



**Al-Adyan: Jurnal Studi Lintas Agama**

**P-ISSN: 1907-1736, E-ISSN: 2685-3574**

<http://ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/alAdyan>

Volume 19, Nomor 2, Juli - Desember, 2024

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24042/al-adyan.v19i2.24857>

---

## **CONTESTATION OF MODERATE AND RADICAL ISLAM IN CYBERSPACE**

**Kiki Muhamad Hakiki**

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia

*kiki.hakiki@radenintan.ac.id*

**Badruzaman**

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia

*badruzaman@radenintan.ac.id*

**Ratu Vina Rohmatika**

Institut Agama Islam Negeri, Metro Lampung

*ratuvina23@gmail.com*

**Ade Musofa**

Kementerian Agama Provinsi Banten

*ademusofa@gmail.com*

### **Abstract:**

*The internet has transformed the way millennials gain religious knowledge. Previously, they relied on print media like magazines, journals, or teachings from religious leaders. Today, they turn to convergence media that offers instant, though often incomplete, content. Islamic websites have become a primary source for quick religious information. This shift highlights new spaces on the internet for social interaction and religious discourse, particularly aimed at millennials. However, these digital spaces serve as more than just communication tools; they also act as*

*channels for spreading religious messages, including propaganda and radicalism. Given the significance of Islamic websites as communication channels, studying radicalism on these platforms is essential. This is due to three key factors: first, Islamic websites have emerged as new communication platforms; second, religious messages online have a broad reach, crossing national borders; and third, internet-based information has a strong influence on users. This research is critical in preventing radicalism on websites and social media by uncovering the motivations behind the spread of radical messages online.*

## **Abstrak:**

*Internet telah mengubah cara generasi milenial dalam memperoleh pengetahuan agama. Dahulu, mereka umumnya mengakses informasi dari media cetak seperti majalah, jurnal, atau melalui pengajian bersama ustad. Namun kini, mereka beralih ke media konvergensi yang menyediakan konten instan, meskipun seringkali tidak sepenuhnya lengkap. Situs-situs Islam menjadi sumber utama bagi milenial untuk memperoleh informasi agama secara cepat. Pergeseran ini menggambarkan bentuk baru interaksi sosial dan diskusi agama melalui ruang virtual di internet yang ditujukan untuk generasi milenial. Namun, ruang digital ini bukan sekadar sarana komunikasi, melainkan juga sebagai media untuk menyebarkan pesan-pesan agama, termasuk propaganda dan paham radikal. Karena situs-situs Islam kini menjadi saluran komunikasi penting, penelitian mengenai radikalisme di platform tersebut menjadi sangat relevan. Alasan utamanya adalah: pertama, situs Islam telah menjadi platform baru untuk komunikasi; kedua, pesan agama di internet memiliki jangkauan luas yang melampaui batas negara; dan ketiga, informasi di internet memiliki daya pengaruh yang kuat terhadap penggunanya. Penelitian ini memiliki peran krusial dalam upaya pencegahan radikalisme di situs dan media sosial dengan memahami motivasi di balik penyebaran pesan radikal oleh pengguna internet.*

**Keywords:** Moderate Islam, Radicals, Cyberspace, Islamic Websites

## **A. Introduction**

Today, the internet has reshaped how millennials approach religious learning. Previously, they accessed information through print media like magazines, journals, or by attending recitations with an ustad. Now, however, they are turning more towards convergence media that offers instant, though often incomplete, content. For instance, Islamic websites on the internet have become a primary source for quickly finding religious information.

This reflects a shift in social interactions and religious discussions through new platforms, which are now used to share messages, promote propaganda, and spread radical ideologies and religious extremism. These platforms serve not only as communication tools but also as channels for conveying religious messages to the millennial generation.

In the mid-1990s, scholars began exploring how the internet affected spirituality. They looked at its impact on real-world religious practices. Popular sites became hubs for sharing wisdom quotes from various religions. This sparked interest in the internet as a social phenomenon. The internet's influence on religious life has made access to information easier. Adherents can now find both textual and contextual teachings online. Advances in technology even allow scriptures from different faiths to be accessed digitally.

