



AL-AZHAR AND MODERATE: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ALUMNI AL-AZHAR OF EGYPT IN STRENGTHENING UMMAH UNITY IN INDONESIA THROUGH THE CONCEPT OF "WASATHIYYAH"

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Abstracts

Religious moderation is a discourse echoed by the Indonesian government recently in the context of an effort to stem the thoughts of radicalism, terrorism and anarchism that can destroy the integrity of the Indonesian State. Al-Azhar Egypt is one of the leading and oldest religious institutions trying to bridge the multidimensional conflict tensions triggered by religious issues with its wasathiyyah concept. This article attempts to explore the role of al-Azhar West Java (PAAM) alumni in spreading the dialogue of moderation of religion in West Java and the association of this organization with Al-Azhar Egypt. The author is actively involved in conducting observations and interactive interviews with figures and alumni of al-Azhar, West Java, through the ethnographic approach. Results of the discussion show that efforts to strengthen the wasathiyyah azhari concept in the West Java region are carried out by supporting work programs in several fields, namely Education, Da'wah, Research and Development, Social, Community Relations, Information Technology.

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Introduction

After the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate, a new phenomenon emerged in the public sphere of various models of da'wah movements in different parts of the world. The prominent Muslim historian Raghīb As-Sirjani believes that internal and external factors cause the downturn of Muslims. Among the causes of internal factors, namely the simultaneous defeat experienced by Muslims, Muslim leaders who lack integrity and morality, the role of the western media in propagating destructive, harmful content, the outbreak of corruption, and divisions that occur among Muslims. One of the external factors is gazwu al-fikr, or ideological war (As-Sirjani, 2003). The domination of the West towards Muslim countries gave rise to the phenomenon of a new model of the da'wah movement or what is popularly known as Islamism, where the agenda of this group is to realize modern political ideology to respond to and to

balance the secularism ideology echoed by the West and Europe by strengthening the existence of the doctrine of Islamic teachings (Fuad 2020; Roy 2004; Mandaville 2007, 2014). One model that has become the spotlight of the Islamic public and globally is the contemporary Salafi Jihadi militancy movement. Muslim observers think this movement raises the discourse of stemming Western political domination in colonialism and imperialism over Muslim countries. Bernard Haykel, a Western thinker, has termed this kind of da'wah movement model with the term "Salafism", in which their vision is the reformulation and revitalization of ritual worship practices regarding As-Salafu As-Shalih (Anwar, 2018). Salafis see Western culture as dangerous for the life of Islam and its followers (Hirschkind, 2009).

The Salafi Jihadi group emerged in an extremist manner as a group that could represent exclusive groups that refused and wanted to restore Western domination to its place. In classical Islamic literature, historical construction shows that the genealogy of Salafism ideology leads to the main characters, namely Ahmad bin Hanbal (780-855 AD), Taqiyuddin Ibn Taimiyah (1263-1328 AD) and Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792 AD) (Umar & Woodward, 2020). The last figure gave birth to a Wahabbism Movement, namely a reformation movement in the 18th century, based in Najd, the Arab Center (Meijer, 2009). The fluttering of Wahabbi's ideology in the country of Saudi Arabia seems to have influenced political developments in several other Arabian countries such as in Yemen, a similar doctrine was brought by a reformist Muhammad ibn Ali al-Saukani (w.1834), in India by Shah Waliyullah (1703-1762 AD), in India, the transnational movement of Jemaah Tabligh was initiated by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944). The Salafi Reformist Movement had appeared in several Middle Eastern countries at the end of the 19th century; among its figures were Muhammad Abduh (Egypt, 1849-1905), Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (Persi, 1839-1897), and Muhamad Rashid Rida (Syria, 1865-1935). The distinguishing characteristic between the two poles is the emphasis on Western cultural, political and economic threats. The Wahabbi Pole emphasizes the revolutionary movement purely directed at the purification of doctrine. According to Zimmerman, some extremist movements have connectivity with other transnational groups. Al-Qaeda fosters relationships and supports the local Somali Islamist group, ISIS, into the Libyan theatre while remaining loyal to its leadership (Zimmerman, 2017) so that serious attention must be paid to their existence. Issues related to the discourse and discourse of the Salafi Jihadi attracted the interest of scholars from various circles, especially from Western intellectuals. In the research conducted by the author, there is at least some research related to the issue of raising the discourse of religious moderation and its relation to contradictory actions with Islamic teachings such as radicalism or terrorism. (Buehler, 2013; Burhani, 2012; Lazar, 2016; Sheikhzadegan, 2020; Tang et al., 2011; You & Yoo, 2016; Zekrgoo & Tajer, 1980). Among the studies above, most of the studies discuss and study the activities of extremist Salafi jihadi groups in several regions of the country. (Anwar, 2018; Bezabeh, 2012; Damir-Geilsdorf & Menzfeld, 2016; De Koning, 2013; Haron & Hussin, 2013; Hidayatullah, 2014; Mentak, 2011; Østebø, 2014; Warren & Gilmore, 2014; Woodward, 2017; Zimmerman, 2017).

