni often guide their juniors in religious matters, and since this time, activities to spread certain ideologies have been initiated (Institute, n.d.). The findings of PPIM UIN Jakarta and Convey Indonesia, *Pelita yang Meredup: Potret Keberagamaan Guru di Indonesia*, 2018, regarding the teachers' religious understanding in Indonesia, are also surprising (PPIM UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2018). It showed that 53.06% of Indonesian teachers implicitly are intolerant, while 10.1% are very intolerant. Meanwhile, the teachers with explicit intolerant and very intolerant opinions are around 50.87% and 6.03%, respectively.

In this case, around 56% of the teachers explicitly disagreed with establishing non-Muslim schools in their surroundings. Such teachers had radical religious views represented by 40.14% have an extreme opinion, 5.95% have a very radical idea. Teachers' explicit radical ideas are shown by 33% "agreeing to encourage others to fight for establishing an Islamic state". While 29% of teachers agreed to jihad abroad, such as Syria, Iraq, and the Philippines, to build an Islamic state.

Based on such surprising and thrilling research findings, in 2019, the Indonesian government tried to suppress and counteract radicalism through the Ministry of Religion by looking for the "best way" to find a "middle way", which he called Religious Moderation. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, The Minister of Religion, collaborated with various researchers, academics, and activists, then compiled and published a book on Religious Moderation. Lukman even designated 2019 as the "Ministry of Religion's Year of Religious Moderation". At the same time, the United Nations also defined 2019 as The International Year of Moderation. In this regard, Lukman emphasized that moderate religion has become a characteristic of religious people in Indonesia and is also

considered appropriate for Indonesian culture. Moderate religion is a religious model that the predecessor has long practiced and is still needed today (Islam, 2019).

In Majene, Islamic groups with puritan views or who want to purify Islam have existed since 2015. One of them is certain groups prohibiting local religious traditions, which is considered heretical. Majene people are thick with local traditions. In addition to life cycle ceremonies, the Majene community still performs other rituals, such as riding a new house, buying a new vehicle, and seeking blessings to find sustenance.

PAI teachers have not yet joined one of these groups. The understanding of Religious Moderation among PAI teachers is still important to explore because it concerns the future of the young generation in Indonesia. This study described: (1) the understanding and attitudes of PAI teachers in Majene considering the diversity of religions, ethnicities, and minority groups; (2) PAI teachers' understanding of the relationship between religion and the state; and (3) PAI teachers' understanding of the relationship between religion and tradition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious Moderation

The term Religious Moderation began to be discussed by various circles after the Minister of Religion, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, published a book related to Religious Moderation in 2019. Lukman declared 2019 as the year of Religious Moderation.

Religious moderation comes from the word moderate, which in Arabic means *al-wasathiyah*, which has the equivalent meaning of *tawassuth* (middle), *i'tidal* (fair), and *tawazun* (balanced) (Shihab, 2019). In "*Moderasi Beragama*" book published by the Research and Development Agency of the Indonesian Ministry of Religion in 2019, Religious Moderation is defined as a perspective, attitude, behavior, and taking a position in the middle, being fair, and not being extreme in religion. Thus, the basic principle of Religious Moderation is always to maintain a balance between two things, namely reason and revelation, between physical and spiritual, rights and obligations, individual interests and the common good,

ideal and reality, and the balance of the past and the future (Kemenag, 2019a). The four indicators of Religious Moderation are strengthening nationality, tolerance between religious believers, anti-violence, and being friendly to localities (Kemenag, 2019a).

According to "*Tanya Jawab Moderasi Beragama*" book, published by the Research and Development Agency and Training of the Ministry of Religion (2019), Religious Moderation aims to invite goodness and abstain from evil. In religious traditions and practices, Religious Moderation is intended to strengthen the relationship between religion and the traditions and culture of the local community (Kemenag, 2019b).

Masdar Hilmy's article, "*Cetak Biru Moderasi Beragama: Urgensi Pandangan Normatif dan Aplikatif*" (2019), categorizes Religious Moderation into five characteristics: (1) Non-violent ideology in conveying Islamic teachings; (2) Adoption of modern values in life, including science and technology, democracy, human rights; (3) The use of rational thinking as a tool in interpreting and understanding religion; (4) The use of a contextual approach in understanding religion; and (5) The use of *ijtihad* in exploring teaching values which are not found in the Al-Quran and the prophet's hadith (Hilmy, 2019).