In their article "The Unknown God of the Internet," O'Leary and Brasher discuss how the study of religion intersects with the online realm, impacting how religion is experienced in digital spaces (O'Leary, S., & Brasher, B., 1996). In another work, "Cyberspace as Sacred Space," O'Leary examines the rise of online religion, identifying virtual rituals that allow internet users to integrate religious experiences into digital environments (Stephen D. O'Leary, 1996). For instance, this technology enables believers to engage with others in discussing religious matters via chat rooms. This technological advancement allows religious adherents to consciously participate in religious practices online, sharing these activities publicly, which in turn has a notable influence on viewers.

Schroeder's study (1998) also examines how internet users engage in prayer together within virtual reality spaces, tracking how religious practitioners record their rituals on video and upload them to online platforms. This research underscores that online religion has become an essential aspect of modern life, deserving focused attention.

A national survey conducted by PPIM UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta revealed that students obtain religious information and insights primarily through social media and the internet. The survey indicated that approximately 50.89% of students and college students seek religious information online, while around

84.94% of the millennial generation shows a significant dependence on the internet. Additionally, about 96.20% of students access the internet via mobile phones, and 61.05% of millennials use the internet daily to gather information about religion (Yunita Faela Nisa et al., 2018). Similar findings were reported by Pasca UIN Yogyakarta, which identified that the millennial generation frequently accesses popular Islamist literature available on the internet (Noorhaidi Hasan et al., 2018). Research from CSRC UIN Jakarta also supports these findings, concluding that young Muslims generally exhibit moderate behaviors, yet simultaneously demonstrate strong conservatism (Irfan Abubakar, 2018).

The virtual arena provides the millennial generation with easier access to religious issues, simplifying the learning process and dismantling social hierarchies. This communication technology removes traditional barriers that have been established over time.

The issue lies in the scarcity of moderate narratives available on the internet for the millennial generation. In contrast, there is an abundance of narratives promoting rigid Islamic ideologies that conflict with the values of Islam rahmatan lil alamin. This contradiction is further intensified by intolerant attitudes, resulting in verbal violence on social media and physical violence manifesting as persecution in real life. Such conditions could undermine the foundations of our civilization as a pluralistic nation.

Indeed, online media serves as a potential space for the proliferation of radical ideas. In 2016, over 46,000 Twitter accounts were identified as supporting the ISIS movement by disseminating violent videos and jihadist materials via social media. These violent videos reached audiences around the globe. This phenomenon highlights that the internet has become a new platform for conveying religious symbols and fostering social change within religious contexts.

To address these challenges, the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kemkominfo) has been proactive since 2017, blocking 27,000 websites deemed to promote radical and pornographic content. The National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) has also recommended that Kemkominfo take action against

Islamic websites that propagate radical ideas. Additionally, research institutions like Alvara Research Center recognize the internet and social media as significant channels for the spread of radicalism.

However, the issues of radicalism and violent extremism are often critiqued both from within the Muslim community and externally. This criticism stems from the tendency to associate Islam with violence and terrorism. The mass media is often perceived as biased in its coverage, concentrating excessively on reporting incidents of violence within the Muslim world. This research aims to examine and understand the role of Islamic websites in producing and disseminating radical ideologies, whether they support or reject radicalism and violent extremism.

Investigating radicalism on Islamic websites is crucial for several reasons. First, these platforms have emerged as new channels for communication. Second, the dissemination of religious messages on the internet has an extensive reach that crosses national borders. Third, the information available online is highly effective at influencing those who access it.

This research plays an essential role in efforts to combat radicalism on websites and social media by offering precise information about the motivations of internet users who upload and share radical content. It aims to explore how the narratives of moderate Islam and radical Islam compete within the digital realm.