The development of the Da'wah movement of the extremist Salafi Jihadi groups, which is seen as having departed from the framework of the fundamental teachings of Islam, seems to have been responded to very quickly by scholars and masyaikh Al-Azhar University, which is one of the oldest Islamic Education Institutions in the world. Umar Hasyim, the former chancellor of Al-Azhar and the charismatic scholar of Egypt, considered that Al-Azhar and Egypt had a crucial role and position to fortify Islam from the enemies' efforts Islam to divide the ranks of Islam. (Hasyim, 2009). Senior scholars of Al-Azhar such as Sheikh Muhamad Al-Khurāsi, Sheikh Ibrāhīm Al-Farmāwī, Sheikh Abdul Bāqi Al-Kulainī, Sheikh Abdullah bin Muhammad As-Syabrāwī, Shaykh Ibrāhīm Ad-Dzowāhirī are Islamic scholars who become references and qibla khazanah. In various countries (Khufaji & Subhi, 2011). The current Grand

Mufti of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmad Thayyib, even openly invites all stakeholders, alumni, and Muslims to promote wasathiyah da'wah (religious moderation) as a bridge unity of the Ummah. Ahmad Thayyib, with the support of Al-Azhar scholars, allegedly wanted to fortify Muslims from contradicting views with Islamic teachings. In line with Ahmad Thayyib's opinion, Syeikh Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, one of the scholars who graduated from Al-Azhar, is even seen as the Father of Modern Islamic Moderation. (Gräf, 2007; Opwis, 2017; Warren & Gilmore, 2014), emphasized that the principle of ath-tatharruf (extremism) is not included in Islamic teachings. Islam invites its people to be at-tawāzun (balanced) in all respects, meaning that the concept of absolute balance is applied in all aspects. (Al-Qardhawi, 2008). The discourse of Al-Azhar with its kemesiran has at least been carried out by several foreign researchers (Aviv & Levy, 2014; El-wereny, 2018; Hatina, 2007; Hattemer, 1999; Kandil, 2011; Konrad, 2011; Peacock, 2020; Woltering, 2014).

Religious moderation is very much in line with the vision and mission of the prophets and messengers that aim to strengthen the unity of the people, not to divide, to strengthen harmony, not to create enmity. In addition, this is certainly in line with the movement established by the government to maintain national stability by strengthening religious unity even though it has a variety of socio-cultures as far as the author's observations, there has been no structured and systematic scientific study related to the actions and roles of Al-Azhar Egyptian alumni in West Java to strengthen the unity of the Ummah in West Java in particular, and in Indonesia in general. The principle of wasathiyah (religious moderation) is at least seen as playing an active role in minimizing dangerous ideas such as radicalism, terrorism, and even anarchism. Using an ethnographic approach, the author tries to make observations and observations for six months from July to December 2020. The author explores related data from alumni and stakeholders of the Al-Azhar Egypt Alumni Association of West Java. The research will be focused on three main research problems which, in the view of the author, are closely related, first, exploring the dynamics of religious moderation discourse in Al-Azhar and Egypt; second, what are the dynamics of speech on religious moderation in Indonesia, and third, what is the role and strategy of Al alumni -Azhar West Java to realize its efforts to strengthen the unity of the people with its wasathiyah principles.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach, which seeks to explore an understanding based on a methodology that investigates a social phenomenon and human problem. In this approach, the researcher creates a complex picture, examines words, reports detailed views of the respondents, and conducts studies in natural situations. The method of collecting data is by using observation, interview, documentation and focused discussion techniques. technical data analysis, the researcher did by analyzing the content of the interview answers and the results of the observations made, then the researcher conducted an in-depth discussion of the contents of the written or documented information material, then combined the results of the interview with studies of appropriate journal articles and books and became a reference study.

Results and Discussion

The Movement for Religious Moderation in Egypt and Al-Azhar University

Egypt is a country that has a long history of building human civilization. This country has a major contribution to the birth of religious religions, both heavenly and ardhī. Discussing the discourse of the developmental movement and the direction of the trend of religious moderation in Egypt cannot be separated from the developing global phenomena. Borrowing from the framework of the sociological functionalism theory that was born by the sociologists Robert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Parsons and Merton where this theory states that the

condition of society as a system of structures or closely related parts that function and operate harmoniously together (Tischler, 2011). If we relate this functionalist theory to the phenomenon of the emergence of the religious moderation movement in a global scope, then the basic assumption is to examine when is the phenomenon of the emergence of movement of extreme groups such as the Salafi Jihadi. Referring to a research study conducted by Fuad and strengthened by the results of M. V Bruinessen's study in one of his researches entitled Ghazwul fikri or Arabisation? Indonesian Muslim responses to globalization, the phenomenon of the extreme Salafi Jihadi movement with the Islamism movement first appeared in the public domain around the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Fuad, 2020; Mandaville, 2007, 2014; Schielke & Th, 2007).

According to Peacock, the discourse of the Islamist movement in Egypt has increased with the efforts to build a reformist group project by playing the support of the mobilization of the press to pursue change simultaneously. Therefore, according to him, State Institutions play a key role in articulating the response to the framework of Islamic reform (Peacock, 2020). The development of an increasingly complex model of the da'wah movement seems to have an impact on other sectors, including the discourse on the issue of gender equality, where the politics of the secular Egyptian state, both in the colonial and post-colonial period, depended heavily on the role of religion in its legitimacy process (Mclarney, 2012). The development of education in Egypt has been felt since the beginning of the 19th century when the country developed many new institutions aimed at expanding the influence of state authority. The education system was adopted from several European developed countries in order to improve the quality of education in Egypt (Konrad, 2011).

