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by Rektor 13

Submission date: 12-Jun-2023 03:01AM (UTC-0400)

Submission ID: 2114302527

File name: 13.doc (306K)

Word count: 6672

Character count: 40287

Actualization of Religious Moderation in Islamic Fatwas in Mainstream Online Media in Indonesia

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Abstract:

This study is intended to explore the actualization of religious moderation in Islamic fatwas in mainstream media in Indonesia. This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach, in the form of media text studies combined with field studies. The media that is used as the object of study is Republika online which is considered to be able to represent mainstream media that has an interest in Islamic issues. Data analysis used the critical discourse analysis method developed by Teun A van Dijk. This study conveys that in general the contents of fatwas in Republika have actualized and supported the agenda of religious moderation in Indonesia, but when measured by each indicator, the contents of religious moderation tend to only appear in formal in national commitment aspect, tend to avoid diversity of insight because of the urge to always be moderate, and only convey the physical and manifest violence by disregarding that of non-physical and latent. Meanwhile, accommodative indicators of local culture tend to be overlooked in almost all fatwa content, even though many issues potentially can be linked to this indicator.

Keywords: *Fatwas; Mainstream Media; Online media; Religious Moderation.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of media in the digital age has also been utilized by a number of mainstream mass media in Indonesia to disseminate Islamic studies, especially fatwas. If you want to name one media that is representative in this context, then that is Republika media. Apart from its historical factors which are synonymous with the dissemination of Islamic studies (Utomo, 2010), Republika realizes that it is important to produce fatwas on Islamic law due to the high demand of the Indonesian public (Interview with Erdy Nasrul, Editor of Republika, July 2022).

Due to the position of fatwas that are not transcendental like the Qur'an and Sunnah, fatwas are heavily influenced by the considerations and interpretations of the *mufiti* (giver of fatwas) on the issues they analyze (Mudzhar, 1993). In the current Indonesian context, religious moderation is an important element that deserves consideration in every fatwa. Without considering this aspect of moderation, the fatwa that is issued can have a tendency to be counterproductive to the values of the common good.

Research related to fatwas and online media has become to be the concern of many researchers, one of which is Gary R. Bunt's research on networks, calls for jihad, and fatwas to support the popularity of Islamic activism on the internet. This research shows how the internet has changed the behavior of people in interacting with other people, including with their own religious leaders (Bunt, 2003). Cahawki's study then strengthens Bunt's argument, that internet has triggered the changes in religious patterns with the emergence of new religious authorities that are interconnected (Chawki, 2010). Muttaqin's study also adds that in the Indonesian context, the transmission of Islamic studies does not only occur in traditional educational institutions such as *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) which are its trademark, but has begun to spread to virtual communities on various social media platforms by calling itself the "ngaji online" (online religious learning) (Muttaqin, 2020).

These researchs form a landscape that show the relationship between the internet, the media, and changes in religious patterns which are the main themes of this article. These researches are very meaningful in mapping the phenomenon and influence of the internet in religious life. However, the three of them have not shown specific aspects of the fatwa. A study of fatwas in relation to the internet was revealed by a number of researchers. Sunarwoto's study shows how fatwa has shifted from its traditional meaning in a question and answer program that is widely disseminated through the media, in this case radio (Sunarwoto, 2012). However, the article has not provided sufficient guidance on how the pattern (reasoning) of interpretation is used by interpreters in answering Islamic questions.

The same thing is also found in Najwa Abdullah and Mohamed Osman's articles about Islamization in the media space. This research shows how the internet has been used by religious conservative groups to spread their religious views and fatwas. The conservative character found in online media, he said, was a form of "resistance" by Muslims against global forces led by the West (Abdullah & Mohamed Osman, 2018). Najwa and Osman succeeded in uncovering the motives of conservative groups and their networks on the internet. However, this research does not discuss how Islamic law is built, designed and rolled out on the internet. Likewise, the research conducted by Rusli and Nurdin on the production of Islamic knowledge and fatwas revealed a more deeply rooted phenomenon related to the role of the internet in the production of Islamic legal knowledge in Indonesia. However, this research has not mapped out the construction of legal decisions (fatwas) resulting from knowledge sources and knowledge networks from the internet.