Previous studies have explored religious radicalism in online media or on the internet. Key examples include: 1) O'Leary and Brasher's article, "The Unknown God of the Internet"; 2) Research by Schroeder, Ralph, Heather, Noel, & Lee, Raymond M. in 1998, published as "The Sacred and the Virtual: Religion in Multi-User Virtual Reality" in the "Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication" (Vol. 4, No. 2); 3) A national survey by PPIM UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, titled "Gen Z: Religious Identity Turmoil" from the Center for the Study of Islam and Society; 4) A study by Post-UIN Yogyakarta, "Islamic Literature of Millennial Generation: Transmission, Appropriation, and Contestation"; and 5) Research by CSRC UIN Jakarta, "Millennial Muslim Youth: Cultural Hybridization, Conservatism, and the Challenge of Radicalism".

Drawing from the reviewed references, the researcher's study presents a distinct approach. While it shares a common thread with past research in examining religious discussions on the internet, it diverges by specifically focusing on the contestation between Moderate Islam and Radical Islam narratives within Islamic sites. This research uniquely categorizes online media into three types of website media—mainstream websites, contemporary websites, and non-affiliated websites—to analyze how each platform approaches and frames these ideological debates.

The availability of online media within the internet space has transformed how individuals perceive their religious beliefs. For today's millennial generation, the internet has become the primary resource for acquiring all types of information, including religious insights. As a result, the internet now serves as a new media platform for modern society to engage with various virtual communities.

This situation opens the possibility that online media could be an entry point for radicalism among millennials. The internet, increasingly a preferred source for millennials, is shaping how they seek and absorb information on religious matters. Using O'Leary's terminology, the internet has emerged as a transformative medium that enhances religious understanding, surpassing traditional print resources.

The internet, as an emerging medium in the lives of millennials, has created a limitless, egalitarian space for interaction and connection. Mark C. Taylor likens this complex digital realm to a "shadow of God" (Noorhaidi Hasan et al., 2018). Scholars Lorne Dawson and Douglas Cowan elaborate on this phenomenon through the concepts of "religion online" and "online religion." "Religion online" refers to the practice and experience of religious activities on the internet, while "online religion" relates to religious information accessible through internet media (Dawson & Cowan, 2004). Consequently, cyberspace has become a central hub for seeking religious knowledge, with the insights gained online influencing religious practices in offline settings, sometimes subtly shaping real-world rituals for its users.

The growing number of internet users in Indonesia has significantly influenced the Islamic identity of those who engage with it. Individuals can now quickly access religious knowledge with just a few clicks. Dubbed "Kiai Google," the internet serves as a go-to resource for seeking answers to religious queries and satisfying their thirst for knowledge. With a simple click, a vast array of information—often numbering in the thousands or millions—becomes instantly available. This diverse range of religious content, presented in various formats, is readily accessible for users. The convenience offered by this technology enables both individuals and communities to easily discover forms of meditation that impact their religious practices.

A wide range of information related to religious understanding—spanning from moderate to radical views—can be easily accessed, profoundly influencing individuals' perceptions and behaviors regarding their faith. This is where the "online religion" phenomenon starts to impact internet users. Consequently, it's undeniable that the interest in carrying out jihad through acts of physical violence finds its justification within this context. Numerous resources on radical Islam, including doctrines and videos, are readily available, allowing unfettered access to content that promotes extremist ideologies.

Blogs created by Islamic radical fighters are easily accessible, often without any form of censorship. Users can view videos that showcase Western propaganda and intimidation tactics against Muslims, as well as instructional content on making bombs and assembling firearms. Such exposure can lead to imitative behavior among viewers. This environment may inspire individuals to commit acts of violence, such as suicide bombings, in the name of their religion. This situation illustrates how the new media space of the internet serves as a gateway to religious radicalism, significantly affecting individuals' mindsets, as seen recently with the suicide bombers in Makassar.

In this research, the concept of "radical" is understood in a broader context, extending beyond mere opposition to government authority to encompass resistance against societal norms of decency upheld by the community at large. Radical messages are not restricted

solely to those who voice dissent against the government; they also include individuals who may support governmental policies yet simultaneously act in ways that contradict the standards expected of society.