Egypt's Al-Azhar is one of the most influential centers of Sunni authority in the world (Zebiri, 1991). One of Al-Azhar's most central thoughts is the concept of religious moderation or what is called *Islam Wasathyyah*. Al-Azhar University was founded in the 10th century by the Fatimid dynasty. At present, Al-Azhar is an educational institution that has become the center of knowledge for Islamic science claimants around the world, and is often the main reference for global Islamic discourse. Syeikh Abdul Halim Mahmud Saltut, former Chancellor of Al-Azhar, argues that Islam is a moderate religion which is composed of two essential components of the creed and shari'ah. This religion contains elements of theory and implementation as well as actualization (Arif, 2020). As a charismatic scholar and expert on Islamic law, Abdul Halim Mahmud tries to make innovations played by Al-Azhar in order to ease the tension between aspects of civil law and Islamic law (Albo & Meital, 2014). Nearly 30,000 students each year register to study at Al-Azhar, where most of them aspire to become scholars who can benefit society through preaching. According to Berglund, the Islamic Movement is seen as a stereotypical monolithic institution built with the same perspectives and attitudes. Scholars have characterized daily religious life as the religion of privatization and spirituality (Berglund 2014; Hamberg 2009).

Al-Azhar students are a fusion of many religious backgrounds such as Sunni, Shia, Salafi, and so on. Al-Azhar never imposes ideology, worship practices on every student, but builds a moderate mindset. Various efforts have been made by contemporary Al-Azhar scholars in order to harmonize Muslims by strengthening the bonds of brotherhood among Muslims, one of which is by trying to open space for dialogue and scientific discussion among Islamic groups. The former Egyptian Mufti Syeikh Ali Jum'ah even clearly explained that uniting Muslims is an obligation, repairing conflicts between Muslims is part of Islamic teachings (Jum'ah, 2008). This is in line with the Al-Quran contained in QS Ali Imran: 103 as well as the testimony of the hadith of Rosulullah SAW, where he said "*Believers for other believers are like buildings that support one another*". Harmonization efforts in Ali Jum'ah's view do not mean merging the ideologies of fighting groups into one, but according to him, it is more towards avoiding blind fanaticism

towards the group, and being tolerant towards others, so that the seeds of hostility can be minimized. In the early 20th century, the leading Al-Azhar clerics with moderate Shi'ah scholars held a meeting to discuss harmonization of theology among Sunni-Shi'ites. The conclusion of the meeting resulted in various formulations which in essence were that not all Shi'ah followers had extreme views that deviated from religious teachings, there were even certain groups that were in line with the understanding of the Ahl Sunnah wal Jamaah creed.

The contemporary wasathiyyah movement in this era is being promoted and published by Yusuf Al-Qardhawi intensively through international forums, mainstream media, and even in his works. Yusuf Al-Qardhawi's persistence and consistency in spreading the wasathiyyah concept earned him the title of recognition as the father of modern Islamic wasathiyyah today. Yusuf Al-Qardhawi is one of the charismatic scholars who graduated from Al-Azhar. He was born in the village of Shift Turab, Al-Gharbiyyah Province, Egypt in 1926 AD. Al-Qardhawi had memorized the Koran as a child, at the age of 10 he mastered the science of Tajweed. Al-Qardhawi carried out his studies at the Tsanawiyah and Aliyah madrasa levels at Al-Azhar and almost always won the class. Precisely in 1953, Al-Qardhawi graduated from the Ushuluddin Al-Azhar Faculty. In 1958 Al-Qardhawi completed his master's degree at the Adab faculty. Then in 1973, Al-Qardhawi completed his doctoral studies with a summa cum laude score at the same faculty with the dissertation "Zakat and Its Effect on Social Life". This dissertation was later known as "Fiqh Zakat". (Arif, 2020). Seeing his educational studies starting from adolescence to his doctoral process, this will make Al-Qardhawi have a frame of mind that is in line with Al-Azhar's wasathiyyah ideology. In Arabic literature there is a popular expression "*Al-Insān Ibn Biatibi*" a human being is like a child born from the conditions of his environment. (Rawwas, 1988). This paradigm seems very logical and in tune if later Al-Qardhawi built his Da'wah Movement based on Al-Azhar's ideological features. Al-Qardhawi received various awards, including the Faishal Award in 1412 H in the study of Islamic sciences. Then he received an award as a world Muslim scientist and scholar by the King of Malaysia in 1996 AD and from the Kingdom of Brunei Darussalam Sultan Hasanul Bolkiah and Islamic Fiqh in 1997 AD saw his many works with no less than hundreds of good works from the field of sharia. morals, politics, economics, fiqh, and others. In 2000, he founded the World Ulema Association (*Al-Ittihad Al-Alamiy Li Ulamail Muslimin*).