Through this research, it can be seen that although the study of fatwas and online media is being seriously studied by researchers, their attention to religious moderation as an important variable in fatwas and their dissemination in online media has not been much worked on. This research will try to fill this space by asking how the actualization of religious moderation in Islamic law fatwas conveyed in online media? This question at the same time demands answers about how the media interprets religious fatwa and moderation in the content they convey.

This research is a study of media texts combined with field research, with a qualitative-descriptive approach. The choice of this approach, as explained by experts, is to get an argumentative-analytical explanation of the object under study (Sugiyono, 2013). A combination of field studies was also carried out to get a complete picture of the message and set of conditions surrounding fatwa content in online media which is the target of this research.

This study makes Republika Online media as the locus of study, with the consideration that this media represents mainstream media in Indonesia which is concerned with Islamic issues. Not only has it contributed to spreading information and ideas about moderate Islam in Indonesia (Rohman, 2020), Republika helps to maintain the balance of information and discourse around issues of violence when a number of other media tend to be uncooperative in reporting (Wazis, 2017). This research data was collected in two ways. First, recording the text/content of questions and answers on Islamic law. Data recorded as of August 2022. Second, in-depth interviews with editors or caretakers of Islamic law columns/content in Republika media.

In order to get in-depth and specific answers, this research data will be limited to a number of things. First, the fatwa aspect of Islamic law referred to in this research is a fatwa on *siyasyah fiqh* issues, which include political issues, interreligious relations, and basic human rights. Second, the conception of religious moderation mentioned in this study is limited to the definition and description of religious moderation explained by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. This also avoids the discourse on religious moderation that continues to develop until the time this research is conducted.

The data analysis was carried out using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method developed by Teun A van Dijk. CDA is a comprehensive text reading method. Text is not only interpreted singly, as a series of information that contains a certain message. But the text is very closely related to the specific interests behind the production of the text and the conditions when the text is consumed. That is, reading a text cannot be separated from the political and ideological practices that surround the text (Qianbo, 2016).

DISCUSSION

Islamic Law Fatwas and Religious Moderation

The position of religious moderation in the fatwa discourse on Islamic law can be seen from the moderation values that are part of *Maqashid Syariah*. The last mentioned term becomes a bridge that is connected with fatwa, law and Islamic law. The values in question include *rahmatiyah* (affection), *insaniyah* (humanity), *adliyyah* (justice), *mubadalah* (balanced), *maslahah* (goodness), *mu'adah wathaniyah* (national commitment), *dusturiyah* (constitutional), *tasamubiyah* (tolerance), and *urfiah* (culture oriented) (*Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Bimas Islam*, 2022). These values are then presented through four main indicators of religious moderation, namely national commitment, tolerance, anti-discrimination, and respect for tradition. Although it does not deny that there are other indicators to show moderation in religion, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia stated that these four indicators are sufficient as a minimum standard to recognize the level of moderation and vulnerability of religious activity (*Moderasi Beragama*, 2019).

It doesn't stop there, for ⁵the Indonesian ⁶Ministry of Religion, the position of fatwa is also very important in the development of religious moderation in Indonesia. By interpreting the values of ¹⁰moderation, the scholars will not only present strong religious views but also advance ¹⁰the life of the nation and state, which is the aim of religious moderation itself (Tim Kelompok Kerja Kementerian Agama RI, 2020).

From this relationship it appears that the fatwa of Islamic law and religious moderation are related (Rouf, 2020). The first discourse requires the second as an instrument to bring it closer to achieving the goals of sharia, while the second as a value as well as a religious conception requires fatwas from religious agents and authorities as its praxis. This interrelated relationship then determines how the fatwa is constructed and how the moderation objective can be achieved and realized.

Overview of Fatwas in Media Republika

The development of media in the digital age has not only affected worldly life, but also the religious life of religious communities. New media—as a translation of the term "new media" used by a number of scientists—has fragmented the social order to displace traditional religious authority (Turner, 2007). In the life of Muslim society, for example, the dissemination of ¹⁷Islamic studies is not only through face-to-face lectures, but also virtually, so that it can be ¹⁷consumed by the public at large (Muthohirin, 2021).