Messages classified as radical in this study exhibit some or all of the following characteristics: 1) They convey hatred towards other groups; 2) They display intolerance towards others; 3) They challenge the established and legitimate social order; 4) They contain revolutionary elements; 5) They incorporate elements of violence; and 6) They include threats directed at other parties.

This research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing data from media websites and informants. The media websites under investigation are classified into three categories: mainstream media websites, contemporary media websites, and non-affiliated media websites.

For this study, the mainstream media websites include: (1) those owned by prominent Islamic organizations in Indonesia, specifically the websites of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah; (2) websites of contemporary Islamic organizations, such as the Forum Umat Islam (FUI) and Hidayatullah; and (3) platforms from non-affiliated Islamic organizations, including Eramuslim and Islamic Portal.

The research employs several methods: (1) a digital survey utilizing web-mining and web-scraping techniques to analyze 14 Islamic organization websites recognized for producing both moderate and radical Islamic messages between January 2019 and December 2020; (2) interviews with editors or editorial teams from these Islamic organization websites; (3) interviews with users or accessors of these online Islamic media; and (4) limited Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with stakeholders, including academics, religious leaders, government officials, online media managers, and representatives from Islamic organizations. These combined methods allow for an examination of the characteristics of moderate and radical websites, their popularity, the content they produce, and the social impact they have.



In other words, this research employs a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the phenomenon of netizens in Indonesia, particularly in Bandar Lampung, in relation to religious issues.

## **B. Results And Discussion**

### **a. Map of Redicalism in Cyberspace**

The internet has transformed how individuals obtain knowledge about religion, fundamentally reshaping our perceptions and understanding. As a modern platform for interaction and connection within virtual communities, it has emerged as a potential avenue for the spread of radicalism among the youth. Additionally, the internet serves as a primary resource for millennials seeking religious information. O'Leary notes that the internet has become a revolutionary space for enhancing religious understanding and disseminating information, surpassing the traditional influence of printed materials (O'Leary, 1996).

This phenomenon indicates that new media has cultivated a sense of trust among millennials in the internet, transforming it into an endless space for free and equitable connectivity and interaction. Mark C. Taylor even likens the internet to a complex labyrinth that mirrors the shadowy presence of God (Taylor, 2001). In their book, "Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet," Lorne Dawson and Douglas Cowan distinguish between "religion online" and "online religion." They describe "religion online" as information about religion available on the internet, while "online religion" pertains to religious experiences and practices facilitated through the internet (Dawson and Cowan, 2004). This distinction highlights that virtual space has become central to modern individuals' exploration of religion, subsequently influencing their religious rituals in the physical world.

The growing number of internet users in Indonesia has transformed how individuals experience and learn about their Islamic faith. Many turn to "Kiai Google" for answers to their religious inquiries. With just one click, countless pieces of information related to religion are instantly available, eliminating the need for prolonged searches or anxiety. This technological convenience enables

individuals and communities to discover various meditative practices that significantly impact their religious observances.

The proliferation of radical religious ideologies online is readily accessible and significantly influences individuals' religious perceptions and behaviors. This easy access can draw people toward jihadist movements, such as those in Syria, leading them to join groups like the Islamic State (ISIS). Many become immersed in jihad-related blogs and war videos that showcase Western intimidation and propaganda against Muslims, learning techniques for creating explosives and assembling firearms. Consequently, this exposure can inspire them to carry out suicide bombings and engage in jihadist activities in Syria. Thus, new media serves as a critical entry point for religious radicalism, shaping individuals' thoughts and actions.

The analyzed sites exhibit features that mirror the institutions that created them. For instance, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has embraced social media platforms to communicate religious messages in a manner that resonates with the millennial generation. NU demonstrates adaptability through its NU Online website, which employs engaging graphics and visuals while maintaining the core essence and significance of its messages. This approach ensures that their content is effectively received by the audience.