The da'wah movement carried out by Yusuf Al-Qardhawi prioritizes the principle of *at-tawāzun* (balance). This can be seen from some of his phenomenal works which emphasize that Islam teaches the principle of religious moderation. ((Al-Qardhawi, 2001, 2008, 2009), of his many works, this is what according to some scholars, Al-Qardhawi deserves to be called the father of modern Islamic moderation. (Bashori, 2013). According to Al-Qardhawi, one's knowledge and universal understanding must be built on two main characteristics, namely *As-Syumul* (Universal) and *At-Takamul* (Completing One Another). According to him, this concept must be included in the areas of faith and syaria'h, knowledge and worship, insight and morals, world and religion. (Al-Qardhawi, 2009). The increasingly complex problems of society require an effective solution, one of which is the concept of believing in the main reference source of the Al-Quran and as-Sunnah for the application of Sharia. However, Al-Qardhawi emphasized that a comprehensive understanding that is in line with maqasid syari'ah (the global goal of religion) will bring about enlightening solutions, not ones that drown (Al-Qardhawi, 2009). Islamic syari'at is a way of life that will continue to be in harmony with the times and places (Al-Qardhawi, 1993). This is because Islam is a religion that motivates its adherents to always do good deeds, where these good deeds must be built on the following principles *As-Syumul* (Universal), *At-Tanawwu* (Diversity), *Al-Istimrar* (Continuity), *Al-Kbulus Lil Khair* (Sincere Intention to Do Good) (Al-Qardhawi, 2007). Radicalism, extremism, and the ideology of terrorism were formed at the outset due to a wrong understanding of the Koran and Hadith,

therefore there needs to be a re-education effort by teaching how Islam encourages everyone to understand Islam in a kaffah (comprehensive) manner, so that efforts this will minimize the epidemic of radicalism (Al-Qardhawi, 1996).

In his work entitled *Dzābiratu Al-Ghulummū*, Al-Qardhawi wants to correct misconceptions regarding the Salafī Jihadi group carrying the ideology of takfiri without comprehensively understanding how a Muslim perspective faces the legal status of takfiri towards someone. He wrote this treatise on the background of complaints submitted by several Muslim groups, one of which came from Yemen, where this extreme group believes that Muslims other than their own groups are considered kafir. According to Al-Qardhawi, saying "*At-Takfir*" or kafir a Muslim is very dangerous and has complicated consequences related to both worldly and ukhrowi aspects. (Al-Qardhawi, 1990). In his explanation, Al-Qardhawi argued that the ideology of takfiri was born due to four essential factors. First, the epidemic of kufr and conversion of religion or apostasy openly in a community area. Second, religious leaders who are too ignorant and ignorant of these groups. Third, the imposition of the application of an ideology brought by a religious leader without being conceived on the principle of convenience. Fourth, the lack of scientific tools, especially for the study of fiqh (Al-Qardhawi, 1990). Al-Qardhawi continued, there must be a right effort in reconstructing our frame of mind in building a paradigm in this takfiri case, namely with *Takfir Man Yastahiq* (infidel for those who are worthy). According to him, an indicator of a person being legally punished by takfir is someone who openly believes that he is an infidel. The next paradigm is that there must be an effort to separate the category "kafir" from a person's case, not to be beaten. Al-Qardhawi took one reference by referring to Ibn Taimiyyah's opinion in which he argued:

"An utterance can be punished with kafir, so that saying makes the person punished as infidel. There are also those who argue that whoever pronounces this sentence is an infidel. However, if there are certain groups of people who say the same sentence, they are not immediately punished by the same infidel. Must be built based on evidence until it is feasible "

Yusuf Al-Qardhawi emphasized that the context of kafir a Muslim is very dangerous for several reasons, first marriage becomes invalid, husband and wife are obliged to divorce their partners. Second, the children were not allowed to be under his care. Third, alienated from society. Fourth, if you don't repent, you can be punished as apostasy. Fifth, when you die, you don't deserve to be taken care of like Muslims. Sixth, get la'nat from Allah SWT. Seventh, do not inherit (Al-Qardhawi, 1996). This serious consequence is Al-Qardhawi's top priority in the context of preaching to spread moderate views (*wasathiyah*) both offline and online via his official website to be more careful for individuals and groups in punishing someone with kafir terms. (Gräf, 2007).

The Birth of Discourse on Religious Moderation in Indonesia

Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest Muslim population in the world. Indonesian society is diverse so that this can trigger an "integrating force" that causes clashes between cultures, between races, ethnicities, religions and between values of life. In a multicultural society, interaction among humans is quite high in intensity, so that the social ability of community members to interact between humans needs to be owned by each member. (Akhmadi, 2008). The diversity of ethnicities, races, religions, and differences in language and life values that occur in Indonesia often results in various conflicts and triggers the birth of radicalism ideology. Modernization has generated anxiety among religious leaders regarding the tension between modern socio-cultural contexts and religion (Ammerman, 1987; Fader, 2009; John O'Brien, 2017; Olshan et al., 1994; Tavory, 2016). Indonesia is also known as a country that upholds its religious values and teachings. The spirit of tolerance and respect for the

religious rights of others always colors and is reflected in the nation and state. Pancasila as the nation's philosophy unites diversity in the shade of the nation state and becomes a positive force for realizing unity and integrity.

The spirit of religious moderation in Indonesia coincided with the rampant events of extreme movements that began with partial religious literacy, understanding religion was not comprehensive so that the incoming ideology was seen as religious doctrine. Karl Marx in conflict theory states that every individual or group strives to achieve maximum benefits (Tischler, 2011). On the other hand, Emile Durkheim offers a functionalism theory to measure the phenomenon of society, in which this theory views society as a system of structures or closely related parts that function and operate in harmony. The paradigm developed by Marx and Durkheim can at least be used as an analytical knife to measure the phenomenon of the emergence of extreme movements in Indonesia so that the public responds to it with the *wasathiyah* (religious moderation) movement to minimize the dangers of extreme movements (Parhan, Nugraha, and Islamy 2022). At least the two sociological theories above are in accordance with Akhmadi's opinion in his research studies. According to him, the religious conflict that occurred in Indonesia was triggered by an exclusive religious attitude and the existence of contestation between religious groups in gaining support from the people that were not based on a tolerant attitude, because each used his strength to win, thus triggering conflict (Akhmadi, 2008).

