

THE MODERATE PATH OF ISLAMIC LEGAL THOUGHT: THE CASE OF MUHAMMADIYAH IN INDONESIA

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Abstract. The religious moderation is a newly introduced discourse in Indonesian Islam context. This movement is aimed at moderating extreme practices of Islam and religion in general. Muhammadiyah, one major Islamic movement in Indonesia is known for its moderate and modern inclination. However, as Muhammadiyah is also known as the movement of Islamic reformation which to some extent is often connected to purification, some identifications of Muhammadiyah as a non-moderate movement prevails. This article shows that Muhammadiyah is a modern and moderate Islamic organization. In order to proof this claim, this paper analyses one document produced by Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah, a council within the organization of Muhammadiyah responsible for responding novel issues within the realm of Islamic law in particular, and Islamic thought in general. The document called *Risalah Akhlak Filosofis* or *Treatise on Philosophical Ethics* which was issued in 2020 as the result of the council congress. Using the moderation theoretical framework, analysis of the treatise proofs that Muhammadiyah is a moderate Islamic religious movement, in two contexts, theoretical and practical. Moreover, in Muhammadiyah context, moderation is comprehended in two meanings, namely moderation in the meaning of balance and anti or avoiding extremism. In this sense, moderation can be seen through the explanation in the treatise which emphasizes the importance of placing roles in various contexts. Furthermore, moderation in Muhammadiyah's thought can also be seen in its unwillingness to take advantage of other people's thoughts. In this case, Muhammadiyah shows its tendency of moderation through dialogue of thought between civilizations.

Keywords: *Muhammadiyah, moderation, Majelis Tarjih, philosophical ethics*

Introduction

Muhammadiyah is an Islamic reform movement in Indonesia. Widely known for its moderate orientation, Muhammadiyah is lately often seen as a hotbed for Salafism (which is known for its extreme textual orientation) and radicalism. This view is very simplistic and based on partial analysis of the movement. Deep scrutinization of Muhammadiyah doctrines will show that it is actually a moderate Islamic movement which applies principles of moderation in all its system of thought and social activities. In the recent context, Indonesian government is promoting Islamic moderation as a part of endeavors to eradicate extremist tendency in Indonesian religious life. In the midst of this wave of Islamic moderation, it is important and relevant to show moderate inclination of Muhammadiyah's thought. In doing so, this article will analyze "Treatise of Islamic Philosophical Ethics," a Muhammadiyah's legal document comprehensively discusses concept and practice of *akhlak* (ethics) within the Muhammadiyah context. Following government's initiative of religious moderation, it has been an important discourse featuring contemporary religious dynamics in Indonesia. Indonesian Muslims' responses are non-monolithic. In general, two major views emerge. On the one hand, positive and supportive views prevail (Maimun and Kosim, 2019; Qustulani et al., 2019). This type of view argues, among others, that moderation is a necessity in a situation where religious conservatism and extremism are showing their rising trend. In addition, the increasing complexities brought by diversity of Indonesian society have

sometimes produced tensions among social groups, including among peoples of religions. Although plurality has been an intrinsic feature of Indonesia since its inception as a nation state, Muslims' responses towards diversity are diverse. Consequently, varied attitudes in dealing with diversity are common; and extreme positions which see diversity as threat often occur. In such situation, moderation is believed to be a medium to solve the problems.