By trying to occupy a position "in the middle", Religious Moderation is expected to take the role as a mediator and be fair in responding to religious groups that adhere to radicalism. The attitude of Religious Moderation is presented as a response to intolerance and radical movements, which at any time can change the nature of relations between religious believers towards exclusivism (Idham, 2019).

Radicalism, Tolerance, and Pluralism

Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (2008) divides radicalism into three meanings, (1) radical understanding or flow in politics; (2) an understanding or sect that requires social and political change or reform using violence; and (3) extreme attitudes in politics (Depdiknas, 2008). Radicalism can also be categorized into radicalism of thought and action. The radicalism of thought is still in discourses, concepts, and ideas but supports violent means to achieve goals. In comparison, the action of radicalism is in the social,

political, and religious realms. In the religious field, the phenomenon of radicalism can be seen from destructive-anarchic actions in the name of the religion of a group of people against different religious groups (external) or religious groups (internal). The act of religious radicalism is also imposing religious opinions utilizing violence (Munip, 2012).

Rubaidi, in "*Radikalisme Islam, Nahdlatul Ulama; Masa Depan Moderatisme di Indonesia*" (2010), provides an overview of the radicalism movement. First, Islam is the final ideology in regulating individuals and also political administration; secondly, the Islamic values are adopted directly from the source (the Middle East) without considering socio-political developments at the time the Qur'an and hadith were present, with contemporary local realities; third, very focused on the text of the Qur'an and hadith, so it does not accept local culture for fear of interfering Islam with *bid'ah*. While the fourth and fifth reject Western ideologies, such as democracy, secularism, liberalism, and therefore must refer to the Qur'an and hadith; and the movement of these groups is often at odds with the government and mainstream society due to ideological differences (Rubaidi, 2010).

Azyumardi Azra, in his paper, "*Akar Radikalisme Keagamaan Peran Aparat Negara, Pemimpin Agama dan Guru untuk Kerukunan Umat Beragama*" (2011), describes the causes of religious radicalism: (1) A literal understanding of religion and incomplete understanding of the verses of the Qur'an; (2) A misreading of Islamic history, combined with an over-idealization of Islam at a certain time; (3) political, social, and economic deprivation that persists in society (Munip, 2012).

In some research findings, we still often find the intolerance of the majority religious group towards minority religious adherents in a specific area. For example, in building houses of worship, minority religious groups often find it challenging to make their places of worship. We also often watch and read in the media (television and online) in which Mass organizations act in the name of certain religions, destroying houses of worship of other faiths. Of course, this attitude contradicts what Michael Walzer (1997) stated about the meanings of tolerance, which are accepting and acknowledging other

people's rights; not only showing acknowledgment, but also openness to others, or at least, curiosity to better understand the other; support, nurture and care for differences (Walzer, 1997).

In addition to tolerance, there is also pluralism, which in a general sense, as stated by Yasraf Amir Piliang (2003), is a tendency or view that respects pluralism, as well as respect for the others who are different, colorful, and open to other, and involving themselves in a dialogue process in them to seek common beliefs while still respecting the existed differences (Piliang, 2003). Meanwhile, Diana L. Eck (2006) proposes three things related to pluralism. First, pluralism is active involvement in diversity and difference. This means an attitude that allows other religions to exist but considers them to have no meaning at all should not exist. Second, pluralism is an attempt to understand constructively different religions or other groups. In such a situation, prejudice and suspicion must be eliminated. Third, pluralism is an effort to find a common commitment in the midst of various commitments (L. Eck, 2006).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative, which identified PAI teachers' understanding of Religious Moderation in Majene as a research subject (Arikunto, 2002). To deepen the understanding of Islamic Religious Moderation Teachers, researchers collected data through in-depth interviews, observations, and literature studies (books, journals, and online media on the internet). The informants were selected purposively, who understood the research context and were easy to talk to (Kasniyah, 2012). The informants were the Head of the Ministry of Religion in Majene, Madrasah Aliyah and High School teachers, and the Majene community members. After the data is collected, the data is analyzed descriptively. Data reduction, presentation, and conclusions were also carried out (Endraswara, 2006).