The emergence of an extremist movement that occurred in Indonesia was accompanied by brutal actions at least after the collapse of the Soeharto regime in 1998. The massacre of the archipelago ulama was followed by the tragedy in Poso in 1998 and the tragedy in Ambon in 1999. The terrorism incident which shook Indonesia then continued to the Bali Bombing which occurred on 12 October 2002, this action caused severe damage, where as many as 202 people died in the tragedy. This extreme action has an impact on the exclusion of the International World against Indonesia. The international community has flocked to follow tourism activities to Indonesia, resulting in a decrease in the country's foreign exchange earnings. Furthermore, there was the Thamrin Bombing, this terrorist act took place in the area of Jalan MH. Thamrin on January 14, 2016. Then there was the Surabaya Bombing, this explosion occurred in three churches in Surabaya, the entrance to the Surabaya Police, East Java on May 13, 2018. The terrorist attacks of the Sidoarjo Flats, the Tugu Kartosuro Pospam bomb were acts of terrorism committed. by a group of irresponsible people who portray themselves as Islam. The above terrorist acts have at least aroused the Indonesian government's impulse to respond and take quick preventive action to spread the concept of religious moderation to the public.

According to Luqman Hakim Saepudin, the former Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, explained that the religious moderation movement in Indonesia was carried out with three main strategies, namely: first, disseminating ideas, knowledge and understanding of religious moderation to all levels of society; second, the institutionalization of religious moderation into binding programs and policies; and third, integration of the formulation of religious moderation in the 2020-2024 Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional (RPJMN) (Penyusun, 2013). The Ministry of Religion as the Government Institution that regulates and manages religious discourse has launched religious moderation as the prevention of acts of radicalism, terrorism, anarchism which are dangerous to the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). As the holder of the mandate of the Government, the *wasathiyah* principles are applied by the Ministry of Religion in the area of marriage which is based on the Marriage Law No. 1/1974, where the Ministry of Religion is obliged to strengthen this moderate religious practice through the family system. Noble values such as a sense of justice, mutual respect, and balance are taught by Islam (Ushama, 2014), instilled in the family through intensive coaching, starting from counseling, and guidance at the office of the

Ministry of Religion to the service level of the sub-district Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). The Ministry of Religion establishes a frame of mind and builds a framework from valid religious sources (Penyusun, 2013). Religious moderation echoed by scholars and government officials upholds the values of *tasāmuh*, plural, and *ukhuwwah*, where the main focus of this understanding is to maintain unity and integrity among Muslims and build civilization and humanity. (Fahri & Zainuri, 2019). This is in line with what is contained in the Al-Quran QS. Al-Furqan: 67. Islamic teachings in Indonesia are carried out in a peaceful way, not forcing and respecting the values of local cultural wisdom. (Agis et al., 2018). The concepts and ideas of Nusantara Islam offer anti-mainstream concepts and ideas, where this concept is expected to be able to build social, cultural and religious harmony, as well as build civilization and humanity in Indonesia.

The Indonesian government strives to protect the state ideology which is based on Pancasila from acts of terrorism and radicalism. Law No. In 2003, article 2 of the national education system explains that national education is education based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia which is rooted in religious values, Indonesian national culture and responsive to the demands of changing times. The above law is very clear that religious harmony must be maintained and maintained, therefore religious moderation is needed to support this effort. The curriculum is the heart of the world of education, therefore it is a serious concern for Indonesian education experts to produce curricula that consume religious moderation (Parhan, Romli, et al. 2021). According to Ekawati, a moderate curriculum map is useful for policy making in order to build multicultural-inclusive awareness to minimize religious radicalism. (Ekawati et al., 2019). The pattern of anti-radicalism education must be applied from an early age to the tertiary level, at the stage of academic education in tertiary institutions, students are the last agents who must get a study of religious moderation so that a sense of unity will be maintained (Ali, 2020).

Paguyuban Alumni Al-Azhar Mesir (PAAM) we and the Wasathiyah Movement in West Java

Birth Paguyuban Alumni Al-Azhar Mesir (PAAM)

The West Java Al-Azhar Alumni Association (PAAM) is an organization that houses Al-Azhar Egyptian alumni from West Java who had studied at Al-Azhar Cairo, Egypt. This organization was first established in 2016 at the initiation of several community leaders, who in fact are Al-Azhar alumni. West Java PAAM Upholding National Mission; Maintaining the Integrity of the Country Based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution That Respect Diversity and Local Wisdom In Accordance with Islamic Teachings and Ethics. The establishment of PAAM is a response and internal encouragement of paraalumni in order to strengthen ties among paraalumni and build consolidation in order to foster and contribute to the people of West Java in particular, Indonesia in general. PAAM's alumni network comes from a wide variety of diverse backgrounds. Most of them are involved in the world of education and pesantrenan practitioners, however, there are also those who try to work in other worlds such as politics, economics, social, culture, and others. In one of the interviews the author conducted on Zainurrofiq, the former Secretary General of PAAM, according to him, the alumni of Al-Azhar West Java have a great hope for the birth of the PAAM organization, namely they want to fight in *jama'i* (collectively) in order to build the civilization of the people of West Java and to intensify the *da'wah* program so that the people of West Java have a spiritual spirit and uphold religious tolerance in society (Parhan and Alifa 2020). This is reflected in PAAM's vision, namely "Guyub Sauryunan Building Civilizations". Therefore, in building a bridge towards the realization of a *wasathiyah* human civilization, PAAM alumni build a blueprint agenda for practical programs that are oriented towards planned and directed actions including a) strengthening the

