

MUI Fatwa on the Prohibition of Interfaith Greetings: Analysis of the Perspective of Postmodernist Social Theory in the Context of Plural Society

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Received: October 24, 2024

Revised: January 20, 2025

Accepted: February 01, 2025

Abstract

This research is based on the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) on the prohibition of interfaith greetings, which has sparked widespread debate in Indonesia's pluralistic society, which has given rise to tensions between Islamic theological values and the demands of social diversity in the context of religious pluralism. This research aims to analyze the fatwa from the perspective of postmodern social theory. The scope of the study covers the theological, sociological, and social implications of the fatwa's implementation in society. The method used is a qualitative study with a document analysis approach and a literature review of the official MUI statement, public responses, and postmodern social theories. The results of the study indicate that the MUI fatwa is based on efforts to maintain the purity of the Islamic faith, but in the context of a pluralistic society it can give rise to social exclusivism and resistance to the values of inclusivity. In conclusion, although this fatwa has a strong normative basis from a religious perspective, its implementation requires a more adaptive socio-cultural approach to avoid polarization amidst the diversity of Indonesian society.

Keywords: MUI fatwa, interfaith greetings, postmodern social theory, pluralism.

1. Introduction

Greetings in Islam are a very important expression and have deep theological and social meanings. Literally, greetings come from the Arabic Salam which means peace,

safety, or security. The expression of greeting is a form of prayer and hope for others to get peace, safety, and blessings from Allah SWT. In several verses in the Qur'an, greetings are not only seen as formal greetings, but also as universal values that reflect peace, grace, and security (Baihaqi, 2021). When greetings are conveyed to adherents of the same religion, it is certainly understandable that this has become a common tradition that is agreed upon as permissible. However, it is different when greetings from various religions are combined into one and become a universal greeting conveyed in an interfaith context, of course not all groups of Muslims agree. This is what was discussed by the Indonesian Ulama Council in an Ijtima'ulama Fatwa Commission activity in May 2024.

It was reported on the official website of the MUI center dated June 4, 2024 with the title "Ijtima Ulama Fatwa Commission VIII: No Greetings with a Special Prayer Dimension of Other Religions", that on May 28-31, 2024, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) held an Ijtima Ulama Fatwa Commission activity throughout Indonesia, with the theme "Fatwa: Religious Guidelines for the Welfare of the Community". The activity was attended by 654 participants from various elements in the MUI, Islamic mass organizations, researchers from various universities, and so on. Among the things decided at the meeting was the prohibition of combining the teachings of various religions, including greetings by including greetings from various religions. The fatwa of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) regarding the prohibition of interfaith greetings stated that the use of greetings from other religions by Muslims, such as Shalom (in the Jewish and Christian traditions) or Om Swastiastu (in the Hindu tradition), is considered inconsistent with Islamic teachings. This is because saying greetings is a prayer that is of a worship nature. The current integration of interfaith greetings does not constitute justified tolerance (Junaedi, 2024). What the MUI decided at the meeting was actually not something new at all. Because in 2019, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) of East Java Province had issued a *tausiyah* or appeal in a letter numbered 110/MUI/JTM/2019, not to do interfaith greetings, because it was considered doubtful which could damage the purity of the Islamic faith.

The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) fatwa on the prohibition of interfaith greetings is a complex and sensitive topic in the context of Islamic law and interfaith relations. Therefore, after the formulation of the meeting results was shared with the public, the MUI immediately received a reaction from them and accused the fatwa of being a controversial fatwa. The kemenag.go.id page published an opinion piece entitled "Considering the Fatwa on the Prohibition of Interfaith Greetings: between Religion and Harmony" written by Zaenal Mustakim, Chancellor of UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, (Monday, June 3, 2024). The page explains that the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance, Kamarudin Amin, said that interfaith greetings are a practice that can encourage harmony between people. Spreading peace as a substantive teaching of all religions can be done through interfaith greetings. Amin believes that greetings and greetings on holidays have no effect on faith. It is further stated on the page that the prohibition of greetings from various religions can be interpreted as one of the stumbling blocks in realizing harmony between religions. Even a sharp assessment was expressed that the MUI is not the only institution that represents the religious authority of Muslims in Indonesia, so it should not issue this controversial fatwa (Mustakim, 2024).