However, ¹⁷the wider the spread of religious studies, the traditional religious authority which was previously concentrated in the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Islamic boarding schools, and independent traditional clerics, has now begun to be reduced and shifted to a new authority which is essentially abstract, anonymous and not institutionalized (Jinan, 2012; Marwantika, 2019). In response to this phenomenon, a number of traditional religious institutions in certain areas or preachers have been motivated to adapt and have begun to utilize digital tools to support their studies (Islam, 2022; Safriadi, 2020). A similar potential is used by various mainstream ²²mass media to participate in spreading Islamic studies, especially fatwas, in their ²²online media networks. ²²One of the media that is considered quite representative ²²in this context is Republika.

Since its inception, Republika has been known to be close to and even synonymous with Indonesian Muslims. The establishment of Republika was initiated by ²³number of young journalists led by Zaim Uchrowi, a former Tempo journalist, and fully ²³supported by ²³the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) which was then led by BJ Habibie, until this media was successfully published for the first time in January 1993, then the version online, Republika.co.id, followed two years later (Utomo, 2010).

In 2000, the ownership shares of Republika which were originally held by PT Abdi Bangsa (which belonged to the foundation under ICMI) switched to PT Mahaka Media which has almost no religious affiliation. This transition triggered a number of changes, among which Republika's previous status as a political newspaper changed to become a professional business newspaper. Political news began to diminish, replaced by business-

economic presentations. Interestingly, however, Islamic themes are maintained, in fact more and more relaxed Islamic-themed content emerges (Fanani, 2011).

Republika's Islamic commitment can be seen from the ideology it carries, vision and mission, to rubrication and content. This media carries the ideology of nationality, democracy, and Islam. The vision is to be modern, moderate, muslim, national, and populist media. While its mission, among other things, is to uphold the *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*; defend, protect, and serve the interests of the people; and educate and enlighten. Since it first appeared, Republika has always tried to present Islam as a moderate religion, inspirational, in favor of social justice, inclusive, and technologically literate (Hamad, 2004). This ideology, vision, and mission are reflected in content full of Islamic themes, such as the Friday Dialogue, Umrah and Hajj, Islam Digest, the Islamia sub-section, and Iqtishodia.

The fatwa which is the focus of this research is found in the Friday Dialogue sub-rubric. The fatwa rubric contains popular scientific writings that address or discuss certain issues. Most of the writings lead to conclusions, decisions, or provisions on how properly in Islamic law the issue is resolved. Like the fatwas delivered by the ulema, the writing also directly mentions the primary sources referred to by the author to build decisions or conclusions.

Even so, not all the authors in this Fatwa rubric are scholars or muftis in the general sense. Some of these articles were also written by editors who served as rubric caretakers or permanent contributors appointed by the editors. At this point, the editor of Republika, Erdy Nasrul, said that the caretakers of the Islamic section in the Republika media, both writers and editors, have a strong understanding of the Islamic religion. This is shown through his educational background in addition to the provision of courses and training provided by Republika (Interview with Erdy Nasrul, Editor of Republika, July 2022). In the editorial process, articles in the Islamic rubric undergo special and repeated checking. Specifically, it means that the editor is tasked with checking whether the arguments, information, and the arguments used in the writing refer to authoritative sources. Repetitive meaning, articles are checked by several editors before publication, so that the articles submitted to readers are not wrong and biased (Interview with Erdy Nasrul, Editors of Republika, July 2022).

Characteristics of Fatwas in Islamic Law in the Media

A number of articles were found that characterize Islamic fatwas (hereinafter referred to as fatwas) in the fiqh *siyasa* (political) aspect in Republika Online media. Management of this fatwa published with two models. First, a fatwa is put forward as an answer to a public question. Here, media editors present public questions first, then provide answers from experts or figures who are considered authoritative. This model is very characteristic of a fatwa, because fatwa answers certain questions (Hallaq, 2004; Mudzhar, 1993). Thus, if it is not preceded by a question, then a religious opinion can only be categorized as fiqh.

Second, the fatwa is not accompanied by questions beforehand. At first glance, this article does not reflect the fatwa model, as it is not preceded by a question. However, this

can still be categorized as a fatwa here, because the article is included in the fatwa rubric. By including this article in the fatwa rubric, it can be understood that the rubric manager or editor has received common sense questions on this matter from the public. In terms of rubric management, the first model can be included in the fatwa rubric or other rubrics, while the second model is only included in the fatwa rubric.