relationship between all components of the alumni of Al-Azhar Egypt, West Java, b) Strengthening (ta'ziz al-wasathiyah) the da'wah wasathiyah azhariyyah project through program contributions, c) Supporting the development program of the West Java provincial government in realizing JABAR JUARA, d) making member data banks periodically and continuously, e) creating real work programs and contributive to members, f) building a foundation for organizational independence and member welfare, g) creating the "West Java PAAM" application to facilitate organizational management and program realization, h) building integrated partnership with institutional-based alumni potential (PAAM Community), and i) Establish the main secretariat of West Java PAAM.

The da'wah movement initiated by PAAM on the wasathiyah discourse has similarities with social movement theory. According to Diani, a social movement is a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and organizations that are involved in political or cultural conflicts on the basis of a shared collective identity. (M Diani, 1992). Stuart Hall, a contemporary intellectual who initiated the theory of identity, said that the rise of global capitalism as a result of weakening state boundaries and forms of local identity contributed to creating a new ethnicity. (Hall, 1986). Contemporary social movement theories have emerged in tune with the increase in these phenomena. According to Melluci, at first the social movement was more towards a movement carried out by the workers (Melluci, 1992), but apparently over time the term shifted to denote different realities, situations and phenomena (Mario Diani & Eyerman, 1992; Tilly, 2004). The phenomenon of social movements is conceptually triggered by tension, polarization, and consistency of differentiation (Crossley, 2002; Klandermans, 1997).

The birth of PAAM is certainly a response to the rise of Islamization echoed by salafism groups who tend to be extreme in their preaching activities and to strengthen the integral identity that this organization is part of an official organization under the auspices of Al-Azhar Egypt. According to Zainurrofiq, the concept of wasathiyah is very suitable and relevant if it is applied to a pluralistic Indonesian nation consisting of various socio-cultural differences where these differences are a trigger and are very vulnerable to ideological friction. The concept of wasathiyah (religious moderation) tries to bridge tensions and potential clashes of ideology by being wise, balanced, mediating, and inviting Indonesians to strengthen their sense of unity. Islam teaches its adherents to be mature and maintain a sense of ukhuwwah Islamiyyah as contained in Al-Quran surah Ali Imran (3) verse 103, which holds fast to the teachings of Allah and maintains the absolute unity and unity of religious orders. Da'wah wasathiyah is an appeal and da'wah echoed by Al-Azhar, in an interview Grand Sheikh Al-Azhar Ahmad Thayyeb advised when visiting Indonesia:

"Even though we have different schools of thought, we must return to the right path and the path of unity. Muslims must look for similarities, not look for differences. Muslims are prohibited from disbelieving their fellow Muslims, especially since their Qibla and prayers are the same. Likewise, when someone has sinned, do not make it easy to disbelieve. We must teach our children the correct understanding of the Ahlusunnah wal Jamaah creed "

The narrative of Grand Sheikh Al-Azhar Ahmad Thayyeb regarding wasathiyah religious moderation is his concern for the current condition of Muslims who are easy to compete with one another. In fact, one of the visions of the teachings of Islam is a religion that is rahmatan lil alamin to spread love for all nature. Wasathiyah is an ideology that is based on the ijma of the scholars in the context of theology and shari'ah. Wasathiyah PAAM in terms of theology refers to the theology developed by Imam Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari ra (873 AD - 935 AD) and Imam Abu Mansur Al-Maturidi ra (853 AD - 944 AD). Meanwhile, in the context of shari'ah, PAAM adopted the fiqh that had been initiated by the imams of schools such as the Hanafiyah school, the Malikiyah school, the Syafi'iyyah school and the Hanabilah school. As for the study

of tassawuf, it refers to the Sufistic concept developed by Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali ra (1058 AD -1111 AD). The concepts of theology and shari'ah are in line with the lecture curriculum applied by Al-Azhar Egypt.