In contrast, resistant and negative views can be also identified, on the other hand. As the case with other Islamic religious discourse in Indonesia in previous periods such as Islam's position towards pluralism and multiculturalism, resistance to moderation agenda is not surprising. Moderation is often perceived as an attempt to weaken Muslim identity in a world where rapid and unprecedented changes occur. This type of view also argues, for instance, that in observing religion, moderation will only keep Muslims away from their religion, and that it is basically an idea imported from the West which will eventually lead Muslim to decline and even the destruction of universe (Noeraini, 2020). In the light of these two distinct views, this article follows a conviction that religious moderation is an urgent agenda to take in order to, philosophically, bring Islam (in Indonesia) to its moderate nature and, practically, put communal tensions motivated by religion to an end. Departing from this basis, this article will analyze the "Treatise of Islamic Philosophical Ethics," as a case study. The purpose is two-fold: the first is to reveal the urgency of moderation in this very period of time, and at the same time, it simultaneously aims at proving that as an Islamic reform movement, Muhammadiyah has practiced principle of moderation for very long time through its Islamic legal thought. In order to achieve such a conclusion, this article will be structured as follows. In the first part, I will deal with general principles of moderation in Islam, both in general context and in its Indonesian manifestation. Subsequently, this article will discuss the nature and features of Islamic law in Muhammadiyah are thought. Discussion on anatomy of Muhammadiyah's Islamic legal thought is essential before contextualization into the discourse of Islamic moderation of religious life is drawn. In the following part, "Treatise of Islamic Philosophical Ethics" will be presented and relationship lines and/or relevance with agenda of religious moderation in Indonesia will be concluded.

Discussion

Religious moderation: Concept, relevance and urgency

On February 4, 2019, His Holiness Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, Cairo, Ahamad al-Tayyib met in Abu Dhabi. The meeting of two prominent religious leaders was then resulted in the signing of a document called Abu Dhabi Document on "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together." Among points the document raises are:

History shows that religious extremism, national extremism and also intolerance have produced in the world, be it in the East or West, what might be referred to as signs of a "third world war being fought piecemeal". In several parts of the world and in many tragic circumstances these signs have begun to be painfully apparent, as in those situations where the precise number of victims, widows and orphans is unknown. We see, in addition, other regions preparing to become theatres of new conflicts, with outbreaks of tension and a build-up of arms and ammunition, and all

this in a global context overshadowed by uncertainty, disillusionment, fear of the future, and controlled by narrow-minded economic interests.

Disaster for Communication, 2019

Although this document does not mention the term “moderation” explicitly, its acknowledgement on the danger of extremism and intolerance as well as consequences they brought for the future of human beings is a bold call for people to leave extremism and intolerance and embark for moderation paths. It also proves that the call for moderation is actually a call for humanity which reaches and resonates at every corner of the globe. Hence, it is not confined and exclusive to specific religions and people. As a religion of humanity, Islam is not only called for the quest for moderation, but it has intrinsically contained and promoted doctrines of moderation since very beginning. Against such a backdrop, as an explicit agenda, moderation might be new. However, moderation is a fundamental and essential principle in Islam, which is popularly known as wasathiyya, although many Muslims may not be aware on the essential meaning of the doctrine. Hashim Kamali rightly describes this situation, that “moderation is an important but somewhat neglected aspect of Islamic teachings” (Kamali, 2015). In Islamic religious texts, both the Qur’an and Sunna, teachings on moderate position are strongly emphasized. Quraish Shihab, a leading Indonesian exegete, identifies some Qur’anic basis for moderation (wasathiyya). In all its derivatives, the term wasathiyya is mentioned several times in the Qur’an, such as in Chapter of al-Baqarah verse 143 which mentions: “And we have made you as the moderate community”; Chapter al-Ma’idah verse 89; Chapter al-Qalam verse 28; and Chapter al-Adiyat verse 4-5. In addition, Prophetic tradition (sunna), also urges moderation in many ways. For example, a hadith informs that: “the best of all affairs is the most moderate among them” (Shihab, 2019).