Currently, radical narratives are becoming more prevalent across various websites and social media platforms, contributing to the proliferation of intolerance, hate speech, persecution, and calls for violence. The internet has transformed into a primary source for information, communication, and propaganda that targets those involved in radicalism and the promotion of violence. Perpetrators favor this medium as a strategic means to recruit a larger number of followers.

The internet's prominence as a new media platform is extensively leveraged by various significant groups and entities, including both state and non-state actors. Terrorist organizations, in particular, fully exploit the internet to broaden their networks and establish their online presence. Regardless of their political ideologies—be it Islamism, Marxism, nationalism, separatism, fundamentalism, extremism, racism, or anarchism—these groups

recognize the internet's immense potential to serve their agendas. The evolution of the internet has facilitated easier communication, operational planning, propaganda dissemination, member training and recruitment, as well as fundraising efforts (Forest, 2006; Weimann, 1994).

In simple terms, the internet serves as an open space for individuals involved in radicalism and terrorism to independently seek out information or activities that can lead them to become terrorists. It offers a wide range of information, including guides on making bombs, insights into terrorist movements, and military tactics, making it easy for anyone to access and learn these skills.

The benefits of the internet can be seen in six areas: (1) user-friendliness, (2) anonymity and absence of censorship, (3) speed and precision, (4) extensive audience reach, (5) established networks and communication channels, and (6) broad multimedia representation. Together, these features serve as instruments for terrorists to disseminate their religious beliefs and propaganda.

One example is Aman Abdurrahman, who authored Islamic narratives on the millahibrahim.com blog that he operated from prison. His writings garnered admiration from many followers, who regularly read his blog and were inspired by the content he shared.

In a comparable situation in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a member of the Al-Qaeda network, demonstrated exceptional proficiency in utilizing the internet. He posted videos of roadside bombings, scenes of hostage beheadings, and execution footage of kidnapped Egyptian and Algerian diplomats before their deaths.

Consequently, the majority of the radicalization process for millennials occurs through social media, which has demonstrated high effectiveness and speed. According to Charlie Winter, social media can be compared to a "radical mosque," serving as a platform where terrorists disseminate their narratives to gain support and recruit users. They not only affect the psychology of the younger generation but also comprehend their thought processes, crafting narratives that resonate easily with millennial youth (Winter, 2015).

In Indonesia, several Islamic websites promote moderate Islam and an interpretation of Islam that aligns closely with Arab

perspectives and traditions. This is evident in three categories of Islamic websites: (1) mainstream organizations represented by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Wathan (NW); (2) contemporary groups such as Forum Umat Islam, Hidayatullah, Majelis Mujahidin, Dewan Dakwah Indonesia, and Majelis Tafsir al-Quran; and (3) non-affiliated sites that adopt a rigid and less contextualized approach to interpreting Islam, including Portal Islam and Era Muslim.

### **b. Contested Narratives of Modern Islam and Radical Islam**

According to the study's findings, approximately 59.5% of students and university attendees who have internet access exhibit opinions that lean towards radicalism. Furthermore, around 59.7% of those who actively engage on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram display significantly radical tendencies (PPIM UIN Jakarta: 2018).

This highlights the significant link between internet and social media users and the messages they encounter, which influences their trust in the information. In this regard, stimulus-response theory can help explain this relationship. This theory emphasizes that the resulting effect is a response to the stimulus received. Dennis McQuail elaborates on this by identifying three key components of the theory: the message (acting as the stimulus), the receiver or audience (considered as the organism), and the effect or response that arises from their interaction (McQuail, 1994).

The foundation of this stimulus-response principle lies in the hypodermic needle theory, which elucidates the process of media influence. This theory likens media to a syringe injecting substances into the bloodstream of the audience, provoking the anticipated reaction.

Websites promoting radical views function similarly to this hypodermic needle concept. They disseminate narratives of hate, propagate religious propaganda, and emphasize accounts of Muslims portrayed as victims of Western oppression. These sites define jihad strictly as warfare and interpret Qur'anic verses in a simplistic and literal manner.

