

A Collaborative Action in the Implementation of Moderate Islamic Education to Counter Radicalism

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A number of studies have argued that radicalism should be resisted by implementing moderate policies. Few studies have focused on what moderate policies should be implemented and how they can prevent radicalism within the context of Muslim society. This study, therefore, aims to understand the collaborative influence of local institutions on the implementation of moderate Islamic educational policies to prevent radicalism in a city in the Jambi province, Indonesia. This study used a qualitative case study in data gathering through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and document analyses. The research results showed that by implementing the moderate wasathiyyah Islamic education concept in Islamic schools and Islamic subject content, Muslim societies increased their perspectives and awareness on the importance of moderate Islamic values. They change the concept of jihad from a concept of violence to humanism, which involves working hard to increase welfare, accept pluralism, inclusivity, tolerance, and rational actions. This study concludes that moderate education within Islamic education institutions can prevent or counter radicalism, extreme behaviour, and conflict. Thus, security, order, comfort, harmony, and peace will be created in the community.

Key words: *Moderate Islam, preventing radicalism, peace, Sungai Penuh.*

Introduction

A peaceful society is not only secured by state sponsorship of religion, but also by implementing moderate government policies. State-sponsored religions that are followed up by further moderate policies remains static and allows radical thought and behaviour among its believers to emerge (Elman & Warner, 2008). Fault assumption on certain religious agendas and teaching may also lead to the rise of radicalism within society. Such misconceptions may also be fuelling extremism and hinder tolerance among religious believers.

Several actions have been taken to prevent the emergence of radicalism within societies, in particular, Muslim communities across the world. For example, the United Kingdom provides subsidies to produce and support moderate Islamic groups. The subsidies include changing a mistaken assumption towards Muslims and a false picture regarding the operation of Islamic groups (Stevens, 2011). Meanwhile, Kazakhstan implements permissive state regulations to impede the threat of radical Islamic extremism. Besides, Kazakhstan also implements comprehensive education reform to create moderate behaviour and tolerant attitudes among societies (Achilov & Shaykhutdinov, 2011).

According to the theory of relative deprivation, the rise of Islamic radicals is often referred to as the condition of poverty or economic deprivation within society, and it is also caused by psychological alienation (Achilov & Shaykhutdinov, 2011). In other contexts, the emergence of terrorism is also caused by an excessive response in countering terrorism (Aly, 2013). Therefore, a soft approach strategy in preventing radicalism and terrorism is required to be implemented. Throughout Europe, the government has set up new policy measures and programs to prevent violent extremists (Vermeulen, 2014). For example, France and the United Kingdom incorporate regulation and administration of Islamic Education institutions in their radicalism prevention policies (Peter, 2008).

Acts of radicalism can also be triggered by false religious understandings, unequal socioeconomic conditions between minority (established) and majority (disadvantaged) groups, widespread poverty and unemployment, gaps, and political and security instability due to various ethnic groups, religions, and belief. The lifestyles of society are increasingly materialistic, permissive, and pragmatic, and the intolerance of them is also a contributing factor. More tragically, radicalism is not only carried out by the lower classes, but also by elite groups, communities of all ages, men, women, and children. It is a dilemma because they do not seem to understand the primary purpose of Islam, which is blessing for all nature (rahmatan lil 'alamin). Education is always looking for solutions by taking the middle way, not through extremes and, through the right reasoning, a love of peace and rationality.

The emergence of the stigma that Islam has a close connection with violence has resulted in all Muslims being considered as linked to radicalism (Bayat, 2007). This stigma needs to be eliminated, because Islam does not like violence (facade) and brutality, but wants humans to be able to live side by side in harmony with peace among them (Syahid, 2001). Muslim societies should have a moderate attitude with a sense of balance, which highlights the solution and stresses the benefits (Kamalul Ariffin, 2016). Thus, the approach of moderate Islamic education needs to be implemented, so the view that calls Islam a hard religion can be stopped. Through the moderate attitude, environmental resilience will be maintained, both in the family and community environment for the security and environmental order of the nation and state.

This study, therefore, used a case study of Sungai Penuh City in Jambi province to understand how the local government implements moderate education policies within Islamic education Institutions to prevent the emergence of radicalism within the city. This study might shed light on the soft approach to radicalism prevention in Indonesia. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which the efficacy of moderate Islamic education can prevent or counter radicalism. The benefits of research are also for academics and practitioners interested in new perspectives and strategies in radicalism eradication. This study also provides new insight into the concept of moderate Islamic education for radicalism prevention.