Ibnu Jarir al-Thabari, as quoted by Shihab, interpreted wasathiyya as the best or highest quality. However, in the context of Qur’anic verses which mentions “wa kadzalika jaalnakum ummatan wasathan,” quoted above, al-Thabari interpreted it as the middle position, which also means a position between two extreme ends (Shihab, 2019). Interpretation of wasathiyya also comes from al-Razi. In his view, wasathiyya in the Chapter of al-Baqarah verse 143 contains four meanings, namely: just, the best, the most prominent, and moderate in the sense of avoiding extremism and exaggerations (Shihab, 2019). In the similar tone, Hashim Kamali argues that ummatan wasathan conveys a meaning of “best community God has created.” The basis for this labeling to Muslims is their “dedication to the promotion of good and prevention of evil, its commitment to building the earth, and implementation of justice therein” (Kamali, 2015). Other than those meaning, wasathan also carries meaning of justice and alternative. As Ali Muhammad Muhammad al-Shalaby suggest, wasathan is defined as justice (‘adl) and alternative (khiyar). Shalaby goes further in elaborating his concept of wasathiyya by presenting a comparison of Islamic law to that of Judaism and Christianity. The manifestation of moderation in Islamic law, Shalaby argues, is avoiding extreme difficulties in observing religion as the case with Judaism; and extreme easiness of religion as practiced by Christians (Shalaby, 1999). In congruence with this view, Yusuf Qardhawi, a prominent Muslim legal scholar, formulates wasathiyya as tawazun (balanced) and i’tidal (straight). Furthermore, by balanced and straight, Qardhawi means it as a middle position between two confrontational ends (al-tawasuth wa al-ta’adul baina al-tharfaini mutaqaabalaini). Using this formula, Qardhawi

exemplifies the middle position on which Islam has to stand, which he views as between two extremes, such as: between divinity and humanity, between individualism and communalism, between sacred and profane, or between pure rationalism and pure textualism (Sutanto, 2021).

As moderation is part of Islamic doctrines, it has actually been implemented in Muslims' daily life from time to time. But, as a movement and agenda, moreover in its formal sense, moderation has recently found its contextualized relevance on different levels. This is partly due to the negligence of the teaching of moderation, as Kamali identifies above, and this negligence has triggered the rise of new awareness among Muslim scholars and leaders. It is also important to note that due to urgency of moderation, more and more Muslim scholars and leaders speak up on the subject. In a globalized world, human interactions are becoming easier and more intense that it will bring consequence of exchanges of (at least in term of ideas and culture) among peoples. Naturally, this will lead people to exposes and encounters on difference. In such a context, Hashim Kamali maintains that "the need for wasatīyyah has acquired renewed significance in the pluralist societies of our time." In the context of Indonesia, moderation has even been part of government agenda, and supported by moderate Muslims both individuals and groups. In 2018, Din Syamsuddin, a former leader of Muhammadiyah movement, in his position as Presidential Special Envoy for Dialogue of Religion and Civilizations, initiated and coined a term wasatiyyat Islam as a part of moderation campaign. This effort is hand in hand with Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia systematic efforts and campaigns of Islamic or religious moderation (The Jakarta Post, 2021). Although reasons behind moderation campaign have been slightly expressed earlier, a basic question of "why moderation is urgent?" in its Indonesian context remains important to rise. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, the former Minister of Religious Affairs (2014-2019) identifies three important factors that have made moderation as an urgent agenda. Those are: (a) a factor related to the mission of religion as the bearer of peace for human beings; (b) the diversity of human beings in all aspects of their life such identity, nationality, religion, ethnicity, or orientation and worldview; and (c) in and Indonesian context, it is related the idea and attempt to maintain Indonesia as a nation with high level of diversity and plurality (Dewindah, 2019).

As part of this effort, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia published a book on religious moderation which shows that Indonesian government sees the importance of moderation in Indonesian religious life. It sets basic concepts and understanding on religious moderation in an Indonesian context. Religious moderation, according to Ministry of Religious Affairs, should be understood as a religious norm to balance between practicing one's own religion and respecting other faith. Balance or middle path in religious practice will lead people to avoid exaggerated extreme, fanatic, and revolutionary attitudes. Ministry of Religious Affairs maintains that moderation is a solution of the presence of extreme attitude in observing religion, namely ultra-conservative pole or right extreme on the one hand, and liberal or left extreme, on the other (Dewindah, 2019). More precisely, elements of moderation are: (a) understanding the reality, (b) understanding the priority, (c) avoiding over-fanaticism, (d) avoiding difficulties in observing religious teachings; and (e) comprehensive understanding of religious text (Dewindah, 2019). Din Syamsuddin, details the elements of moderation in important keywords. Those are: *i'tidal* (bold and straight), *tawazun* (balance), *tasamuh*

(being tolerant), syura (democratic, non-individualistic), islah (reform), qudwah (initiating and pioneering) and muwathanah (citizenship) (Muhammadiyah, 2020).