West Java PAAM Network

According to Yopi Nurdiansyah, the PAAM alumni network is spread across most parts of West Java. According to Yopi Nurdiansyah, the current deputy head of PAAM, at least no less than 100 formal school-based educational institutions or Islamic boarding schools are registered and joined in the wasathiyah azhari network in the PAAM database. Most of the pesantren institutions consist of talim councils - talim assemblies that function as da'wah institutions and broadcast wasathiyah principles. Among the Islamic boarding schools that carry the wasathiyah concept in West Java, namely the Al-Kautsar Cianjur Islamic Boarding School, the Cintawana Tasikmalaya Islamic Boarding School, the Bahrul Ulum Awipari Islamic Boarding School in Tasikmalaya City, the Nuruzzaman Pesantren Pasir Angin Ujungberung, the Cirebon City Boarding School Cirebon Islamic School. (CIS) Cirebon, Darul Fikri Garut Islamic Boarding School (PPQT), Al-Masdukiyah Islamic Boarding School, Miftahul Khair Islamic Boarding School Rancaekek Bandung, Pondok Pesantren Aisyarahmat Cigentur Paseh, Darul Dogdag Ar-Raudah Cicalengka Islamic Boarding School, Ponpes Manonjaya, Husnul Khotimah Ciakar Islamic Boarding School Babussalam Al-Mughtariyyah Dago Bandung, and others. In addition to educational institutions, PAAM paraalumni take part in many other fields such as serving in the structural role of the Regional Government of West Java Province, Members of the Council in the Regional Province, Members of Political Parties, and some even serving as members of the Indonesian Parliament. One of the charismatic figures of PAAM who served and is currently serving is Prof. Dr. Rahmat Syafe'i, Lc, M.Ag, a community leader and alumni of Al-Azhar Egypt. He is the Chairperson of the Indonesian Ulema Council for West Java where he serves as Chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council for West Java.

PAAM Al-Azhar's connection with Al-Azhar Egypt

PAAM West Java is a branch organization that is under the auspices of the International Al-Azhar Alumni Organization (OIAA) Indonesia, where the Indonesian OIAA organization has intensive connections with Al-Azhar Egypt. Although PAAM does not directly touch Egyptian Al-Azhar officials, PAAM has an intense relationship with OIAA officials. The head of the Indonesian branch of the Al-Azhar Alumni International Organization (OIAA) is led by Muhamad Zainul Majdi or known as Tuan Guru Bajang (TGB). TGB is a figure of al-Azhar alumni who combines charismatic clerics and accomplished bureaucrats, so it's no wonder he served as the Governor of West Nusa Tenggara for two periods from 2008 to 2018. TGB has received an official award directly for his contribution in order to strengthen religious moderation values (*wasathiyah al-islam*) and national values in Indonesia from Grand Sheikh Al-Azhar Ahmad Thayyeb in 2019.

Al-Azhar Egypt has branches of Al-Azhar schools in Indonesia where the curriculum and some of its teaching staff are oriented there. In Indonesia, at least there are Al-Azhar Islamic schools scattered in big cities such as Bandung, Palembang, Banda Aceh, Pagar Alam, Yogyakarta, Sragen, Wonogiri, and Bali (member of Al-Azhar Cairo Indonesia). The existence of this school at least provides a strong relationship between the role of paraalumni in Indonesia and Al-Azhar in Cairo, Egypt. Most of al-Azhar schools have excellent programs in the form of Al-Quran memorization programs, Arabic Language Training, and Turats Reading Training. As for what distinguishes the tahfidz al-Quran Al-Azhar program from others, it is the method that has a clear scientific history. In addition, in Indonesia there have also been several Arabic Language Daurah (training) institutions which play an important role in guiding students who

wish to continue their studies at Al-Azhar University in Egypt. Among these institutions is PUSIBA (Center for Islamic Studies and Arabic Language) located in Jakarta which is the official branch of Markaz Lughah Cairo. In addition, there are also other institutions such as the Darul Azhar pesantren located in Cianjur where this pesantren trains students in training for entrance testing and Arabic language training.

In order to strengthen the consolidation of Al-Azhar alumni throughout Indonesia including the West Java PAAM organization, OIAA as the parent organization holds regular meetings which are held at least once a year. The agenda discussed in the internal meeting was more towards work programs that had been scheduled which referred to wasathiyah values. Also present were national figures and even from Al-Azhar Egypt Cairo itself at the meeting. Also attended by the Al-Azhar *masyaikh*s provided direction and Islamic treasures in order to increase the provisions of their cadres.

PAAM's Wasathiyah Movement in West Java

The religious moderation dakwah movement that Al-Azhar paraalumni in West Java are active in is at least carried out in a structured and directed way in a long- and short-term program. Da'wah activities carried out in a well-managed manner will produce a good level of effectiveness. In his missionary journey, according to Zainurrofiq, he stated that there were three main challenges faced by azhari da'wah activists, namely a) limited Operational Funds because there was no official assistance received by PAAM, either from Al-Azhar itself or other institutions, b) Strong salafi networks Wahabi in spreading his ideology is wrapped in the program of the Tahfidz Institute and Arabic Language Training Institute, and c) the lack of support provided by the government, both central and regional, in supporting its program activities. According to Zainurrofiq, this is the serious concern of cadres to find practical solutions.

In a further interview session, he also explained how the efforts were made to overcome the above challenges, including a) trying to find sources of funding both from domestic and foreign sources such as Qatar Charity, b) inviting Al-Azhar alumni who have competence in both Al-Quran and Arabic to create a curriculum based on the wasathiyah principle, especially among those who already have sanad, and c) try to coordinate and make approaches to local officials who are bridged by senior Azhari figures who have a relationship with them.