Within that framework, fifteen articles were found (as of August 2022) containing fatwas in the online media Republika which were published in the last four years. The oldest article was published on November 15, 2019. The fatwas cover four categories within the scope of national fiqh studies, namely democracy (*shura*), nationalism including laws and regulations (*siyasah qaumiyah*), human rights (*huquq al-insan al-dharuriyah*), and internationalism or relations between countries (*siyasah dauliyah*).

Issues around human rights (HAM) dominate the fatwas in the fiqh siyasa field. Media Republika does not respond to all religious issues that are developing or questions about religion that come from the public, because the editorial office has set certain criteria for religious content to be published. This is very natural for every media to do, because each media lives with its own character and segment of readers. Republika's editors filter religious content with the criteria of: 1) reflecting contemporary religious issues; 2) representing the viewpoint of the majority Islamic group in Indonesia, namely Ahlussunnah Waljamaah; 3) and put forward the moderate side (*wasathiyah*), including accommodating local wisdom.

Each fatwa includes legal reasons (*dalil*) in the form of the Quran and Hadith. Most fatwas include both. Only a few fatwas include one of them. There is no fatwa that does not include one of them. However, the arguments included in these fatwas are limited to the Qur'an and Hadith, while according to the study of ushul fiqh which¹¹ the basis of Islamic law methodology, the arguments for Islamic law are not only the Qur'an and Hadith, but also include *ijma'* (ulama consensus) and *qiyas* (legal analogy). Sunni scholars agree on these four things as valid and authoritative arguments for Islamic law (Al-Zarkhasy, 2008; Zahrah, 2010).

In addition, there are a number of other methods used by certain scholars who are considered authoritative for their own school of thought but not for other schools of thought, such as *istihsan* (juristic preference) which is only used in the Hanafi school (Ota, 2008), *Maslahah Mursalah* (concerned with the public interest) is used by some scholars of the Maliki school of thought (Al-'Ijy, 2008), *Istishab* (presumption of continuity) in the Shafi'i School (Al-Ghazali, 1992; Muhaimin, 2017), etc. However, of the fifteen fatwas in the Republika Online media, only one fatwa includes *ijma'*, namely the fatwa entitled "Using Violence During Interrogation" (human rights category), and none of the fatwa includes *qiyas* or other methodologies except for the four agreed methodologies.

The use of the viewpoint of the majority group (sunni) can be seen in the tendency of fatwa articles to barely cite differences in schools of thought or the opinions of scholars in every discussion. Of the fifteen fatwas, only one shows a difference of opinion, namely an article entitled "Reviewing Calls to Prohibit Interfaith Greetings". The difference of

opinion that arises here is between the East Java Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), which issued an appeal against interfaith greetings, and the Center for the Study of the Koran, which considered that the appeal was too hasty, because there are a number of arguments in the Koran and Sunnah, including exemplary actions by *sababah* (Prophet friends), which shows that greetings with non-Muslims are legitimate (Kurnia & Hafil, 2019). Thus, the differences of opinion that arise between the two groups are not differences that are rooted in debates between schools due to differences in their respective legal methodologies, but are limited to differences in attitudes within one group of schools, considering that the East Java MUI is identical with the practice of Jurisprudence with the Shafi'i school of thought.

Meanwhile, for references to scholars and books, Republika's editorial team also limits them to those scholars who reflect the religious character of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia. Scholars who are considered more authoritative in contemporary issues are them from Al-Azhar University, Egypt, and al-Ahqaf University, Yemen. These two universities are indeed known as centers for the study of *ablusunnab waljamaab*. There are also references to scholars from other countries and universities, but this is quite limited and only in certain cases, such as scholars from Ummul Qura University in Makah, Islamic University of Medina, or Islamic universities in Malaysia.

However, in the fifteen fatwas examined here, only one reference was found to the scholar of al-Azhar, Egypt, namely Sheikh Athiyah Saqar, while figures from other universities were not found. Moreover, the scholars referred to are those who represent mainstream religious groups or organizations in Indonesia, such as MUI, Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, al-Washliyah, Islamic Unity (Persis), as well as well-known scholars who represent the tendencies of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia, such as Ustaz Abdul Somad. This can be seen clearly from the fatwas presented. Meanwhile, classic books that are referred to as dominant revolve around books that are popular in the Shafi'i school, such as the book of *al-Majmu'* by Imam al-Nawawi or works by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani.