DISCUSSION

Geographic and Demographics

Majene Regency is 947.84 km² consisting of eight districts and 82 sub-districts, and 361 Local Environmental Units

(SLS), which are further divided into 257 hamlets and 104 neighborhoods. The districts in Majene are Banggae, East Banggae, Pamboang, Sendana, Tammerodo, Tubo Sendana, Malunda, and Ulumanda. Meanwhile, the population in this district is 169,072 people, which includes men, 82,618 people, and 86,454 women (BPS, 2018).

Based on data from the Ministry of Religion in Majene (2020), Muslims are 172,997 people, followed by Christians (168 people), Catholics (71 people), Hindus (1 people), Buddhists (18 people), and others (5 people). As the most adherent religion in Majene, Islamic houses of worship (mosques and prayer rooms), counted the most, 323 mosques and 120 prayer rooms, spread over eight sub-districts. This number looks very disproportionate to the synagogues of other religions. Christians, for example, have only one church, Protestant Church in Western Indonesia (GPIB) Immanuel Majene Congregation. This church is quite old because it was built around 1967. This church is known as the "Chicken Church." This refers to the rooster statue that appears at the end of the church's roof. Meanwhile, the population living around the church is predominantly Muslim.

Salafi Groups in Majene: Adjusting to Local Culture

Majene people have never once rejected the presence of a specific religious group, even though the group adheres to the Salafi religious understanding. The Salafi group is characterized as a movement that has a mission of purification of Islamic teachings. Their interpretation often conflicts with local culture and religious traditions of people who adhere to traditional Islamic understanding (Abidin, 2009). The mass media and several studies then attached the term Salafism to the intolerant, rigid, and reactionary Islamic movement. Salafism, on one hand, is a religious terminology. It also intersects with politics and even violence (Muzammil, 2013).

In Majene, most Muslims adhere to traditional Islam, which is still carrying out and preserving local and religious traditions, such as *barazanji*, *salawatan*, and life cycle ceremonies. Some mosque worshipers read *barazanji* every Friday night after Maghrib using loudspeakers (*toa*) while waiting for *Isha*. The Salafi group's understanding is

different from the religious understanding of most Muslims in Majene. Even so, the Majene still welcome anyone with open arms. There was no resistance from the residents.

In the last five years, residents have accepted Salafi groups well as long as their presence and activities do not disturb the peace and comfort of the community (especially Islam). The Head of the Ministry of Religion in Majene, Dr H. Adnan Nota, MA, stated that Majene people accept them with open arms due to their culture, which adheres to *adab* and ethics. Even these religious groups' ideology is different from the general public, they still accept it for *adab* and ethics. This is seen as a gap for certain religious groups to enter and then "work on" Majene.

Armed with a friendly attitude and respect for guests (upholding etiquette and ethics), these religious groups can freely carry out their religious programs. However, Majene people can also act decisively if (religious) groups want to eliminate or interfere with their local traditions or bring understandings contrary to the ideology of the NKRI. This is shown by the attitude of the Majene People towards HTI (post-ban) and other radical groups.

The Ministry of Religion in Majene does not hesitate to use an "iron fist" for madrasa teachers with radical ideologies. It aims to suppress and prevent these teachings from permeating the younger generation through the doctrine of teachers in schools. All madrasa teachers in the Ministry of Religion in Majene must understand the *al-wasathiyah* (middle) *ahlusunnah waljamaah* (middle), with the main characters *tasamuh* (tolerant) and *tawassuth* (moderate), who are described as *wasathan* followers. Scholars have also promoted this until now as the concept of Islamic moderation (*wasathiyyah al-Islam*). Even so, there are still Islamic groups who disagree with the religious moderation on the grounds of selling religion to other parties (Sutrisno, 2019).

In Majene, some teachers exposed to radicalism, although the number is relatively small. However, such teachers are not PAI teachers. In addition, if a teacher is caught embracing a radical ideology, the space for movement is immediately restricted at the school. Other teachers who disagree with them will monitor their actions, including in

the classrooms. To prevent radical groups from entering schools, including spiritualists, one of the senior high schools in Majene held a *Majelis Taklim* every Friday. All teachers and students attended this activity. Meanwhile, those who gave lectures came from NU, DDI, or Muhammadiyah (Interview with several PAI teachers in Majene, August 2020).