The Concept of Radicalism

Radicalization has been considered as a highly individualized process that is determined by the complex interaction of various individual and structural factors (Vidino, 2010). The emergence of radicalism is often associated with the role of religion, but such perspectives are still debated. Studies, such as that of Vildino (2010), agree that religion plays a role in the emergence of radicalism. Scholars also associate radicalism with Islam (e.g: Achilov & Shaykhutdinov, 2013). However, radicalism does not merely exist within Islam but also in other societies and religions such as Christianity (Fleet, 1992) and Judaism (Shahak, 1999).

Even though the term radicalism has no common consensus regarding its meaning, its ubiquitous use by government, security agents, and scholars might prove that the meaning of "radicalization" may have a common meaning (Sedgwick, 2010). The word "radicalism" was derived from the Latin word "*radix*" which means "root." The word "root" is defined as something that is basic. However, since the term "radical" is often used in a political context, scholars define "radical" as a "*fundamental approach to politics, rather than one that makes do and mend, and radicalism suggests complete rather than gradual change*" (University-of-Aberdeen, 2015).

Within an Islamic context, the term "radicalism" is understood as a thinking or behaviour driven by an excessive interpretation of Islamic teaching or Islamic law (Mauro, 2014) and the "radical" term is also often associated with "jihad." Its meaning, however, has nothing to do with extremist or radicalism (Ridouani, 2011). Meanwhile, radical individuals or groups tend to change the entire world order with their ideas or deadly actions without considering humanity.

One way to resist radicalism within society is through moderate religious policy. Scholars (e.g: Mandaville, 2007; Schmid, 2014) argue that religious moderation is the product of secular knowledge. In this regard, religious moderation means its believers are open-minded, and they have a religious belief that refuses the extremes of religious teaching. Religious believers are

eager to cooperate and build a partnership with moderate societies and governments (Schmid, 2014).

Moderate Education

Some scholars (e.g: Aly & Striegher, 2012) found that religion plays a minor role in radicalization. Meanwhile, Botha (2014) found governments and other religious have a significant role in creating radicalization. The finding implies that the current conception of radicalism, which is often associated with religion, needs to be countered. One way to avoid radicalism is by creating a moderate education policy which involves collaboration between governments and different religions. A moderate liberal education is considered to provide opportunities that allow different religions to flourish in moderate thought and paradigms (Arthur, 2015).

The Australian government has invested in mentoring and education initiatives to counter Islamic radicalism (Akbarzadeh, 2013). However, the initiatives were hindered by a range of political, cultural, and socio-economic factors. The cause for this might be a lack collaboration between government institutions and societies across religions. Collaboration in countering radicalism is required to overcome barriers. For example, the British central government collaborates with local partners to establish the criteria for moderate education and training for imams (Bleich, 2013). Both the central government and local partners also foster moderate leadership within the Muslim community. Moderate Muslim leaders are able to spread moderate thought across the Muslim community and counter radical views. As a result, the prevalence of radicalism and extremism within education institutions are eliminated (Brown & Saeed, 2015).

In some examples, countering radical ideas and groups requires the government to implement secular methodology. This means that the government may change religious ideation without intervention in religion ideology (Rascoff, 2012). The process of ideation change can be carried out through an education system where moderate Islamic teaching can be taught. The product of Muslim individuals from moderate education institutions can be integrated into mainstream society who respect each other (Archick, Belkin, Blanchard, Ek, & Mix, 2011). Such a soft approach might attract more Muslims to be involved in radicalization prevention policies.

Research Method

This study employed a case study method to study moderate education policy implementation in a multicultural city in Indonesia. A case study approach is considered appropriate to examine a phenomenon when the boundary between the phenomenon and its context is not clearly defined (Yin, 1981). Moderate education implementation in countering radicalism is a complex

phenomenon due to the involvement of heterogeneous communities and institutions with different ideology and religion. As a result of their interaction across social, cultural, political contexts, policy implementation can be studied using an interpretive case study research approach (Walsham, 1995, 2006).

Data was gathered using in-depth interviews, direct observation, and written documents (Yin, 2003). However, the primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, which involved 16 participants from the city government, and included education institution leaders, the community, and religious leaders. The interviews lasted between 40 minutes to one hour. All interviews were recorded by transcript and verified by the participants for final confirmation. Data was gathered from different levels of the government organization hierarchy, and social and religious leaders contributed in order to form a more informed conclusion. As a consequence, the researcher was able to generate information from different perspectives.