Portrait of Religious Moderation in Islamic Fatwa Content

This section classifies Republika's commitment to religious moderation based on four indicators put forward by the Ministry of Religion. First, in the aspect of national commitment. In this case, national commitment means perspectives, attitudes, and religious practices that show loyalty to the basic national consensus in the form of the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila, as well as a sense of nationalism (Sugiyarto, 2013). Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia in 2014-2019, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin narrated this national commitment by: practicing religious teachings in line with fulfilling obligations as citizens, and carrying out obligations as citizens is part of practicing religious teachings (Kementerian Agama, 2019).

In general, the contents of the fatwa in Republika have shown a clear national commitment. However, as far as the data obtained in this study, national commitments are limited to matters that are regulated by the state through laws and regulations, such as

matters related to diplomacy between countries, the system of state financial management, state security and defense, and general elections. Meanwhile, for matters that have not been or are not regulated by law, such as social interaction between religious communities, the contents of the fatwa in Republika do not explicitly show national commitment. Impression of this bias can be seen in the content of the fatwa regarding the distribution of sacrificial meat from Muslims to non-Muslims which was reported on 18/10/2020, as stated there that:

Tidak banya orang miskin, malahan orang non-Muslim boleh mengonsumsi bagian daging kurban. Menurut sebagian ulama, tidak ada larangan mereka untuk memakannya... Akan tetapi, idealnya dabalukan kalangan Muslim yang memerlukan, terutama mereka yang hidup dalam keterbatasan ekonomi (Not only the poor, even non-Muslims may consume the meat of the sacrifice. According to some scholars, there is no prohibition for them to eat it... However, ideally it should be prioritized by Muslims who need it, especially those who live within economic limitations.) (Sakinah, 2019).

This fatwa basically already reflects religious moderation, namely by opening opportunities up for interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims through the moment of distributing sacrificial meat. However, the fatwa narrative does not explicitly provide stimulation so that this practice is associated with the context of harmony between religious communities as fellow Indonesian citizens, or refers to certain laws and regulations that provide legal standing so that this harmony is strengthened, so that the national commitment is truly visible.

This fatwa basically already reflects religious moderation, namely by expressing opinions that allow the distribution of sacrificial meat to non-Muslims. However, the fatwa narrative does not explicitly provide stimulation for this practice to be associated with the context of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims as Indonesian citizens, or refer to specific laws and regulations that provide legal standing for this practice to be carried out.

Second, in the aspect of tolerance, in the form of accepting differences of opinion, ideas, beliefs, and religious practices. Tolerance refers to being open-minded, inclusive, and thinking positively about differences in various aspects of life. Within this framework, religious fatwas published by Republika online media do not show any antipathy towards differences of opinion. Although several studies state that sometimes reporting in Republika does not totally show an inclusive and pluralist attitude, for example reporting on Chinese New Year celebrations by ethnic Chinese in Indonesia (Santosa, 2016), in this study it was found that almost all fatwas showed an inclusive and open attitude towards dissent. The most representative fatwa to support this is about interfaith greetings which often triggers debate. Republika here states that (15/11/2019):

*Apakah bersalam kepada kepada kafir itu hal baru? Dia menegaskan tidak dan bukan bid'ah. Dia menyebut ulama salaf melakukan- nya. Sahabat Nabi, Ibnu Mas'ud, biasa melakukannya. Sahabat lain, Abu Umamah, siapa saja disalami olehnya, baik Muslim mau pun kafir. Bukankah agama mengajarkan kami untuk menebar salam kedamaian? (Is greeting the infidels a new thing? He emphasized that it was not and was not bid'ah. He said that the *salaf* scholars did it. The Prophet's companion, Ibn*

Mas'ud, used to do this. Another friend, Abu Umamah, greeted everyone, both Muslims and infidels. Doesn't religion teach us to spread greetings of peace?) (Ichsan, 2019).