In the Ministry of Religion of Majene, madrasa teachers who are caught adopting a radical ideology will be transferred to schools that fall into the "remote school" category. This mutation is a sanction because it is considered "deviating" from mainstream Islamic teachings in Indonesia. Usually, the teacher is transferred to a madrasa, where most teachers follow traditional Islamic teachings (NU or *Darul Dakwah Islamiyah*).

"If I hear information that there are female teachers in madrasas who wear large headscarves and veils, I will call them to have a dialogue. I've already called a madrasa teacher who wears a veil. I asked her, is your veil ideology or just fashion? As for the fashion veil, I asked not to wear it at school. Because many children (students) still think that the veil is part of radical Islam, the children are also not to blame because they watch television. So far, the women who are most often seen carrying out bombs wear the veil. However, if the veil is part of her ideology, I will transfer her to a distant madrasa, so she cannot communicate with her group. Before the government banned HTI, there were once veiled ASN teachers. She is an outsider of Majene, but passed the CPNS in Majene. After it was discovered that she was a Salafi, I transferred him to a madrasa whose teachers were mostly NU and DDI people" (Interview with the Head of the Majene Ministry of Religion, Dr. H. Adnan Nota, MA, in Majene, September 2020).

For the Ministry of Religion of Majene, banning the veil among madrasa teachers is not a discriminatory attitude. If the reason is fashion, then there will be no sanctions. However, the teacher is advised to remove the veil when in the schools. In Majene, most of the students are not familiar with seeing the veiled teacher. Their minds are still influenced by television, which often associates veiled women with the actions of bombers and terrorists. The prohibition of madrasa teachers from wearing the veil is a

kind of religious moderation at the Ministry of Religion, so that the teaching and learning process in schools runs "normally".

The mutation of madrasa teachers who adhere to radicalism aims to: (1) Keep the teacher away from her group; (2) "Severing" the cognitive chain, as well as breaking their relationship in intensive discussion with fellow Salafi friends; (3) Get discussion partners from NU or DDI circles in a new place; (4) Prevent indoctrination to students, and (5) As a material to evaluate the way they teach.

The response of the Majene community to the Salafi groups is quite good. There have been cases where the government and the community rejected the wishes of a Salafi group who wanted to build a prayer room on vacant land in a plantation area. When applying, the government asked them to comply with building a house of worship in PBM No. 9 and 8 of 2006. Because there were no residents around the vacant land, building a prayer room was eventually canceled.

In another case, a Salafi figure in Majene received a strong rebuke from the mosque's congregation for delivering a Friday sermon containing hate speech. Luckily, this case was quickly resolved by local religious leaders, so it didn't lead to violence. After the Salafi figure apologized, the problem was considered finished.

Interestingly, some parents send their children to schools run by Salafi groups, even though the parents concerned are affiliated with traditional Islam. There are many choices of religious schools and conventional Islamic boarding schools in Majene and Polman. The paradigm shift of parents sending their children to schools belonging to the Salafi group is caused by the desire of parents to make their children memorize the Quran (*hafidz*). This opportunity (memorizing the Qur'an) has not been read by the administrators of the traditional *pesantren* in Majene. This is what later became the advantage of Salafi *pesantren* compared to traditional *pesantren* in Majene.

The Head of the Ministry of Religion in Majene, Dr H. Adnan Nota, stated that the Majene community could accept the Salafi group because such group can adapt and adjust to the religious culture of the community. In his view, the Salafi group in Majene does not spit words of heresy and haram against local

traditions. One of the Salafi figures, the head of one of the *pesantren* in Majene, began to participate in *zikiran* and praying together during congregational prayers in the NU environment. Even so, this Salafi group consistently carries out their ideology and interpretation of the Qur'anic and sunnah texts based on the scholars' opinions and references to books circulating internally. However, when dealing with people outside their group, they choose to be flexible.