The phenomenon of the MUI fatwa on the prohibition of interfaith greetings and the controversy that followed it seems to be an important theme to be studied further,

by identifying the social impact of the fatwa, and analyzing it from the perspective of contemporary social theory, namely postmodernism, especially in the context of a plural society, so that this polemic does not become a source of prolonged conflict, the impact of which is actually unhealthy for the continuation of harmony and unity among the nation's children.

2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This design was chosen to in-depth explore the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) fatwa on the prohibition of interfaith greetings in the context of Indonesia's pluralistic and multicultural society. The case study allows researchers to understand the phenomenon in a real-life context comprehensively and contextually.

Data were collected through document analysis, reviewing official MUI fatwas, media reports, statements by religious figures, and relevant academic articles (Dharta et al., 2025). This study also utilized a literature review to link the data to postmodern social theory, particularly the notion of plurality of meaning, deconstruction, and the critique of claims to a single truth. The data analysis technique used was content analysis, which allows researchers to examine the structure of meaning, symbols, and narratives within the text (Krippendorff, 2013). With this approach, the research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the social position and impact of the MUI fatwa, while also offering a more contextual and inclusive perspective.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Greetings to Non-Muslims from an Islamic Perspective

Greetings, in the context of Islam, are not just greetings. Greetings such as "Assalamu'alaikum" which means "may peace and blessings be upon you" are a form of respect and prayer. However, when the context of this greeting is extended to interactions with non-Muslims, various views have emerged among scholars regarding its limits and permissibility. This has given rise to a controversy regarding whether a Muslim may greet non-Muslims or return their greetings. The main controversy about greeting non-Muslims stems from the various views of scholars and the evidence used as the basis for making legal decisions. Some scholars allow it, with certain conditions, while others prohibit it, based on hadith that limit greeting interactions to Muslims only. One hadith that is often used as the basis for scholars who prohibit greeting non-Muslims is: "Do not start greeting Jews and Christians. If you meet them on the road, then narrow the path for them." (HR. Muslim No. 2167)

This hadith is understood to mean that a Muslim should not initiate greetings to a non-Muslim. The main reason behind this prohibition is the difference in beliefs between Muslims and non-Muslims. According to scholars who hold this view, the greeting "Assalamu'alaikum" which means "may Allah's peace and mercy be upon you" is not appropriate to be given to someone who does not believe in Allah according to Islamic teachings.

However, there are also opinions from several scholars who allow a Muslim to greet non-Muslims. They argue that the context of the hadith above is in a certain situ-

ation during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, namely when Muslims and non-Muslims were in conflict. If in a peaceful and respectful condition, greetings can be given as a form of good social relations. One of the arguments used is the generality of Islamic teachings to spread peace and compassion. In this case, Imam Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah stated that if there is a sharia interest or good relations with non-Muslims, then it is permissible to greet them, but with general words such as "Good morning" or greetings that do not contain prayers that are specific to Muslims (**ibnqayyim2002**).

In addition to the debate on whether a Muslim may greet a non-Muslim, the issue of returning a greeting from a non-Muslim is also an important topic in Islamic law discussions. In the hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) provides guidelines on how to respond to a greeting from a non-Muslim. It is narrated that when a Jew greeted someone with the intention of mocking or twisting the meaning of the greeting (by saying "Assalamualaikum" which means "death to you"), the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ordered them to respond with the words: "If the people of the book greet you, then say: 'Wa'alaikum' (And also to you)." (HR. Bukhari No. 6258, Muslim No. 2163). From this hadith, scholars agree that when a non-Muslim greets a Muslim, he may reply with the words "Wa'alaikum" which means "and also upon you," without mentioning the prayer for Allah's safety and mercy. This response is considered a neutral response, not violating the principles of Islamic belief.