On the other hand, there are a number of discussions that should not be opened up for different opinions, because it would be counterproductive to the values of religious moderation, for example fatwas on vandalism laws (Saputra, 2021), racism (Ichsan, 2020a), and violence in the name of religion (Ichsan, 2020b). In fact, opening up space for differences of opinion in these discussions shows that this fatwa is contrary to the spirit of religious moderation. At this point, the content of Republika's fatwa has shown a clear partiality. The same thing was also seen when Republika reported on LGBT issues where the sources referred to were only figures who were against the LGBT campaign, while pro-LGBT figures were not invited, although some people considered this to be an unfair attitude or did not cover both sides (Suranto et al., 2017).

Third, in the aspect of anti-violence and discrimination. Violence and discrimination in question are actions driven by ideology or understanding that want rapid change in the social and political system. In this context, attitudes of violence in the name of religion are often termed religious radicalism. Therefore, anti-violence and anti-discrimination mean the opposite attitude that seeks to ward off or anticipate such acts of violence. So far, the fatwas in Republika online in general have shown an attitude of anti-violence and discrimination, for example by demonstrating an attitude against acts of racism, violence, destruction of places of worship, or disbelief towards fellow believers or other religions.

This anti-violence attitude can also be seen in Republika's reports on cases of violence with a religious background, such as the violence against Ahmadiyah, the Temanggung Church, and Shia in Sampang (Ayani, 2013). In fact, when it comes to defining terms or concepts related to violence, Republika dares to be different from other media which also call themselves Islamic media, for example when interpreting the term deradicalization where Republika tends to mean the mainstream and is in contrast to Arrahmah media, which looks the other way around (Fikri, 2013).

However, in some of the fatwas, Republika does not seem to be firm in demonstrating an attitude of anti-violence or anti-discrimination, for example in the fatwa prohibiting interfaith greetings (Ichsan, 2019). This fatwa does not provide strict limits on which parts are prohibited, which parts are permitted, and which parts should be highlighted to foster harmony between religious communities. If related to the condition of Indonesia which is prone to conflict over interfaith issues, a fatwa like this opens up opportunities for latent violence-based attitudes to emerge, and one day become manifest violence. Hefni's study confirms that sometimes the fatwa in Republika does not refer to indicators of religious moderation as narrative framing as the basis for managing moderate religious life (Hefni, 2020). A similar condition occurred when Republika reported on the bombing incident in Surabaya in 2018, for example, where Republika tended to see this problem as merely the government's inaction, but barely highlighted the potential for violence against individual Muslims (Setiawan & Suyoto, 2020).

Fourth, in the aspect of acceptance of tradition. Appreciation for tradition means an attitude of accepting religious amaliyah practices that have synergized with local culture and traditions, of course as long as this assimilation does not conflict with the main teachings or principles of religion (Iskandar et al., 2022; Phalet & Fleischmann, 2018). This aspect is not much highlighted by religious fatwas in *Republika* online, because there are no specific topics related to tradition and culture at all. However, of all the existing topics, there are several that have the potential to be brought into the discussion about appreciating tradition. The topic of building harmony between religions, for example, is very open to be positioned within a certain cultural and traditional framework (Forbes & Zampelli, 2014), and within the methodology of Islamic law there is the theory of *'urf* or *maslahah* which has the potential to be used to frame themes of social-religion relation (Harun et al., 2021), but these fatwas do not mention this element at all.

One fatwa that can be pointed out in this context is regarding the law on travel to non-Muslim places of worship which was broadcast by *Republika* on October 7, 2021. It stated that:

Ada semacam kesepakatan di kalangan ulama bahwa berwisata ke tempat-tempat ibadah non-Muslim hukumnya haram jika memenuhi empat unsur. Pertama, jika tujuannya untuk mengagungkan dan membesarkan tempat-tempat itu. Kedua, jika bersamaan dengan perayaan atau ritual peribadatan mereka. Ketiga, jika saat masuk ke sana wajib mengikuti syiar-syiar agama mereka, seperti mengucapkan sesuatu atau harus memberi tanda hormat kepada benda-benda tertentu. Keempat, jika menimbulkan fitnah terhadap agama Islam, seperti munculnya dugaan bahwa dengan masuknya seorang muslim ke sana, berarti menyetujui atau memberikan dukungan kepada agama tersebut (There is a kind of agreement among scholars that traveling to non-Muslim places of worship is haraam if four elements are met. First, if the aim is to glorify and enlarge those places. Second, if it coincides with their celebration or worship ritual. Third, if you enter there, you must follow their religious teachings, such as saying something or having to pay respects to certain objects. Fourth, if it causes slander against the religion of Islam, such as the emergence of allegations that by entering a Muslim there, it means agreeing or providing support for that religion) (Nasrul, 2021).