The internet plays a crucial role as an information system in preserving, altering, and even generating conflicts within communities, groups, or individuals in their social interactions. In today's information society, the internet is heavily relied upon as the primary source of knowledge, perspectives, and insights into societal developments.

### **c. Narratives of Hate**

Independent websites that frequently disseminate hateful narratives have become the most visited sources for Indonesian internet users seeking information about religion. These sites often cover conflicts in Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and other Muslim-majority countries experiencing violence. However, the presentation of this information typically emphasizes Western responsibility for the wars and the suffering endured by Muslims.

Their writings explicitly call for jihad to support individuals involved in these conflicts. Additionally, discussions on *aqidah* and *muamalah* often involve literal interpretations of the Qur'an and hadith, employing terms like "kafir" to describe and categorize those who do not share their beliefs.

These narratives hold significant potential to sway readers into justifying acts of extremism or even terrorism. Evidence supporting this is reflected in data gathered by the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT), which reveals several cases linking exposure to internet media with the development of radical thinking in individuals, ultimately culminating in acts of terrorism.

### **d. Persecution is an Intolerant Action**

The Jakarta gubernatorial election in 2017 marked a critical juncture for groups like the FPI to gain momentum in their oppressive actions. This was triggered by statements made by Ahok that were perceived as disrespectful to Islam, which provided a pretext for these groups to launch a political movement. They organized large-scale demonstrations opposing non-Islamic leadership, known as "aksi bela Islam," which saw participation from various Islamic organizations demanding Ahok's imprisonment.

This collaboration ultimately led to the establishment of the MUI Fatwa Guard National Movement (GNPF), headed by Bachtiar

Nasir. In his article "Islamic Populism in Indonesia and the Middle East," Vedi Hadiz points out that the emergence of primordial sentiments is a component of the rise of Islamic populism (Hadiz, 2016).

The blasphemy case involving Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) marked the beginning of a series of online persecution incidents. The Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFENET) reported 47 cases of persecution targeting social media accounts accused of insulting religion or clerics. These incidents have occurred throughout Indonesia and impact individuals from diverse backgrounds.

In West Sumatra, there is a case involving a doctor named Fiera Lovita, who became a victim of persecution. Typically, these acts of persecution are executed by groups of individuals who are directed to target someone whose identity has been publicly revealed, including their photos and residential or workplace addresses. These individuals then converge on the victim in large numbers, a practice commonly referred to as raids, with the intention of delivering the victim to the police.

In addition to Fiera's case, another incident that gained significant attention was that of Raka Fadil Sulyanto in Malang, who was targeted for sharing a video featuring Ustad Arifin Ilham with his two wives. His personal information was subsequently disseminated on the website muslimcyber.net and shared on Facebook by an account named Abd Rachim. Additionally, there exists a Facebook page called Database of Muslim Fugitives, which compiles information on accounts accused of insulting ulama or religion. This page incites individuals in various regions to pursue or take action against those accused of disrespecting clerics, the Prophet Muhammad, or religion in general. A notable victim of this phenomenon was sports journalist Zulfikar Akbar, who lost his job at the daily *Tops Score* due to tweets he made on Twitter that were perceived as insulting to clerics.

The phenomenon of persecution in Indonesia reflects the effectiveness of those who cultivate hatred to exploit religious sensitivities, ultimately threatening the country's democracy and

diversity. Such acts of persecution represent intolerance and should be a significant concern for both central and local governments. It is essential for the police to implement oversight and preventive measures to identify and apprehend those who promote hatred on social media.

**e. Building Alternatives: Narratives of Moderate Islam**

In an increasingly polarized world, the promotion of moderate Islam offers a vital counter-narrative to extremism and intolerance. This approach focuses on fostering understanding, compassion, and dialogue among diverse communities, emphasizing the core values of peace and coexistence inherent in Islam.

Moderate Islam advocates for interpretations of Islamic teachings that promote social justice, human rights, and interfaith dialogue. By presenting a balanced view of Islamic principles, these narratives challenge extremist ideologies that distort religious texts to justify violence and hatred.