The adaptive attitude and "adjusting to the conditions" of the Salafi group can be understood as follows: First, the Salafi group chose to be open (moderate) as a form of negotiation and a tactic to "grab the hearts" of the Majene people. In the sense of the word, they choose moderation (the middle way) solely to be able to adapt, as well as survive in Majene. A Salafi cleric invited to be an imam during prayers in NU and dhikr together and reading prayers with the congregation (after worship) shows that this group has practiced religious moderation. Their willingness shows another moderation attitude to dialogue with other groups (especially NU) and no longer question local traditions and religious rituals of the Majene community. In addition, according to records of the entry of these religious groups in Majene, they all come from outside Majene, namely Makassar City, South Sulawesi. With the position as "outsiders" (guests), they certainly respect the customs and traditions of the host.

Second, local traditions, religious traditions, and tarekat are still strong in Majene. The rules and teachings of the tarekat are relics of scholars who are known as broadcasters of Islam in Tanah Mandar, such as Imam Lapeo, *Annangguru* Kyai Saleh, and Sheikh Abdul Mannan. Suppose this group prohibits the community from holding local and religious traditions on the grounds of heresy and haram. In that case, it is the same as this group insulting their ulama, which they consider *waliullah*.

Holding *barazanji*, *salawatan*, and remembrance shows that the Majene people still adhere to local and religious traditions. This religious tradition is also one of the reasons why it is difficult for radical religious groups to develop and become prominent in Majene. At least, this local tradition becomes a kind of antidote to reject religious doctrines that do not follow the ulama's teachings in

Mandar. Although several religious groups are present in Majene, members do not reach around 100 people. And, even if identified by ethnicity, most of them are not native (Mandar).

Religious Moderation of PAI Teachers in Majene

In many research studies, the position of PAI teachers in schools should not be underestimated. Teachers teach religious knowledge to students and transform expertise to be practiced in daily life (Sardiman, 1996). Because of that, almost all parents in Majene are worried if there are PAI teachers who secretly instill a certain religious ideology in students, which leads to the emergence of seeds of hatred towards other religions, different ethnicities so that they no longer believe in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Worries about the radical ideology of the PAI Guru are not only felt today but also long ago, an education observer, Abdul Rahman Salih, had given an early warning against Islamic religious education in elementary schools, which was outlined in his book, "*Pendidikan Agama Islam di Sekolah Dasar*" (1976). According to him, Islamic religious education is in the form of guidance and care for students. The goal, when students finish school, they can practice the teachings of Islam and make it a way of life (Shaleh, 1976).

To become a PAI teacher, people are required to have in-depth knowledge of how to educate children and have a good personality. Arifin, in his book, "*Hubungan Timbal Balik Pendidikan Agama di Lingkungan Sekolah dan Keluarga*" (1978), provides three requirements to become a teacher of Islam, namely: (1) understand the science of educating as well as possible, so that his actions in educating can be adapted to the soul. The language he teaches; (2) have an excellent language, and use it as well as possible so that the language can cause soft feelings in children; and (3) must love their students, because love always means eliminating one's interests for the needs of others (M. Arifin, 1978).

Based on the Ministry of Religion data in Majene 2020, there are 21 PAI civil servant teachers in public schools (SMA/SMK) in Majene. Three of them have

not been certified. Meanwhile, there are 20 PAI teachers in public schools and have the status of Non-Permanent Teachers.

The informant of this study had an Islamic educational background. Most of them had stayed at one of the *pesantren* in Majene and Polewali Mandar for six years (junior to high school). While in college, they then continued to choose religious campuses, such as UIN Alauddin Makassar, STAI DDI Majene, and IAIN Parepare. Among the informants, there is a Magister degree at UIN Alauddin. They are also active in various social activities and extra-campus organizations during colleges, such as HMI and PMII. No one was involved in the Salafi group and HTI.

An informant admitted that he had attended HTI studies at his campus and other campuses in Makassar during the first semester. He took part in the activity because his college friends invited him. He was curious and wanted to know what HTI's religious ideology was like through their studies. After attending HTI studies twice, he decided that this organization was not suitable for him. As a person who has spent six years in a *pesantren* and studied the "*kitab kuning*", all the doctrines that HTI instilled are contrary to the teachings he received during his time at the *pesantren*. The point is, he said, HTI's ideology doesn't make sense. Therefore, when HTI invited a PAI teacher in Majene to attend its activities in mid-November 2011, he immediately refused. Moreover, before the invitation arrived at his school, he had already received a tip about the executor of the activity. So, until he was invited twice, no PAI teacher at his school was present.