This fatwa meets the elements of tolerance and displays an inclusive image (although there are still certain conditions that must be met). However, this fatwa only approaches this problem from a legal aspect (permissible or forbidden), while the cultural aspect is actually overlooked, even though this one has the potential to be developed to further strengthen the building of inter-religious harmony in Indonesia, However, these fatwas do not mention this element at all.

There is another fatwa in *Republika* which contains elements of culture, which is about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. *Republika* on 21/05/2021 wrote that:

Melakukan ikhtiar maksimal untuk membantu keluarga dan saudara sesama muslim seperti di Palestina itu menjadi tuntunan dan dua hal yang tak perlu dipertentangkan (Doing the maximum effort to help families and fellow Muslims like in Palestine is a guide and two things that don't need to be contradicted) (Ichsan, 2021).

It appears that the portion of cultural content in the fatwa is limited only to the context of relations among Muslims who have different territorial and cultural differences. The fatwa does not at all present aspects of cultural education to the public in order to be accommodative towards local culture or religious practices that have certain localized values. Indeed, the discussion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is full of themes of geopolitics, defense and security, international law, and religion, but these issues can also be seen from the context of social interaction within a cultural frame, or at least provide education to readers in Indonesia to reflect on the conflict as a consideration in building cultural insights supporting the agenda of religious moderation.

Eventually, the fatwas in Republika have carried out the agenda of religious moderation proportionally, but in some other aspects it is still unclear. Likewise, in its reports, Republika has actually shown a clear commitment to the campaign for religious moderation. However, when there was resistance by a number of individuals towards this campaign, Republika tended to only see this issue from the side of the government's weakness and overlooked the existence of individual tendencies (Sunaryanto et al., 2022). When a number of parties warned of the potential for radicalism by certain individuals in a number of tertiary institutions, Republika's reporting showed the attitude that this should not be feared, in fact what Republika is demanding is the role of the state, not individuals on campus (Pradana, 2016). These tendencies which overlook individual potential to act counterproductively with religious moderation are also evident in some of the Islamic fatwas adopted by Republika.

CONCLUSION

Religious moderation has received adequate space in fatwas related to *fiqh siyasa* (state-politics) published by Republika in general. However, at several points there is still unclear narrative which can be interpreted as a blurring of commitment to religious moderation. For the first indicator, national commitment, moderation of religion in the media is already evident in formal affairs, but is still unclear in non-formal matters. On the second indicator, acceptance of differences, Republika has taken a moderate position that represents the majority without discriminating against minorities. However, the choice to always prioritize a middle way has become a trap for Republika to always tend to only one opinion, thus ignoring the diversity of opinions. For the third indicator, anti-violence, Republika has shown an anti-violence and discrimination attitude, but this attitude has only been seen in manifest acts of violence, while the potential for latent violence has not been seen. Meanwhile, for the fourth indicator, which is accommodative to local culture, the fatwas here hardly mention it. Discussions about cultural diversity are often limited to territorial considerations and interpretations of the majority religion. On the surface, these fatwas in the media have strongly supported the agenda of religious moderation in Indonesia, but for deeper consideration, they show ambiguity.

This study is still limited to fatwas that contain state issues or are relevant to state issues. Meanwhile, the content of religious moderation should be seen in other issues that

have a wider reach. Therefore, this deficiency can be continued by the next researcher in order to get a more comprehensive picture. It is also possible to develop methods in a quantitative direction to capture trends or percentages of how moderate fatwa content is in mainstream media. However, this study may contribute to providing a qualitative picture of the extent of the commitment of a mainstream media in Indonesia in actualizing religious moderation campaigns and programs to create benefits for all citizens, and that can be one of considerations in developing program and making relevant strategic policies.

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