A key component of this movement is the utilization of digital platforms to disseminate positive narratives. Websites, blogs, and social media channels dedicated to moderate Islam serve as vital resources for individuals seeking alternative perspectives. These platforms encourage discussions that highlight the diversity within the Muslim community and the various cultural expressions of Islam around the world.

Moreover, educational initiatives play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of Islam. Incorporating teachings that focus on tolerance, pluralism, and respect for others into religious education can help counteract extremist messages. By emphasizing the importance of critical thinking and contextual interpretation of religious texts, individuals are better equipped to reject radical ideologies.

Community engagement is also essential in building narratives of moderate Islam. By fostering relationships between different religious and cultural groups, these initiatives can help to dismantle stereotypes and promote mutual respect. Interfaith dialogues, cultural exchanges, and collaborative community service

projects can create environments where individuals can connect on common values, rather than divisive beliefs.

Furthermore, the voices of moderate scholars and community leaders are instrumental in shaping public discourse. Their teachings and writings can provide a counterbalance to extremist narratives, demonstrating that Islam can coexist harmoniously with democratic values and human rights. Encouraging these leaders to share their insights through various media can amplify their impact and reach a broader audience.

Ultimately, building alternatives through narratives of moderate Islam is not only about combating extremism; it is also about creating a vision for a more inclusive and harmonious society. By highlighting the richness of Islamic teachings that promote peace, understanding, and coexistence, we can foster resilience against divisive ideologies and contribute to a more just and equitable world.

At its core, Islam is a faith that appreciates humanity and embraces diversity. In Indonesia, Islam differs from the varieties found in the Arab world; it may be less advanced in terms of development due to its geographical distance from the Islamic heartland in Arabia and its distinct cultural identity compared to Arab culture (Majdid, 2002).

Islam in Indonesia presents a unique and specific identity that showcases its ability to blend with local traditions. Anthropologists like Thomas Raffles, Snouck Hurgronje, Clifford Geertz, as well as Mark Woodward and Robert Hefner, who have researched Islam in Indonesia, consistently emphasize that Indonesian Islam is marked by its peaceful nature and its capacity to harmonize with local cultural heritage (Hidayat & Gaus, 2006).

Abdurrahman Wahid introduced the idea of local Islam or indigenous Islam, which seeks to blend the universal principles of Islam with the cultural values prevalent in society. When formulating Islamic legal rulings, it is essential to take into account the specific needs and contexts of the local community (Wahid, 2001). In essence, indigenous Islam represents an endeavor to integrate Islam with local wisdom while enhancing the value of humanity.



Indigenous Islam strongly opposes the process of Arabization or the adoption of Middle Eastern culture. This resistance stems from the belief that Arabization can not only threaten local cultural heritage but also lead to the erasure of people's identities, compelling them to abandon their own cultural backgrounds. Moreover, Arabization often carries a spirit of triumphalism that should be rejected, implying that being Islamic equates to being familiar with Arab customs. Such a perspective oversimplifies and diminishes the essence of Islam, reducing it solely to its Arab roots (Ghazali & Rasyad, 2006).

The promotion of moderate Islam on websites and social media represents a logical result of initiatives aimed at fostering constructive dialogue about the faith. This version of Islam focuses on enhancing faith and piety, contributing to the social fabric of a cultured society. It involves not just respect for diverse religions, beliefs, and ideologies but also a collective commitment to creating a peaceful and just nation. In Indonesia, Islam embodies an inclusive approach and serves as a catalyst for peace among its people, ensuring that a diversity of thoughts is preserved and respected.

### **C. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper highlights that the internet and social media have emerged as potent platforms for disseminating radicalism and extremism. The advanced nature of these technologies creates new avenues for effective interaction and communication, enhancing their influence. Among the Islamic organization websites that have gained traction among internet users, many operate without formal affiliations. Eramuslim.com stands out as the most popular site, while NU Online serves as the primary platform for one of the most frequently visited Islamic organizations. Additionally, hidayatullah.com ranks as one of the top websites among contemporary Islamic groups.