In analysing the data, we used the grounded theory technique from Strauss and Corbin (1998). Data coding and analysis was carried out in stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the first stage, we coded into a broad range of categories based on the research problems and the constructs in the literature review. In the following stage, we conducted axial coding by making a relationship between categories and codes found in the data (Juliet M. Corbin & Anselm Strauss, 1990). In this stage, categories found in the open coding were reduced to a smaller number to identify moderate implementation strategies in Sungai Penuh city. In the final stage, selective coding (Juliet M Corbin & Anselm Strauss, 1990) helped the researcher with in-depth examination of the categories and led us to build theoretical perspectives that informed the result of this research.

Results

Case Description

Based on the 2017 statistical data, Sungai Penuh has high heterogeneity, plurality, and multiculturalism in ethnicity, language, and religion. Its population also varies in occupation. The indigenous people of Sungai Penuh City accept the situation as something that must be accepted, appreciated, protected, and guaranteed in terms of its existence. Likewise, from the side of the Sungai Penuh City government, the entire population is to be treated equally, and without discrimination against plurality and diversity.

Sungai Penuh City is also one of the learning destinations for the regencies around it so the city is categorized as an educational city inhabited by students. In this city, there are a lot of public and private educational institutions from the level of PAUD / RA., SMP / MTs., SMA, SMK, MA. It also includes State Universities of Kerinci State Islamic Institute (IAIN) as well as

several other private, public, and religious universities. This is in accordance with the vision and mission of Sungai Penuh City in 2012-2016 for “advancing in the economy and leading in education.” This has already shown results in terms of the economic target of the 2016 MAPAN government, which, in general, has been achieved, as well as in the aspect of education, which has also shown good performance at the national level.

With the condition of the people who are religious and academic, and with the government's seriousness in protecting and caring for the diversity of its people, an atmosphere of harmony, peace, safety, and comfort, which is conducive and tolerant is imperative. The city is faced with minimal radicalism and extreme treatment. One of the efforts made by the government is the implementation of moderate Islamic education. It starts with socializing and internalizing moderate Islamic education through SKPDs or agencies, offices, college institutions, schools, madrasas and pesantren, places of worship, religious organizations, majlis ta'lim, and the Team for Family Welfare Empowerment (TP PKK), and all levels of society in Sungai Penuh City.

Based on repeated observations, it was found that at each of the flags of ceremony, the Mayor of Sungai Penuh City, as the ceremonial advisor, is always mandated to be moderate (like the moderate), neutral (not biased), fair (responsible for upholding the truth, dealing with everything professionally), and tolerant (accepting other people with different backgrounds). Thus, all parties will feel they are treated equally, not discriminatively. This attitude is implemented in real terms in each Regional Work Unit (SKPD), which operates as a servant of the community. Likewise, it also engages in cooperation with institutions of higher education, secondary schools, elementary schools, houses of worship, majelis ta'lim, religious, social organizations, and the TP PKK of Sungai Penuh City.

The Role of City Mayor

Sungai Penuh city mayor consistently promotes moderate Islamic attitudes and behaviour among the city community. The city mayor encourages all local institutions and actors to implement religious and education moderation in every meeting with the city head of departments. The city mayor also uses the Indonesian flag ceremony every month when all city employees gather to promote religious moderation.

Figure 1. The City Mayor Attends Regular Flag Ceremony



Religious moderation policy is implemented consistently and continuously within education institutions and government offices with great attention and a sense of responsibility from all local employees and the community. For example, the city mayor demands education institutions, such as schools and universities, to integrate multicultural subjects and religious moderation within their curriculum. Teaching staff at a university said the following:

“In Islamic Education courses at religion colleges and public universities, we are always instructed to teach students with moderate Islamic values, and we also ask our students to be moderate in acting, and not to carry out radical and extreme actions. Thus, the students will avoid conflict with other students who have different beliefs.” (Participant AH)

The city mayor also gathered all religious and cultural leaders to make a strategic plan for religious moderation policy implementation. They take the city mayor’s instruction seriously by designing routine inter-religious cooperation to counter radicalism. Religious and cultural leaders are committed and put serious effort to realize the city mayor’s policy.