Some contemporary scholars expand the understanding on this matter. They argue that in the context of harmonious social relations in a pluralistic society, responding to greetings from non-Muslims well, as long as it does not violate the creed, is a recommended action to maintain peace and harmony. Scholars such as Yusuf Al-Qaradawi allow the use of greetings in interactions with non-Muslims as a form of da'wah and strengthening good relations between religious communities (Al-Qaradawi, 2010). However, in conditions where greetings are given with negative intentions or sarcasm, as in the case of the hadith above, scholars emphasize that the response must still be with "Wa'alaikum".

In a modern pluralistic and multicultural society, interactions between religious communities often occur. The controversy over greeting non-Muslims becomes very relevant in this context, where interfaith relations are marked by intense cooperation and social interaction. Islam generally teaches an attitude of tolerance and compassion towards all humans, including non-Muslims. In QS. Al-Mumtahanah (60): 8, Allah SWT says: "Allah does not forbid you to do good and be fair to those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your land. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly."

This verse emphasizes that Muslims are commanded to be kind and just towards non-Muslims as long as they do not become hostile or fight Muslims. In this context, greetings as an expression of peace can be a means to build harmonious relationships.

The controversy over greeting non-Muslims in Islam lies in the differences in interpretation of the hadith and the social conditions of society. Some scholars forbid greeting non-Muslims based on the hadith which states the prohibition of initiating greetings to non-Muslims, while other scholars allow it, with certain conditions and in peaceful conditions. Likewise, responding to greetings from non-Muslims is recommended to be done with the greeting "Wa'alaikum" as a neutral form of response. The argument is that in the context of a modern pluralistic society, it is important for Muslims to understand the role of greetings in building peace and harmony between religions. Greetings can be

a tool to strengthen social relations, as long as they do not violate the principles of faith.

3.2. Background and Purpose of the Fatwa Prohibiting Interfaith Greetings

The fatwa prohibiting interfaith greetings issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) has sparked heated and controversial discussions among Muslims and the pluralistic Indonesian society. This fatwa prohibits Muslims from greeting or using greetings from other religions in formal or informal contexts. To understand the background and purpose of this fatwa, it is important to look at several aspects, including theological views, social conditions of Indonesian society, and the role of the MUI in maintaining the purity of the faith of Muslims.

Theological background of this fatwa is closely related to the principle of purifying faith in Islam. Greetings are greetings that are essentially part of the rituals and prayers of Muslims. The use of greetings in Islam, such as "Assalamu'alaikum", has a deep meaning that is not only a greeting, but also a prayer for safety, peace, and prosperity given by Allah SWT. This greeting reflects the vertical relationship between humans and God, so that in the context of Islam, greetings are considered as expressions that contain elements of worship (Putri, Berlianie, and Mubarak, 2024).

According to the MUI, the use of greetings from other religions by Muslims can be considered a violation of the creed and a form of imitation of the rituals of other religions. This is based on the principles contained in several verses of the Qur'an which call for not mixing Islamic worship or rituals with other religions. One of the verses often quoted in this context is QS. Al-Kafirun (109): 6, which reads: "For you your religion, and for me my religion." This verse is used as a basis that Muslims are not permitted to mix or follow rituals that are part of the teachings of other religions, including in terms of saying greetings.

In addition to theological considerations, the social context in Indonesia's pluralistic society is also an important background to this fatwa. In various official government events or social activities involving various religions, the use of greetings from various religions is often done as a form of respect and tolerance between religious communities. Usually, these greetings are said in order to reflect togetherness, such as "Assalamu'alaikum" (Islam), "Shalom" (Christian), "Om Swastiastu" (Hindu), and "Namo Buddhaya" (Buddhist) (Sujarwanto, 2012).

However, the MUI views this practice as a potential deviation from the faith of Muslims, because saying greetings from other religions can be interpreted as accepting symbols or prayers from other religions. This view is also supported by several scholars who state that saying greetings from other religions, even in a formal context, still contains elements of ritual and prayer that should not be said by Muslims.

The phenomenon of globalization and the influence of modernity also influenced the emergence of this fatwa. In the era of globalization, there is a tendency towards syncretism or mixing of religious values and rituals. Religious syncretism is a phenomenon in which the practices of various religions influence each other and sometimes mix with each other. The MUI views this phenomenon as a threat to the integrity of Islamic teachings. In dealing with this influence, the MUI seeks to protect the religious identity of Muslims from the mixing of other religious values that could blur theological boundaries (Fikri, 2024).