Muhammadiyah's Islamic legal thought

As a movement of Islamic reform, the most fundamental aspect in Muhammadiyah's thought is the balance between purification and dynamization. The first context refers to a fact that the birth of Muhammadiyah in the beginning of 20th century was motivated by Ahmad Dahlan's (the founder) strong aspiration to purify Islam, especially in Java, from elements of local traditions contradictory to Islamic faith. Moreover, the manifestation of Muhammadiyah's purification of faith is manifested in the realm of rituals. In accordance with basic principles of Islamic legal maxim that in ritual (ibadah) initial legal status of everything is forbidden except there are explicit order in the Qur'an and Sunna; Muhammadiyah follows the path of purification in ibadah (ritual). In contrast, in terms of social relations (muamalah), Muhammadiyah adopts open and progressive principles, such as that everything is permissible, except those are explicitly forbidden by religious textual basis. By and large, purification is a paradigm adopted by Muhammadiyah in rituals (ibadah), and dynamization is a path Muhammadiyah pursues in dealing with social issues (muamalah). This nature of Muhammadiyah reform can be clearly seen from Syamsul Anwar's explanation. Anwar, who serves as Head of Tarjih Council of Muhammadiyah Central Board, explains that in carrying its reform (tajdid), Muhammadiyah generally classifies it into two contexts, namely reform in the field of faith and ritual and reform in the field of social life. In the former realm, Muhammadiyah chooses to follow the exemplars of Prophet Muhammad taught through the Qur'an and Sunna. In Muhammadiyah context, the sunna which is acceptable as the basis of observing rituals is called sunna maqbulah, literally means the acceptable prophetic tradition. This step is known as purification, while reform in the field of social life (muamalah), is more flexible in methodology and broader in scope. It is not surprising, that Anwar then maintains that Muhammadiyah was initially known as a reform movement in social life (SuaraMuhammadiyah, 2020).

In carrying its reform, Muhammadiyah stands on the support of employment of reason. It accords this principle through its attitude to reject the shut of ijtihad gate. Mukti Ali, a former Minister of Religious Affairs during Suharto administration, viewed that as a reform movement, Muhammadiyah is always in sustainable efforts to solve issues in religious life, by referring them to the Qur'an and Sunna (Ali, 1990). This point underlines dialectical relationships between texts and realities within Muhammadiyah system of thought. Saad Ibrahim, a prominent Muhammadiyah Islamic legal scholar strengthens this point. He maintains that fiqh should be progressive by transcending textual meaning, as a merely textual approach in dealing with text could result in failure of Islamic law in accommodating changes (Ibrahim, 2017). In its effort to maintain relevance of Islamic law with empirical realities of social life, Muhammadiyah assigns a special council responsible for this issue called Majelis Tarjih. Accordingly, in observing this function, Majelis Tarjih set a specific method of Islamic law called the Manhaj Tarjih (Tarjih methodology). Syamsul Anwar states that as intellectual activities, Manhaj Tarjih is set to respond any issues from the Islamic law point of view. Accordingly, in order to enable the Majlis to assume such tasks, Majelis Tarjih does not base its function merely on Islamic legal technical procedure per se, but also on wider horizon of understanding of religion which have become unique characteristics of Muhammadiyah movement. Those are: a) horizon of religiosity, b)

understanding of the position of reform in observing religion, c) understanding and awareness on tolerance, d) openness, and e) non-fanatic approach, in the sense that Muhammadiyah does not fanatically follow certain school of law (mazhab) in expense of leaving others (Anwar, 2018).