Most of the PAI teachers in Majene are not active or rarely attend religious studies at the mosque or their neighborhood. Generally, they stated that they did not have time to participate in the study. Apart from devoting time and energy to taking care of their families at home, they also need to take the time to read other books (besides printed books) for teaching materials for their students at school. However, PAI teachers are also listed as the *Majelis Taklim* members and administrators of the mosque near their house.

At the *Majelis Taklim*, they often hold recitations, with the model of inviting an *Ustaz* or *Ustazah* to give lectures. After the class, sometimes it is followed by a question

and answer session and discussion for a few minutes. The invited *Ustaz/Ustazah* always have NU and DDI backgrounds, according to the religious experiences of *Majelis Taklim* members. Meanwhile, as mosque administrators, they rarely hold religious discussions at the mosque. In 2012, the mosque was visited by several people, who were later discovered to be Salafi/Wahabi groups. This group asked for permission to hold discussions in its mosque every week. However, he and all the mosque administrators refused.

If we look at the ulama, who are admired and used as idols, and then associated with their religious views, the PAI teachers in Majene are generally moderate. In their *pesantren*, they make Sufi clerics, national clerics, and kyai patrons of religious knowledge. For example, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jailani, Sheikh Nafis bin Idris Al-Banjari, KH. Moh. Saleh, KH. Nur Husain, Quraish Shihab, Nasaruddin Umar, Abi Makki, and Syarif Matnaji. When I asked them if they knew *Ustadz* Abdul Somad, Khalid Basalamah, Adi Hidayat, and Hannan Attaki, they generally knew but didn't like the content of the lectures. According to the PAI teacher, the content of the *Ustaz's* speech was more or less inconsistent with his religious understanding. One PAI teacher has a crush on *Ustaz* Nur Maulana, who is admittedly funny. During the online teaching process (meeting zoom) due to the Covid-19 pandemic, he admitted that he often watched *Ustaz* Nur Maulana on the television screen.

The PAI teacher's reading reference for the material taught to students in school comes from the PAI textbook, a "compulsory book." However, to support the religious knowledge of PAI teachers, they also often master other books, such as *Fiqh of the Five Mazhab* by Muhammad Jawad Mughniyah, *Fiqh of Traditionalism* (KH. Muhyiddin Adusshomad), *Sirah Nabawiyah* (Syekh Safiurrahman al Mubarak Furi), *Bidayatul Hidayah* (Imam Al Gazali), and the *Advice and Will of Imam Haddad* (Al Allamah Al Habib Abdullah bin Alwi Al Haddad).

The PAI teachers' family background is moderate Islam. This is known by looking at the background of their parents, who generally carry out local traditions and religious traditions. Not surprisingly, once they become parents, these PAI teachers

mainly send their children to Islamic boarding schools in Majene. However, PAI teachers also put their children into the Quran House of *Pesantren* Hidayatullah, inaugurated in 2019 in Majene. Because this *pesantren* trains *Santri* to memorize the Koran, he also wants his son to become a hafiz. *Pesantren* Hidayatullah is a modern *pesantren*, which combines general subjects and Islamic lessons (*diniyyah*). In Indonesia, the name of this *pesantren* is quite famous. Moreover, the number is quite large. As of January 2020, *Pesantren* Hidayatullah has totaled 580 Islamic boarding schools spread across Indonesia. From several kinds of research, *Pesantren* Hidayatullah teaches rigid religious understanding, such as being anti-tradition and understanding the verses of the Koran textually (Ismail, 2007).

PAI teachers are urgently needed to prevent and ward off radical ideas that can infect students at any time. In the school environment, teachers are one of the spearheads of implementing education because they directly deal with students to transfer knowledge and educate with positive values through guidance and example (Kunandar, 2007). Based on the views and experiences of PAI teachers regarding minority groups and cultural diversity, relations between Islam and the state, and relations between religion and tradition, it can be said that PAI teachers in Majene have practiced Religious Moderation. This can be seen in the following section.

Diversity of Tribes, Religions, and Minority Groups

Majene is a plural or multicultural area, with several ethnicities and six official religions of Indonesia. They all live to mingle and side by side. The location of people's houses is not segregated based on religion or ethnicity. Likewise, housing complexes do not exist based on faith and race. Everyone is free and given the freedom to choose and settle in the housing complex they want. Even so, Majene is dominated by the Mandar ethnicity, which is the original ethnicity of the Majene people, along with other districts included in the geographical area of West Sulawesi.