The MUI fatwa on the prohibition of interfaith greetings is not only motivated by theological concerns, but also contains several broader objectives, both from a religious and social perspective. Among these objectives, the first is to maintain the purity of the faith of Muslims. The main objective of this fatwa is to maintain the purity of the faith of Muslims from practices that are considered deviant or blur the boundaries between Islamic rituals and other religions. The MUI seeks to ensure that Muslims do not get caught up in practices that could endanger their beliefs, especially in the context of reciting prayers or greetings from other religions that are considered part of religious worship or rituals.

According to the MUI's view, interfaith greetings can cause misunderstandings, both among Muslims themselves and outside of Islam, regarding the theological beliefs of Muslims. With the issuance of this fatwa, it is hoped that Muslims will better understand the importance of maintaining their religious identity, especially in interactions in public spaces involving various religions.

The second is to prevent syncretism and *tasyabbuh* (imitation). This fatwa also aims to prevent Muslims from engaging in *tasyabbuh* or imitating the teachings and rituals of other religions. In this context, *tasyabbuh* is seen as a form of conformity to another religious identity, which in the long term can weaken a person's Islamic identity. By prohibiting interfaith greetings, the MUI seeks to emphasize that Muslims must maintain the uniqueness of Islamic teachings and not mix them with the teachings of other religions, which in many cases can lead to religious syncretism (Wafirah et al., 2020).

The third is to strengthen the religious identity of Muslims. This fatwa is also intended to strengthen the religious identity of Muslims in a pluralistic society. In the context of diverse Indonesia, the MUI feels the need to provide guidance to Muslims regarding the boundaries that must be considered in interfaith interactions. Religious identity is an important element in maintaining the integrity and loyalty of Muslims to their religion (Amelia, Triyadi, and M., 2023).

The fourth is to avoid ambiguity in religious rituals. This fatwa aims to avoid ambiguity that may arise from the pronunciation of interfaith greetings. In various formal events, the use of interfaith greetings is often delivered simultaneously without considering the context and meaning of the greetings. The MUI sees this as something that can cause theological confusion for Muslims, because greetings from other religions often contain the meaning of prayers or greetings that are specific to certain religious beliefs (R. A. Wibowo, 2013).

The fifth is to maintain harmony with the right approach. Although this fatwa prohibits interfaith greetings, its purpose is not to trigger tensions between religious communities, but rather to maintain harmony while respecting existing theological boundaries. The MUI recommends that Muslims use universal or neutral greetings in interfaith events, such as "Good morning" or greetings that do not contain specific religious elements (Indonesia, 2024).

3.3. Implications of the Fatwa Prohibiting Interfaith Greetings on Interreligious and Socio-Political Relations

After this fatwa was exposed to the public, there were pros and cons among the public, including among religious figures and other Islamic organizations. Some parties supported this fatwa on the grounds that it was important to maintain the purity of the

Islamic faith in a pluralistic society. However, there were also those who considered that this fatwa could actually disrupt interfaith relations and hinder efforts to build tolerance. Groups opposing this fatwa argued that the interfaith greeting should not be seen as a threat to faith, but rather as a form of respect and an effort to create harmony between religious communities in Indonesia. They argued that interfaith greetings should be understood in a social and cultural context, not a theological one.

The MUI fatwa on the prohibition of interfaith greetings has broad implications for interfaith relations and socio-political dynamics in Indonesia. In the context of implications for interfaith relations, this fatwa can potentially disrupt interfaith harmony. Indonesia is a country known for its religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity. Interfaith relations in Indonesia have historically been marked by efforts to maintain tolerance and harmony. The use of interfaith greetings, especially in formal events or interfaith activities, is often seen as a symbol of appreciation and recognition of this diversity.