Considering main realm of Majelis Tarjih's function, it can be said that it mostly deals with fiqh which loosely can be understood as Islamic jurisprudence. However, it should be noted that the term "fiqh" in Arabic cannot be merely translated as "Islamic jurisprudence", as this term conveys much more complex meaning than just Islamic jurisprudence. In order to comprehend such idea, I believe that understanding of the evolutionary nature of the meaning of fiqh is unavoidable. In my view, there are four phases of evolution in the meaning of fiqh. First phase took place in the context of pre-Islam Arab period. During this course of time, the term fiqh had been used by Arab society, but its connotation was not narrowly limited to Islamic law or Islamic jurisprudence as it is now understood. More broadly, it was used to refer to any branches of knowledge developed at the time. Arabs are known for their eloquence in literary works although at that time the works were not expressed in written forms (Harisuddin, 2018). In addition to literature, pre-Islam Arabs also developed such science as astronomy and agriculture. In this context, fiqh referred to any branches of knowledge and faqih (the subject for fiqh) also referred to anybody well-versed in any knowledge. Second phase occurred during formative period of Islam. In this phase, however, the meaning of fiqh transformed. Its meaning was narrowed down from "understanding of any knowledge" into understanding of "any knowledge on Islam." This claim is based on a hadith which narrated that Prophet Muhammad prayed to God that He might grant Ibn Abbas, one of Prophet's companions, thorough understanding of religion. In Arabic phrase, Prophet Muhammad said: "Allahumma faqqihhu fi al-din." The term fiqh which is derived from verb (fiil) faqiha carries meaning of deep and thorough understanding and comprehension. Following this logic, faqih (singular) or fuqaha (plural) are those who are able to comprehend any branches of Islamic religious knowledge.

After the Prophet passed away and Islamic territory expanded, not only Muslim polity developed significantly, but also centers of learning flourished, and branches of religious knowledge multiplied. This period is the third phase of transformation in fiqh meaning. It is from this period on; more technical meaning of fiqh was introduced. Muslim jurists usually define fiqh as practical law related to rituals. Yusuf al-Qardhawi, for example, formulates fiqh as al-ilmu al-muta'allahu bi al-istinbathi al-ahkami al-shar'iyyati al-amaliyati min adillatiha al-tafsiliyya (a science on shari'a law related to rituals and human conducts derived from their detailed textual basis) (Yusuf, 1993). Similarly, Ahmad Mustafa al-Zarqa' defines fiqh as majmu'atu al-ahkami al-amaliyyah al-mashru'ah fi al-Islam (a compilation of practical law obliged by Islam) (Zarqa, 1999). The meaning of fiqh in this phase is the longest period, as it is this meaning of fiqh which is used up to present day. Nevertheless, while this meaning is still maintained and is the most acceptable definition, a new understanding emerges. I call this trend as fourth phase of fiqh meaning transformation. Interestingly, it resembles second phase in some ways, but with more contemporary touches and dimensions. The resemblance is that in contemporary era, fiqh once again refers to broader area of Islamic thought, so it is used to describe any conceptual formula related based on Islam, mainly the Qur'an and Sunna. So, many terms attributed to fiqh does not necessarily contain legal formulation, but more in the meaning of "in Islamic perspective" or

“Islamic ethical framework.” Terms such as “fiqh of environment” carries meaning of how Islam views issues of environment from wider and comprehensive point of views and is not confined Islamic legal perspective. The same situation is the case with “fiqh of water,” “fiqh of agrarian and land management”, “fiqh of disability” and other fiqh on contemporary issues.