PAI teachers do not question religious and cultural diversity at all. Instead, they see diversity as *sunnatullah* (plurality). Several religions and ethnicities live in harmony and

peace in Majene, including the Chinese. If you look at the rows of building material shops, the owners are undoubtedly Chinese. They generally trade. So, indirectly, the presence of Chinese people helped boost the economy of this district. What's more, they have been living in Majene for a long time. They are thought to have been around since the 1960s. So, the Chinese millennial generation is those who were born and raised in Majene.

In general, PAI teachers are pretty worried about the radical Islamic groups in Majene. Moreover, this group tends to target school children, including their biological children. One of the ways that PAI teachers protecting students at school, including their children, is to explain the religious understanding of such group. Furthermore, the PAI teacher compared the religious knowledge held by the Mandar ulema and most of the religious beliefs held by Muslims in Majene (traditional Islam).

It is also interesting to observe the inter-religious tolerance among PAI teachers. When I asked about their attitude towards the practice of inter-religious tolerance, some PAI teachers gave a "dual" answer. In terms of tolerance, for example, they clearly distinguish between social relations and theological relations. For instance, in terms of social interaction, they do not mind students associating with people of different religions because it is a form of mutual respect and respect among religious people. This is also shown by the social relations of PAI teachers with people of different religions. For example, if a friend, acquaintance, or neighbour of a different religion experiences grief (died), they also attend the funeral at the funeral home. During the research, one of the PAI teachers admitted that he had just sent a Whatsapp message to his Christian friend, whose family had died at that time. He could not go to the funeral home because the Christian teacher lived outside Majene. However, when asked about the theological relationship with followers of different religions, their opinions appear to be inversely related. For example, some PAI teachers admitted that they were unwilling to wish Christians a Merry Christmas for reasons that could damage the faith. Saying Merry Christmas is considered a theological affair, so there is no "bargain" there.

Suppose you look at the religious moderation of PAI teachers in Majene regarding the diversity of ethnic groups, religions, and minority groups. In that case, it can be said that their religious understanding tends to be closed. For example, PAI teachers, on the one hand, accept all forms of diversity or differences around them, such as differences in religion, ethnicity, and culture, which are seen as *sunnatullah* (plurality). On the other hand, it's just that they have not been able to accept the presence of different groups in their lives fully. By arguing for maintaining peace and tranquility in Indonesia, most of the PAI teachers in Majene have not respected and even wanted restrictions on the development of Shia and Ahmadiyah in Indonesia. Their disapproval also sees the exclusivity of PAI teachers of the positions of regent, head of the service, and principal, held by people of different religions. Moreover, Islam is the dominant religion in Majene.

The Relations Islam and the State

The spirit of nationalism of all PAI teachers in Majene towards the Republic of Indonesia is no longer in doubt. When asked whether they agree with the actions of a few groups who want to return Pancasila to the Jakarta Charter and the wishes of the radicals who want to make Indonesia an Islamic state, they all answered: they did not agree.

The matter of returning Pancasila into the Jakarta Charter said the PAI teacher violates the plurality of Indonesia. The Jakarta Charter, especially in the First Precept, "God, with the obligation to carry out Islamic *Shari'a* for its adherents," shows that the state of Indonesia is only inhabited by one religion, namely Islam. In fact, in addition to the six official religions recognized by the state, there are also local religions embraced by the local community. If the Jakarta Charter is enforced, it would be tantamount to discriminating against Indonesia's non-Muslim religions and local religions.

According to the PAI teacher, the ideal form of state is that the state is truly capable of protecting all Indonesian citizens without discriminating against religion and ethnicity. Meanwhile, the desire of radical Islamic groups such as HTI, which wants the establishment of an Islamic state or caliphate, is considered inappropriate because the religion adopted by the Indonesian population

is not only Islam but multi-religious. So, Indonesia has rightly embraced the ideology of Pancasila, which is the formulation and guideline for the life of the nation and state for all Indonesian people, regardless of or discriminating between one religion and another. PAI teachers do not agree with the separatist movement that disturbs the security and peace of life of citizens, let alone to the point of taking their lives. They cited one example, namely *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (OPM), which is considered a separatist movement and should be eradicated (Andrianto, 2001, Syuhudi, 2019).