Non-Muslim communities may view this fatwa as an exclusionary attitude or a rejection of previously widely accepted forms of interfaith cooperation. In interfaith events, alternating greetings, such as "Assalamu'alaikum" (Islam), "Shalom" (Christian), "Om Swastiastu" (Hindu), and "Namo Buddhaya" (Buddhist), are ways to show mutual respect. If Muslims are prohibited from saying greetings from other religions, this can be seen as a decline in the spirit of togetherness and reducing the sense of tolerance that has been built up so far.

The impact of the MUI Fatwa can also strengthen the perception that Islam adopts an exclusivist attitude that increasingly limits interfaith relations. Although the main objective of this fatwa is to maintain the purity of faith, the impact felt in society is a clearer separation between Muslims and other religious communities, especially in public interactions. Exclusivism in the pronunciation of interfaith greetings can strengthen the impression that Muslims are separating themselves from broader social interactions. This can have an impact on decreasing trust between religious communities and has the potential to reduce the willingness to work together on humanitarian or social welfare matters.

In the context of national socio-politics, this fatwa can affect the government's efforts to build national harmony. As a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, the policies and views of religious institutions such as the MUI have a broad impact on social and political policies. This fatwa can strengthen the conservative position in Islam which tends to want to maintain the purity of religion in stricter ways. However, this fatwa can also trigger a backlash from moderate or pluralist groups who see Indonesia as a country with Pancasila which upholds diversity and unity in difference. If not managed properly, tensions between conservative and moderate groups in Islam, as well as tensions between different religious groups, could increase and have a negative impact on national political stability.

The implementation of this fatwa at the government level also poses its own challenges, especially for Muslim officials who are in strategic positions in interfaith or state events. In state events or official ceremonies involving interfaith, interfaith greetings have become a norm practiced as a form of respect and harmony between religious communities. The prohibition of interfaith greetings could put Muslim officials in a difficult position. On the one hand, they are bound by the fatwa issued by religious authorities, while on the other hand, they are also expected to follow protocol ethics and state norms that uphold togetherness between religious communities. If there is no adjustment or clearer

guidance from the government, this situation could trigger confusion and even political conflict within the bureaucratic environment.

Efforts by the government and community organizations to build tolerance can also be affected by this fatwa. Many tolerance and interfaith harmony programs implemented in Indonesia are based on the understanding that social harmony can be improved through harmonious interfaith interactions. The use of interfaith greetings in public events is one way to strengthen the commitment to plurality. This fatwa can be considered an obstacle to ongoing tolerance programs, because there are limitations in the form of greetings that are considered symbolic but important in the context of togetherness. Tolerance campaigns must adapt to this fatwa, for example by encouraging more universal forms of interaction such as the use of neutral greetings, such as "Good morning" or "Salam sejahtera," which are not associated with a particular religion.

In order not to cause greater division, it is important for the government, civil society, and religious organizations to create clear guidelines and support constructive interfaith dialogue. In this way, diversity in Indonesia can remain a force for national unity.

3.4. Postmodernism Social Theory

Postmodernism, with figures such as Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard, offers a critique of the grand metanarrative views, including religion, which attempt to provide a single explanation for social reality. Postmodernism emphasizes that in modern society, there is no single narrative of truth, but rather many competing interpretations and perspectives (foucault1972).

Postmodernist social theory, which emerged as a reaction to modernism, focuses on the rejection of single truth claims, and emphasizes plurality, relativism, and deconstruction. Postmodernism proposes the view that reality and knowledge are socially constructed and influenced by a variety of factors, including culture, language, and power. In this view, there is no one truth that applies to all, but rather there are multiple truths that depend on the social and cultural context of each individual or group. Plurality is a central tenet of postmodernism theory. According to this view, society is a space filled with different perspectives, values, and identities. Each individual or group constructs their own understanding of the world based on different experiences, cultures, and histories. This plurality not only acknowledges differences, but also celebrates them. In a pluralistic society, no single identity or perspective should be dominant. Instead, each narrative or identity has room to be expressed and valued, leading to the recognition of diversity in various aspects of life, be it religion, culture, or politics (Wahid, 2024).