Similar to my thought of four phase of fiqh meaning is Jan-Michel Otto’s concept on four manifestations of shari’a. In his view in order to comprehend shari’a appropriately, the context of shari’a from time to time should be understood beforehand. He then identifies divine abstract shari’a, classical shari’a; historically transfer shari’a, and contemporary shari’a (Otto, 2010). The most relevant between mine and Otto’s concept are phase four and contemporary shari’a. On contemporary shari’a, Otto offers an explanation “the whole of principles, rules, cases, and interpretations that are actually in use at present throughout the Muslim world. Contemporary sharia has become a vast, fragmented, and dispersed mass.” It is evident that Otto’s understanding of contemporary shar’ia refers to how Islamic law is understood and implemented in contemporary time as an ethic. In other words, I would call this as shari’a or Islamic law or fiqh as an ethical framework. The Treatise of Islamic Philosophical Ethics issued by Muhammadiyah’s Majelis Tarjih falls under this category. The topic of Islamic philosophical ethic does not explicitly contain Islamic legal formulations or fiqh in its traditional meaning. But, the fact that Majelis Tarjih covers this topic clearly reveal two facts, namely that Majelis Tarjih does not confine its scope only on Islamic law of rituals and that the meaning of fiqh has transcended its traditional connotation in order to accommodate unprecedented development of the world and complex dynamics of society.

Moderate inclunation of treatise on Islamic philosophical ethics

In 2020, Muhammadiyah’s Majelis Tarjih organized its National Congress. The congress is held regularly to respond any issues confronting Muslim societies in Indonesia. Many issues are presented and discussed in the meeting, ranging from legal expositions related to rituals to contemporary issues which do not explicitly seem as ritualistic. The inclusion of this latter type of issue in many Majelis Tarjih congress which leads me to conclude that in this very period, fourth phase regarding the meaning of fiqh emerged. The 2020 National Congress is not an exception. Majelis Tarjih deals with many issues, which Islamic ethics (akhlaq) is one of them. In a treatise called Risalah Akhlaq Islam Filosofis (Treatise of Islamic Philosophical Ethics), compiled in volume two entitled Materi Musyawarah Nasional Tarjih Muhammadiyah XXXI, Majelis Tarjih comprehensively discussed how ethics should be brought into contemporary life. Theoretically, ethics related to human conducts. In many ways, philosophers describe ethics as a parameter on how to measure good and bad in human actions both at individual and communal or social level. The presentation of ethics as a topic in the congress based on a conviction that one key for the success of Islam is the mainstreaming of akhlaq (ethics) (Anwar, 2018). Up to this point, a fundamental question should be raised: Why akhlaq should be made mainstream again? Does it mean that Muhammadiyah has not made it mainstream so far? Mohamad Mas’udi, the secretary of Majelis Tarjih of Muhammadiyah Central Board, argues that education of ethics is seen essential not only as an individual character, but also as fundamental values in social life and in the context of citizenship (Yulianto, 2020).

The treatise has explicitly mentioned the purpose. It also briefly informs factors leading to the formulation of treatise which was not explicitly mentioned. Other than this, also those mentioned earlier, my hypothesis regarding to the treatise is that it relates to moral crisis that leaders of religion and scholars often summoned. Simon Blackburn, for example, sees that there are seven threats to ethics, namely the death of God, relativism, egoism, evolutionary theory, determinism and futility, unreasonable demands, and false consciousness (Blackburn, 2003). It is not difficult to agree on Blackburn's point. In term of the death of God, this expression might literally sound harsh. However, to take it metaphorically, it carries meaning of human beings' superiority which leads to misconducts in many walks of life. In relation to creation of man, the Qur'an informs that God told Angels that He was to create man as His vicar on the earth, to protect human beings and universe from destruction. Using moderation parameter, all seven above issues confronting issues of ethics and morality, are among extreme values that need to be moderated. Beside the fact that the treatise is sometimes not easy to follow conceptually (it may be due to fact that it is composed by a group of authors who have different perspective and orientations), it can be clearly seen as an attempt to bring moderation to the heart of Islamic ethics. Referring back to Qardhawi's formulation of moderation as middle positions between two confrontational ends (*al-tawasuth wa al-ta'adul baina al-tharfaini mutaqaabalaini*), Majelis Tarjih's treatise clearly show that mission of moderation. Regarding role and responsibility of human beings, the treatise set several classifications which on the whole can be seen as pair in harmony, namely: role and responsibility as individuals, as servant of God, as members of family, as members of community, as members of society, as citizens, and citizen of world (Muhammadiyah, 2020).