In addressing the presence of radicalism in society, NU Online and Suara Muhammadiyah take a strong stance against radical narratives. In contrast, websites associated with contemporary Islamic organizations often hesitate to engage with the issue of radicalism, while non-affiliated organizations actively promote and disseminate radical narratives. Additionally, many social media users

who create and share radical or extremist content frequently operate under pseudonyms or group identities, making it difficult for them to be identified and held accountable.

The motivations driving social media users to create, share, and engage with radical messages include: (1) utilizing social media accounts as a means to critique the government; (2) leveraging these platforms to combat the spread of hoaxes or unverified information; and (3) employing social media accounts as a venue for da'wah (Islamic preaching).

## Bibliography

- Beckerlegge, G., (2001). *Computer-Mediated-Religion: Religion on the Internet at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*. London: Ashgate.
- Bhakti, Agus Surya. (2016). *Deradikalisasi Dunia Maya, Mencegah Symbiosis Terorisme dan Media*. Jakarta: Daulat Press.
- Brooke, T. (1997). *Virtual Gods: The Seduction of Power and Pleasure in Cyberspace*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House.
- Bunt, G. (2000). *Virtually Islamic: Computer-Mediated-Communication and Cyber Islamic Environment*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Castell, M. (2001). *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business, and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cowan, D. E, and J. K. Hadden. (2004). *Virtually Religious: New Religious Movements and the World Wide Web*. Di dalam *The Oxford Hand book of New Religious Movements*, edisi. J. R/ Lewis. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dawson, Lorne L & Cowan, Douglas E. (2004) *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet*. New York: Routledge.
- George, Cherian, (2016) *Pelintiran Kebencian: Rekayasa Ketersinggungan Agama dan Ancamannya bagi Demokrasi/* Cherian George; penyunting, Ihsan Ali Fauzi dan Irsyad Rafsadiem, Jakarta: PUSAD Paramadina, 2017.
- Hidayat, Komaruddin & Ahmad Gaus AF, (2006) *Menjadi Indonesia: 13 Abad Eksistensi Islam di Bumi Nusantara*, Jakarta: Mizan.
- Irfan Abubakar, Mohamad Nabil, *Kaum Muda Muslim Milenial: Hibridasi Kultural, Konservatisme, Dan Tantangan Radikalisme*, (Jakarta: CSRC UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2018).

- Lorne L Dawson dan Douglas E Cowan, *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet*, (New York: Rautledge, 2004).
- Noorhaidi Hasan dkk, *Literatur Keislaman Generasi Milenial: Transmisi, Apropriasi, dan Kontestasi*, (Yogyakarta: Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 2018).
- O'Leary, S, Brasher, B, "The Unknown God of the Internet" dalam Philosophical Perspectives on Computer-Mediated Communication, (*State University of New York Press, 1996*).
- O'Leary, Stephen D. (1996). *Cyberspace as Sacred Space: Communicating Religion on Computers Networks*. Di dalam *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet*. New York: Routledge.
- Stephen D O'Leary, Cyberspace as sacred space; Communicatiing Religion on Computers Network. Di dalam *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet*, (New York: Routledge, 1996).
- Turkle, (1995). *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Yunita Faela Nisa dkk, Gen Z: Kegagalan Identitas Keagamaan, *Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat, (Jakarta: PPIM UIN Jakarta. 2018)*.
- Dian, Benedicta Ariska, *Media Literasi Dalam Kontra Propaganda Radikalisme dan Terorisme Melalui Media Internet*, *Jurnal Prodi Perang Asimetris* (April 2017), Vol 3, Nomor 1
- Fauzi, Iman Ghifari, *Radikalisme di Internet*, *Jurnal Agama dan Lintas Budaya* 1, 2 (Maret 2017).
- Schroeder, Ralph, Heather, Noel., & Lee, Raymond M. 1998. "The Sacred and the Virtual: Religion in Multi-User Virtual Reality", (*Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication Vol. 4. No 2, page*)