Relativism, as a further principle of plurality, proposes that truth is not something absolute, but rather depends on the perspective and context of each individual or group. In the postmodern perspective, there is no universal or single truth that can be accepted by all parties. Instead, truth is understood as something relative, depending on social, cultural, and historical factors. This means that each view or interpretation has its own validity, and none is more correct than the other. This relativism often conflicts with the modern view which tends to seek a single truth that applies to everyone (Lestari, 2020).

Deconstruction, which is one of the main methods in postmodernism, is an approach used to dismantle structures and narratives that are considered "true" or "natural"

in society. Deconstruction emphasizes that all texts, be they culture, language, or ideology, are products of power and interpretation. In deconstruction, there is no fixed or final meaning. Instead, meaning always depends on the reader and the context. In other words, deconstruction invites us to see everything from a more critical perspective, question established assumptions, and open up space for more diverse interpretations (Auliya and Pujawati, 2023).

Overall, postmodernism challenges the idea that there is one objective truth that is universally accepted. Instead, postmodernism recognizes that the world is full of valid and relevant perspectives. This opens up space for dialogue and interaction between groups with different backgrounds. Within the framework of postmodernism, all social identities and outlooks on life, whether religious, cultural, or political, are valued as part of the diversity that shapes social reality. Postmodernism views society as a complex, fragmented, and diverse entity. In this perspective, society consists of diverse identities, values, and narratives, each of which is valid without the dominance of one view as the sole truth. This concept describes society as a space where differences in cultural, ethnic, and religious identities coexist without the need for uniformity (Putra, 2021).

The context of Indonesia's multicultural society fits this view perfectly. With its rich ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, Indonesia faces the challenge of creating unity without eliminating that diversity. On the one hand, cultural plurality allows for dynamic interaction, but on the other hand, it can trigger conflict when values clash. Postmodernism encourages appreciation of this diversity by seeing Indonesia as a society that not only tolerates differences but also considers them a social wealth worth celebrating (Pangalila and Rumbay, 2024). In practice, the postmodern approach to Indonesian multiculturalism also faces challenges due to low cross-cultural awareness in various social strata. Although many consider themselves to live in diversity, deep awareness of other cultures is often underdeveloped. More intensive multicultural education and integration of pluralistic values are believed to help bridge differences and reduce the tendency of ethnocentrism in Indonesian society (A. P. Wibowo et al., 2023).

In the postmodern era, religion is seen as one of many narratives that shape individual and group identities. Postmodern social theory rejects the idea that there is one universal truth that applies to all parties, and emphasizes plurality as one of the main principles. Religion, in this context, is not the only source of truth or value, but rather part of the various perspectives that exist in society. Every religion, according to the postmodern view, is a narrative constructed by certain social groups, and is confronted with other narratives that also have their own validity (S.Ag, 2020).

The greatest challenge for religion in the postmodern context is to maintain its identity amidst the rapidly growing diversity of values. In an increasingly pluralistic and technologically connected society, religion must be able to adapt to the various views and practices that exist. Religious identity is often threatened by the growing relativism, where all views are considered valid with none being more correct than the others. This creates a challenge for religion to maintain its fundamental teachings and values while interacting with the existing social and cultural diversity (Auliya and Pujawati, 2023).

Another challenge is how religion can remain relevant without getting caught up in exclusivity or dogmatism. Postmodernism criticizes all forms of hegemony or dominance of one view over another, and this creates space for religion to speak within the framework of interfaith dialogue. Rigid and closed religions tend to be increasingly marginalized,

while religions that are able to appreciate plurality, accommodate dialogue, and be inclusive may be more resilient in this dynamic and fragmented postmodern society (Wahid, 2024).

3.5. Analysis of the MUI Fatwa on Interfaith Greetings from a Postmodernism Perspective

The deconstruction of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) fatwa on the prohibition of interfaith greetings is relevant in the context of a pluralistic society, such as Indonesia. From the perspective of postmodernist social theory, which emphasizes the relativity of truth and diversity of perspectives, this deconstruction helps open up a space for dialogue to understand the motives and limitations of the fatwa in maintaining religious identity without sacrificing the values of pluralism (hasyim2020).