The current ideological conflict in the Islamic world brings together two main poles, namely the Salafi Jihadi who is more popularly known as Wahabbism, which is supported by strong financial support from the countries of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait against the Wasathiyah ideology initiated by Al-Azhar Egypt. According to Muhammad Sani Umar in his research study, he explained that the external Salafi Jihadi group was supported by the power of the government of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait which was channeled through several official institutions such as *Muassasah Al-Haramayn Al-Khairiyya* (Haramain Charitable Foundation), *Rabita Al-Alam Al-Islami* (Muslim World League), *Kuwait with Jam'iyyat Ihya At-Turath Al-Islami* (Reviving of Islamic Heritage Society) in order to spread Wahhabi ideology through construction of mosques, schools, providing scholarships for students studying in Saudi Arabia (Umar & Woodward, 2020). However, although it has strong support in the form of unlimited funding, it seems that this project is not as successful as a hundred percent in attracting the attention of Muslims, especially in Indonesia. The presence of the role of Al-Azhar Egypt through its alumni who have plunged into several areas of both education and government has become a thick wall in order to fortify the ummah from Wahhabi ideology that can divide the unity of Muslims.

PAAM's da'wah movement is not only carried out offline, there are even some of them who are actively involved in using mainstream media information technology to intensify their preaching. The online media used by PAAM da'wah activists usually use YouTube, Instagram,

Facebook and websites. The information media today has a fundamental role in building and directing ideology and public opinion (Parhan, Jenuri, and Islamy 2021). Van Laer emphasized that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) contributed greatly in increasing the spirit of social movements (Laer & Aelst, 2010). Furthermore, Morozov argues that ICT has been widely used by certain groups as a tool of political repression by authoritarian regimes (Morozov, 2011). The important role of the media in maintaining ukhuwwah and harmony was not neglected by Rosulullah SAW. Even according to expert Muslim historian Muhammad Rawwas in his work "*Dirāsah Tablīyiyah Li Syahsyiyati Ar-Rāsul Muhammad SAW*" argues that at least the Prophet in the battlefield used the principle of *al-harb al-i'lamīyah* (media warfare), When the enemy used media means to attack, then the Prophet and his companions countered these efforts by stopping the media in use (Rawwas, 1988). PAAM da'wah activists at least use good communication and in accordance with the intellectuals of the community at hand. They adhere to the rules of communication of the Prophet Muhammad, one of which is *al-kehibāh alā qadri jabmi 'uqūlibim* and *ista'mil at-tha'mu al-munasīb* meaning that good communication must be based on the listener's intellectual and themes that fit their background.

In order to realize PAAM's vision "Guyub Sauyunan Building Civilization", the chairman of PAAM together with its members formulate short- and long-term programs that interpret the vision of PAAM. The program can be seen in the table below.

Table 1 Education, Da'wah and R & D Division Works Program

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Building Networks among PAAM Member Pesantren	Creating curriculum and TFT for Tahfidz, Arabic, Mawaris, and other programs	Building Azhary Da'wah Center
Data collection on lecturers and campus activists Da'i PAAM Corps	Internal and general Talaqqi study Create a digital library	Evaluating and formalizing AD / ART PAAM

Source: data sourced from research results

Table 2 Work Program for Cadre, Social and Welfare Division, Community Relations, and Information Technology

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Creating a Member Data Bank	Organized the PAAM Expo	Building the Al-Azhar Center mosque and the PAAM Secretariat
Building PAAM Community (Education, Entrepreneurs, Da'i, and others)	Creating a try out program and selecting Al-Azhar New Student Candidates (CAMABA)	Holds Siliwangi CUP
Create a PAAM organization profile	Building communication and cooperation with local governments	
Mapping PAAM HR Champion	Create a PAAM Member Card	

Source: data sourced from research results

Making PAAM Membership Cards From the work programs above, according to Zainurrofiq, there are at least several stages that are tried to be realized by paraalumni to create religious moderation in the people of West Java, including: a) first, fixing and managing the cadre process of students from West Java who want to go study at Al-Azhar Egypt. To simplify the administrative and preparation processes, PAAM collaborates with several Islamic boarding schools such as the Kautsar Institute, Darul Azhar Cianjur Islamic Boarding School, Al-Mumtaz

Islamic Boarding School in Kuningan and several others to accommodate all the students' needs in the form of Arabic language training, campus introduction Al-Azhar Egypt, the introduction of community culture in Egypt and others so that it can provide a general picture for students, b) second, connecting the relationship between the West Java Community Association Family (KPMJB) Egypt and the West Java Regional Government (PEMDA), this is it is considered very important so that the positioning of alumni when they have finished their studies can directly contribute to society. c) third, preparing alumni so that they can directly contribute to West Java local government programs, d) fourth, consolidating with azhari Islamic boarding schools in West Java so that programs that have been designed by PAAM can be assisted by them, e) fifth, building a wasathiyah center movement that focuses on scientific research studies to provide the spirit of akedimisi so that it can help the realization of a targeted and effective da'wah movement.

Conclusion

The wasathiyah movement which was discussed by the West Java Al-Azhar Alumni Association (PAAM) is a social missionary movement that invites the Indonesian people to strengthen a sense of unity and brotherhood in social life, especially in West Java. This da'wah is part of the global agenda echoed by Al-Azhar University in Egypt in order to respond and protect Muslims from the extreme views displayed by radical Islamic groups and Salafi Jihadi who tend to misunderstand the teachings of Islam which are rahmatan lil alamin in principle on the values of tolerance and maintaining peace. PAAM faces three major challenges in its wasathiyah movement in West Java, namely challenges related to funding, facing the salafi jihadi network, lack of attention from the Regional Government. The programs launched at least refer to the PAAM vision "Guyub Sauyunan Building Civilization". The program implementation process is built in stages into five main agendas.

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