Relationship Between Religion and Tradition

Majene is synonymous with local religious traditions. Local religious traditions such as *barazanji*, *salawatan*, remembrance is still practiced by almost all people in Majene. Thursday night, there are *barazanji* readings in several mosques in Majene, which are read by the congregation. Not only that, the Majene community also still holds traditions related to the life cycle.

According to the PAI teacher, the local religious traditions carried out are the legacy of previous scholars and Islamic broadcasters in Majene, and do not conflict with Islamic law. For example, the tradition of khatam Qur'an, or *sayyang pattu'du* for children, is coupled with parading the child around the village on a horse. This procession is also accompanied by music and dances typical of Mandar. For PAI teachers, *sayyang pattu'du* does not conflict with Islamic law. This tradition is used to motivate other children to be diligent in reciting the Koran and completing (khatam) the Koran. The tradition of *sayyang pattu'du* is often also found at weddings (*tokaweng*) in Mandar, because the two are believed to have close ties.

Seeing local religious traditions in Mandar, the local community still retains the nuances of local religious traditions. Even so, this area was also missed and surprised by a splinter flow that disturbed the community. In Polewali District, in January 2006, for example, there was a religious practice of praying while whistling, which was taught by Sumardi (Liputan6.com, 2006). Likewise, in Karampuang, Mamuju Regency, November 2019, the leader, Ustaz R, promised his

followers to see God and get tickets to heaven by paying a certain amount of money (Liputan 6.com, 2019).

The educational background of PAI teachers, most of whom have attended *pesantren* and studied at moderate Islamic colleges, show that they understand what local traditions are deviant or non-deviant. So, if we look at the understanding of religious moderation related to the relationship of religion with cultural traditions and local religious traditions, PAI teachers in Majene can be categorized as moderate. All teachers do not question the cultural and local religious traditions that the Majene community has practiced. Genealogically, they know that these local religious traditions are the legacy of the previous local clerics and broadcasters of Islam in Majene. In terms of religious knowledge, they have also distinguished between traditions allowed and forbidden by religion.

CLOSING

As in other areas in Indonesia, Majene did not escape the target of Salafi groups. However, only HTI is considered dangerous compared to the existing Salafi groups because it wants to overthrow the legitimate government. In addition to intensively instilling ideology among the general public, HTI also targets the younger generation. Even so, HTI cannot do much in madrasas. The Ministry of Religion in Majene was forced to use an "iron fist" to suppress and prevent the spread of HTI teachings from entering the madrasa environment. Without mercy, madrasa teachers who are caught affiliated with radical ideologies are immediately transferred. Their range of motion is also limited. This is one of the moderation attitudes to save the younger generation exposed to radicalism.

Although several Salafi groups are in Majene, PAI teachers at *Madrasah Aliyah* and public schools (SMA) in Majene are not affected and entered the circle of these groups. The background of six years living in a traditional *pesantren* and then studying at a moderate Islamic campus is a strong asset for PAI teachers. Based on the moderate religious education background obtained in traditional *pesantren* and moderate campuses, PAI teachers then appreciate the diversity of

ethnic groups, religions, and minority groups, as part of plurality. The PAI teachers also considered that the form of the Indonesian state was ideal, so there is no need to change it to an Islamic state (*khalifah*). With moderate religious understanding, PAI teachers also "transmit" and instill religious moderation values to students. The trick is to hold discussions in a class by taking examples of some instances, such as suicide bombers and the destruction of houses of worship (whose perpetrators are Muslims). For PAI teachers, such actions have tarnished the name of Islam as the religion of *rahmatan lil alamin*.

Religious understanding of PAI teachers is generally moderate. Even so, they tend to be closed to different religions (non-Muslims) and radical Islamic groups. Against different religions, they draw a clear line between social and theological relations. PAI teachers do not question establishing social relations with followers of different religions but are unwilling to wish Merry Christmas verbally because it is considered to damage the faith. Meanwhile, PAI teachers disagreed with radical Islamic groups, especially HTI, and did not associate with them. For PAI teachers, they take a "middle way" (moderation) to avoid debate and conflict with Islamic groups (radicals).

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