Education Institutions Create Peaceful Campus Atmosphere

Higher education institutions take serious action in promoting religious and education moderation. Student organizations are encouraged to pay serious attention to moderate Islamic thought and to implement it within their daily life. A leader of a student's organization at a university admitted to receiving moderate Islamic education courses to counter radicalism:

“We were taught with moderate Islamic values, so we have never carried out radical actions and behaved extreme, they act very rationally, have thought about the effects or consequences arising from anarchic actions. Even though the students have varied religious views, moderate, radical, inclusive, exclusive, but in religion and public universities are always peaceful, can control themselves, including religious education that is moderate and inclusive.” (Participant AJ)

Students are required to have values that are humanity-based and universal, as well as possess friendly religious attitudes. They are encouraged to be friendly, peaceful, accepting of differences, openness, pluralism, and unity, while being opposed radicalism and conflict, because it will cause destructive effects for common life.

Similarly, schools, madrasah, and Islamic boarding schools also implement the subjects of Religion and Islamic Education using moderate perspectives. A participant from the education department said:

“The curriculum contained topics related to moderate character values and material that supported the upholding of these characters, so students do not act radically towards fellow students, promote tolerance (accept the different background/origin and religion), commendable character (towards the creator, towards fellow human beings: friends, parents, and teachers), adab, polite and ethical, respect (to parents, teachers). So every teacher always internalizes and recommends to implement the moderate characters in daily life.” (Participant NM)

When confirmed with an Islamic education teacher, it was found that they have internalized the Islamic education material given to all of their students. We observed that students across the schools within the city are very responsive, accepting, and practice the religious moderation values in their life. It is very rare that students from schools and madrasahs act in radical ways. Instead, Muslim students respect other students from different religions very well.

Religious moderation seminars and workshops are often held by education institutions to promote tolerance and diversity. In the seminars, all religious and cultural leaders, as well as the government, are always invited. They seriously contribute to the seminar to find better

methods of radicalism prevention. Picture 2 depicts a moment from a religious moderation seminar.

Figure 2. Moderate Islamic Conference



The Role of the Indonesian Ulema Council

The Indonesian Ulema Council or Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) in Sungai Penuh City plays an essential role in promoting moderate Islam. The council promotes moderate Islamic teaching throughout the Muslim community in the city. The council also encourages education institutions to implement a moderate education curriculum to encourage tolerance among the community. The council also uses Friday sermons and the ta'lim assembly in every village in the Sungai Penuh City to promote Islamic moderation as described by the following participant.

“The MUI has provided ulama with moderate Islamic values and anti-radicalism and extremist. The MUI change our perception of jihad, which previously we understood as a spirit to go in war, but after MUI explain to us, we understand that jihad a spirit to work hard. The MUI also said that the principle of jihad is not synonymous with warfare and the practice of violence in the name of religion. Jihad has a broad scope, such as enthusiasm in studying, working hard to support the family, and others. Unlike radical groups that interpreted jihad is a war against the enemies of Islam, identical to terrorism, it is permissible to bomb, even get a heavenly prize.”
(Participant N)

Indonesian Ulama Council distributed many items to promote moderate Islam among Sungai Penuh city. Picture 1 is one example of a brochure created by MUI to promote moderate Islam in the city. Figure 3 shows a moderate Islamic brochure produce by the city Ulama Council.

Figure 3. A Brochure Created by Sungai Penuh City Ulama Council



The council cooperates with the team for Family Welfare Empowerment (TP PKK) of Sungai Penuh City for community strengthening in religious moderation. The cooperation began with strengthening the resilience of the family moderate perspective. If families have resilience in religious moderation aspects, they are able to cooperate economically and socially to create community welfare. If families do not have sufficient religion moderation resilience, then the opportunity to build economic and social welfare may be reduced. The cooperation between the Family Welfare Empowerment team is described as follows:

“Thus, the MUI and PKK are the front guards in helping the government of Sungai Penuh City to realize Islamic moderation at the level of the family. In the family, there should be no acts of violence against family members. With the synergy and efforts of all parties, all programs are intended to make the people of Sungai Penuh live in harmony, and a non-violent environment can be realized.” (Participant EZ)



The Role of Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB)

Based on the results of interviews with a leader of Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB), we found that the city Department of Religious Affairs often provides holy lecture guidelines before the lectures are delivered in Mosques, Churches, Temples, and other holy places. The content of the holy speech is encouraged to be reviewed by scholars, chaplains, and clerics who have served in their religious organizations.