At individual level, role and responsibility are manifested in the following conducts: (a) moral awareness to thank God for all His blessings; (b) moral awareness for soul purification; (c) moral awareness not to follow desire of lust as manifestation of fear of God; (d) moral awareness of courage to express the truth; (e) moral awareness to be humble and avoid arrogance; (f) moral awareness to be patient, refrain from anger, and be forgiving; (g) moral awareness of seeking knowledge by using reason (Muhammadiyah, 2020). Aspect of moderation which can be found in the treatise is that Muhammadiyah emphasizes balanced aspects on two levels: theoretical and practical. On theoretical level, the form of moderation can be found in the combination of variety of theoretical basis. For example, in defining what *akhlak* (ethics) is, the treatise goes onto classical sources which are mostly derived from Muslim intellectual tradition. It is a clear moderation, since in such a divided world which is haunted by "the clash of civilization", people tend to be sectarian in many ways of life. Such sectarianism can also be seen in discursive level. Many Muslim groups are trapped in reluctance in accepting any discourse coming from the west without deep scrutiny to the nature of the discourse. The treatise shows contrasting tendency. It has rigorously taken any useful discourse both from Islam and non-Islam sources. Although this seems something simple, it basically conveys strong message of moderation. The moderation point it offers is that people should be realistic in treating intellectual works. Truth is something universal in nature, and therefore no east or west in the truth. This is an important ethics of our time, which the treatise has shown timely. With reference to modern science, Arun Bala argues that modern science is basically a result of "interaction of ideas drawn from different cultures". Such an understanding "would subvert attempts to use history

either to promote the hegemony of one single culture or to make the existence of diverse cultures an excuse for confrontation and conflict” (Bala, 2006).

Conclusion

This article argues that Muhammadiyah is an Islamic movement in Indonesia that has promoted religious moderation since its inception, even when the term moderation has not yet become a formal agenda as it is now. In order to analyze the moderate view of Muhammadiyah, presenting an explanation of the nature of Islamic legal thought in Muhammadiyah is very important. By presenting example, further tracking of the moderate tendency in Muhammadiyah’s system of thought (Islamic law) and furthermore Muhammadiyah social actions can be placed. Tracking moderateness of Muhammadiyah thought can be conducted through presenting one examples of Muhammadiyah thought produced by its council of Islamic Legal thought and issues known as Majelis Tarjih. One of the latest products of the Majelis Tarjih is “Treatise on Islamic Philosophical Ethics.” By analyzing this text, it can be concluded that Muhammadiyah has shown moderation in the realm of Islamic thought, in general, and Islamic legal thought, in particular. One meaning of moderation is in balance. In this sense, moderation can be seen through the explanation in the treatise which emphasizes the importance of placing roles in various contexts, for example regarding the balance of responsibilities as a person, as a servant of Allah, as a family member, and so on. Moreover, a more interesting point can also be revealed. The treatise refers to variety of works in the field. It is interesting that it refers to works of experts without looking at East and West. This fact may seem trivial to some, but in a world where featured by polarities as it is today, the freedom to take advantage of the views of various thinkers actually shows an extraordinary attitude of moderation. An extreme anti-other attitude can be manifested in an unwillingness to take advantage of other people's thoughts. In this case, Muhammadiyah shows its tendency of moderation through dialogue of thought between civilizations as reflected in the Minutes. This is also a manifestation of the moderate view that world civilization is not an exclusive civilization, but an eclectic civilization that requires interaction with various contexts and identities. It is impossible to achieve this goal for those with extreme attitudes.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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