The MUI fatwa can be seen as an attempt to protect Islamic identity by avoiding practices that are considered to blur theological boundaries between religions. However, the postmodernist approach, which does not recognize a single truth, challenges this view. Postmodernism considers that all truth claims are social constructions related to certain cultural and historical contexts. This means that the fatwa may reflect the particular views of conservative groups in Islam in Indonesia that have influence in formulating religious norms, but is not the only interpretation of Islam that can be accepted legitimately (fitriyani2011). In a pluralistic society, the deconstruction of this fatwa also encourages society to re-examine whether the prohibition is truly essential in maintaining identity or can instead be re-understood as a cautious attitude in maintaining interfaith harmony. The principle of plurality in postmodernism encourages the acceptance of various perspectives which should also open up opportunities for the MUI and related parties to renegotiate theological boundaries that still respect diversity in the context of interfaith in Indonesia.

Postmodernism sees that in a pluralistic society like Indonesia, the ban on interfaith greetings issued by the MUI can be viewed from two sides. First, from the perspective of postmodernism that supports plurality and criticizes the concept of absolute truth, this ban is seen as having the potential to limit freedom of expression and interaction across beliefs. In a multicultural context, this kind of regulation is considered to hinder the creation of harmonious communication between religious communities because it perpetuates strict and inflexible theological boundaries. Second, postmodernism that deconstructs a single truth also highlights that claims of truth from a particular religious perspective should not deny the diversity of beliefs in society. The MUI, through its fatwa, emphasizes the importance of maintaining religious identity. However, for postmodernism, plurality that supports tolerance can be more effective in building harmonious interfaith relations than formal restrictions on interfaith greetings (Kharlie, 2024).

In Indonesia's pluralistic and diverse society, this postmodern interpretation becomes relevant, considering the need to maintain harmony between religious communities amid differences in belief. According to this view, policies that force uniformity without considering plurality can actually reduce existing cultural and religious diversity, thus tending to be contrary to the spirit of pluralism and inclusivity.

The social implications of the MUI fatwa on the prohibition of interfaith greetings have raised discussions about its impact, whether it leads to social fragmentation or can create harmony. From a postmodernist perspective, differences in religious beliefs are seen as a form of diversity that should be respected in a multicultural society. However,

this MUI fatwa is feared to create boundaries that strengthen religious identities exclusively, thus potentially triggering separation between community groups (fragmentation) rather than embracing diversity (Hamzah, 2018).

The postmodernist approach that rejects absolute truth provides the perspective that every belief or faith has its own space, which should be accepted in a pluralistic society like Indonesia. However, the implementation of the fatwa that strictly prohibits interfaith greetings can be considered as a strong affirmation of Islamic identity, but risks giving rise to the interpretation that Islam is intolerant of customs that are considered "outside." In this context, the fatwa can be perceived as an identity boundary that hinders harmonious interaction with other groups. On the other hand, the MUI fatwa can be seen as trying to maintain harmony by avoiding practices that can be seen as mixing different religious teachings. However, in the context of a multicultural society, this fatwa must also consider its impact on harmony between religious communities in Indonesia, considering that some Muslims and other religious organizations already have a more inclusive view of the practice of interfaith greetings.

From a postmodernist perspective, which supports plurality and rejects a single truth, this policy can be seen as counterproductive. The postmodernist approach tends to see freedom of expression and interpretation of religion as a positive step in maintaining harmony and integration in a diverse society. Thus, when this fatwa is strictly implemented, the risk of social fragmentation due to the emphasis on exclusive identities may increase, as rigid boundaries tend to inhibit more fluid interfaith dialogue and respect for differences.

4. Conclusions

From a postmodernist perspective, the MUI fatwa prohibiting interfaith greetings reflects a tension between preserving Islamic identity and meeting the demands of living in a pluralistic society. While the fatwa aims to strengthen theological exclusivity, it risks widening social gaps between religious communities and undermining the spirit of pluralism that upholds openness and diversity. In Indonesia's multicultural context, fatwas should consider their social impact and promote interfaith dialogue to understand greetings not only as religious expressions but also as social gestures of respect. Therefore, the MUI is encouraged to develop more inclusive fatwas that align with the values of Pancasila, to prevent social fragmentation and instead foster harmony among religious communities.

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