“In the outline, the guidelines that should be guided by the lecturer are: do not contain speeches of hatred, teach the secrecy of religion, give more peace and tranquillity, not to divide, not blame other religions, not to exaggerate differences, not practice politics and violence.” (Participant Ph)

Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) plays an essential role in promoting tolerance between religious believers. The forum consists of scholars from all religions within the city. They held a regular meeting with communities from all religions to promote religious moderation. The forum has a strong commitment to countering radicalism within the community. The commitment is expressed by a high figure from the forum:

“This forum seriously seeks to avoid radical attitudes from all religions. With the hard efforts of FKUB, the Sungai Penuh City government, and all community groups, we have to build religious harmony. We must live in harmony even though we have different religions and cultures. The Ministry of Religious Affairs has highly appreciated our effort.” (Participant AZ)

The Department of Religious Affairs

The Department of Religious Affairs has awarded the forum effort for promoting religious moderation with the Harmony Award. The award proves that the policy to implement moderate Islam is a success. Gathering with different religious groups and ethnicities is also often practiced to encourage tolerance among the community. Picture 4 shows different religions and ethnic citizens gather in a moment to promote diversity and harmony.

Figure 4. Religious and Ethnic harmony in Sungai Penuh City



Sungai Penuh City is highly heterogonous in ethnicity, which requires high tolerance among each group. The policy of the city mayor is that equality among the community and its ethnic groups must be achieved. The local government policy is also supported by the National Interaction Forum. A high figure from the National Interaction Forum (FPK) expressed his commitment regarding equality between religious groups and ethnicity as follows:

“We always put forward an inclusive character style that is open to diversity, pluralism, cultural differences, and anti-discrimination and radicalism, as well as challenging exclusivism. Each tribe must maintain the consensus of the four pillars of nationality “Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, NKRI and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.” (Participant M)

An exclusive religious attitude model or an individual who has an exclusive religion has a high chance to act radically. It is not wrong to say that if one side of a religion contains values of peace, humanity, and justice, the religion might also provide opportunities for the birth of violence. If religion is understood rigidly and partially by its believers, they can have the potential to behave and act radically against all humans. In developing a harmonious and peaceful life, the disintegrative aspects of all religions must be eliminated, whereas the integrative aspect must be highlighted through a flexible, contextual, and non-rigid religious understanding. It is time for all religions to put forward the themes of compassion, the nobility

of character, fellowship, and the values of virtue and kindness, as well as providing benefits to other human beings, while eliminating all forms of violence and damage.

By promoting moderate Islamic education, the city government produces positive results. The communities live in harmony. For example, even though the markets look crowded, they carry out their respective activities in accordance with the work they carry out as merchants, laborers, and as buyers. The buying and selling of goods takes place peacefully and kindly. A citizen expressed his opinion as follows:

“I have been living in Sungai Penuh for decades, I never see radical or riotous acts, so that the merchants are not worried, afraid, but felt safe and comfortable. I think the government has been very serious in preventing radicalism, besides often giving warnings and appeals from elements of security to remember each other, look after each other and supervise each other.”
(Participant N)

Every corner of the city is met with many symbols and posters to maintain orderliness, such as the words “prevent radicalism, fight drugs” and others. The efforts to prevent radicalism seem quite useful when all actors within the city are involved. Non-government organizations such as FKUB and FPK have made successful efforts in promoting moderate religious life within the town.

Other institutions such as the Regional Government (Pemda), along with its security, Police, Civil Defence, the Ministry of Religion and religious organizations, MUI, Majelis Ta'lim, National Integration Forum, Universities, Schools / Madrasah / Pesantren, TP PKK, have also taken important roles in promoting and implementing moderate religious policy. As a result, the lives of the community in Sungai Penuh City is safe from radical acts.

Discussion

The findings show that Islamic education with moderate character (tawasuth) is education based on the principle of tolerance (tasamuh) that takes the middle way, which is the balanced (tawazun) and neutral (ta'adul) path in preventing and resolving all problems faced, and aims to realize all possible benefits (Utaminingsih, Utomo, & Zamroni, 2017). The findings prove that ‘moderate Islam’ can put justice above various acts of injustice in the local and global space and become a meaningful policy. By implementing moderate Islamic education, it is believed that moderate education policies can prevent, counter or overcome the threat of radicalism and extremism in the community, as found by Brown & Saeed (2015), by strengthening community supervision together. It is the community that is effective in supervising actions and preventing radicalism because the one that conducts radical acts are the people themselves.

The local government's principle that "preventing damage must take precedence over repairing damage," or that "prevention is better conducted than repairing," proves that the implementation of moderate education and religious moderation policies have reduced the opportunities for radicalization to emerge within the city. The religious and education moderation implemented in the Sungai Penuh City can anticipate and prevent acts of violence, which is better than rectifying acts of violence that have occurred widely. Preventative policies are better than recovery as has been suggested in previous studies (e.g: Thomas, 2010, 2016)

By implementing moderate Islamic education, namely by developing an attitude of moderation, things that are moderate are encouraged over things that lead to radical, extreme, conservative, or liberal behaviour. A moderate attitude is believed to create brotherhood between fellow religions (ukhwah Islamiyah), brotherhood among nations (ukhwah wathaniyah), as well as brotherhood among fellow human beings (ukhwah basyariyah) (Lucas, 1995; Yani, 2017).

In addition to the role of the government in counteracting radicalism, the role of students, as well as youth, is essential, because the occurrence of violence has generally originated from fights between youth and citizens between villages. On the contrary, peace is also often initiated by youth, and they are able to resolve conflicts between them through such means as the youth organization forum. They are able to transform their activities into something positive, avoid conflict, and respectful of diversity. The role of youth in conflict prevention and resolution has been addressed in previous studies such as that by Hettler & Johnston (2009) and Close & Lechman (1997). Conflict is always there because it is something that cannot be avoided in human life. Some even say that conflict is an art in life, and that life without conflict (problem) is not beautiful. However, if conflict is left to continue, it will always make an uncomfortable situation, and leave us unable to work calmly. A glimmer of hope is that the new generation does not inherit conflict from the previous generation.

Solid cooperation between the government and the community, especially with religious organizations and non-government organization have proved effective in encouraging tolerant behaviour among communities. (Roffey, 2012) argues that institutions which are involved in such cooperation become more aware of the benefits of cooperation and negotiation in a flourishing and tolerant environment.

The ideology of religion is considered as the strongest unifying force (Kinnvall, 2004) because it restores civilization and creates common sense. However, at the same time, the unifying force might be used for harmful purposes, such as fuelling a group's radicalism. In this regard, moderate religious principles and education play crucial roles. Moderate religious perspectives should begin from within the family because the family is the grass-root that is the point of the problem. Parents have leading roles and responsibilities in educating and controlling their

children. However, the state's role is also required because the government can create institutions to promote changes in education programs, as found in this study.

An important foundation for moderate Islam in Indonesia is the principle of *tasamuh*¹. The concept of *tasamuh* has a dimension of tolerance because it contains values that foster respect for each other within the community. As such, a Muslim community with *tasamuh* values respect and treat believers of other religions peacefully. In this study, the city government and other institutions implement *tasamuh* values through moderate religion and education. The outcome of a Muslim community who hold *tasamuh* values is a moderate Muslim community with “moderate Islam,” which is based on the tridimensions of the ukhuwah religion (Islamiyah), nationality (wathaniyah), and humanity (basyariyah) (Nugroho, 2018).

The Sungai Penuh City government must always create a climate of harmony between religious groups by establishing social stability, law, order, justice, and the prosperity of the city's community. Economic prosperity and welfare are have been found to be related to socioeconomics (Akbarzadeh, 2013). As such, the city government must also focus on improving social and economic aspects to counter the emergence of radicalism within the Muslim community, in particular, low-income Muslim community members.

Harmony is the ultimate target of the city government that must be achieved. Thus, communal harmony in Sungai Penuh City means a social condition that is characterized by peace, compatibility, and is without dispute, conflict, hostility, and suspicion among people of different religions within the city. In realizing this harmony, the city government has gone hand in hand with religious leaders, non-government organizations, and educational institutions to promote moderate thinking and behaviour through religious and education moderation policies.

Conclusion

In general, the Sungai Penuh community has implemented moderate Islamic education in daily life, which is carried out with commitment, consistency, and an eye to the future. In the moderate Islam implemented, the jihad concept among traditional Islam believers can change. Jihad has been re-defined by the city government and other local actors so that it is no longer synonymous with warfare and the practice of violence. Instead, the term “jihad” has a broader sense, which includes studying, working hard in trying to support the family, and striving earnestly to improve society. It also involves being inclusive, accepting other religions, not degrading other groups, transformation, trust, respect, love, and an acceptance and respect for pluralism.

¹ *Tasamuh* is a good manner in friendship, including with different religious believers. The *tasamuh* is derived from Islamic teaching.



The Sungai Penuh City Government and social and religious organizations synergistically promote moderate Islam as a teaching that can create harmony among the city's multicultural citizens. This study provides new insight for other local governments with high diversity in religion and ethnicity. The findings also provide practical knowledge to other local governments in implementing moderate Islamic education to counter radicalism within their community.



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