



Digital Academics as Strengthening Religious Moderation Values in Overcoming the Potential of Identity Politics in The Kadokan Village Community, Sukoharjo District

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Abstract: *This community service aims to investigate the role of digital academics in strengthening the values of religious moderation as a response to the potential for identity politics in the community of Kadokan Village, Sukoharjo Regency. Identity politics is often a source of tension and conflict in various communities, especially in religious contexts. A qualitative approach was used in this research by collecting data through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of digital platforms used by academics and local communities. The results of UIN Raden Mas Said's Community Service (PKM) regarding "Digital Academics as Strengthening the Values of Religious Moderation in Countering the Potential for Identity Politics in the Kadokan Village Community, Sukoharjo Regency" in terms of activities have run smoothly, on target, and in accordance with PKM planning. This activity also provides a positive and real influence by indicating openness in the way the community views the meaning of difference and plurality. The next step is an evaluation to see whether the level of tolerance in the PKM location area is increasing and whether moderate attitudes are also growing*



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Introduction

As a multicultural nation, one of the prominent characteristics of Indonesia is its diversity, both physically and socio-culturally. Indonesia is also the country with the highest heterogeneity on earth, socio-cultural heterogeneity as well as religion, namely Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism.¹ This authentic

¹ M. Ainul Yaqin, *Pendidikan Multikultural: Cross cultural understanding untk demokrasi dan Keadilan*,

fact proves that Indonesian nationality is based on a combination of various ethnicities that are so diverse. For the Indonesian people, pluralism is a blessing in disguise, because there would be no entity of the nation and state of Indonesia, if there was no pluralism.

With a "*multicultural*" society, Indonesia has invaluable socio-cultural wealth, but on the other hand, Indonesia also has the potential to fall into anarchy if it fails to find an adequate pluralist federation formula. This is the biggest challenge for the "*plural society*" which shows the urgent need to reconstruct the "*Indonesian Religious and National Culture*" that can be an integrating force that binds all ethnic and cultural diversity.

The reality of the diversity of Indonesian society can be both a strength and a threat. In terms of strength, for example, Indonesia's diversity is an attraction for other nations to learn how to maintain diversity.² In fact, things of diversity such as the richness of language, social and economic stratification, religious diversity and others in Indonesia, can be the basis for growing and strengthening the love of national values itself.³ While the threat, Indonesia's diversity can trigger the emergence of several problems such as religious harmony ⁴, security,⁵ political stability.⁶ and religious radicalism.

Plurality is something that cannot be denied or circumvented anywhere and by anyone. Plurality can concern various aspects of human life such as ethnicity, nation, customs and religion. Especially in a globalized world where geographical and cultural boundaries are becoming faint, human life has turned into a community that demands full awareness of plurality, especially religious plurality.

Therefore, religious plurality is a phenomenon of social reality that cannot be avoided in this life. So that the existence of plurality or pluralism is actually a blessing that should be grateful for, but this is also a challenge for religious people themselves.⁷ Because in plurality is usually loaded with interests that are popularly called conflict of

(Yogyakarta: Pilar Media, cet. 2, 2007), hlm. 3-5.

² Endang Fatmawati, "Strategies to Grow a Proud Attitude towards Indonesian Cultural Diversity," *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. S1 (10 September 2021): 810-20, <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5nS1.1465>.

³ Nelly Martin, *Bahasa Gado-Gado in Indonesian Popular Texts: Expanding Indonesian Identities through Code-Switching with English* (United States: The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2017), <https://www.proquest.com/openview/ac8abcddc14545e6d8c94be80c306c6d2/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>.

⁴ Dwi Chyntia Putri dan Nasiwan, "Harmony in Diversity: The Implementation of Multicultural Education at Indonesian Schools" (2nd International Conference on Social Science and Character Educations (ICoSSCE 2019), Atlantis Press, 2020), 168-72, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200130.035>.

⁵ Rinaldi Ramadhan, Mahmud Mulyadi, dan Marzuki Marzuki, "Peran Polisi Masyarakat (POLMAS) Dalam Mewujudkan Sistem Keamanan Dan Ketertiban Masyarakat (Studi Di Kepolisian Resort Tanjung Balai)," *Jurnal Ilmiah METADATA* 3, no. 1 (2021): 274-91.

⁶ Tracey Yani Harjatanaya dan Chang-Yau Hoon, "Politics of multicultural education in post-Suharto Indonesia: a study of the Chinese minority," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 50, no. 1 (2 Januari 2020): 18-35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2018.1493573>.

⁷ A.A. Yewangoe. *Agama dan Kerukunan* (Jakarta: PT. Gunung Mulia, 2002) hlm. 22.

interest.⁸ Moreover, many parties have signaled that plurality or diversity and pluralism are vulnerable to being a source of conflict and strife. This of course happens because there are many different interests, each of which competes among the existing diversity, so that conflict in a plural society cannot be avoided. Moreover, conflicts in societies that are in religious plurality or plurality are very likely to occur.

Radicalism today is not only caused by religion. Religion is indeed the dominant ideology in some existing radicalism movements, but that alone is not enough to move someone to commit acts of violence such as terror, bombings or suicide. The image of Islam as a violent, unfriendly and intolerant religion by Western countries has indeed made the psychological burden of Indonesian Muslims very deep. Even more so when the image leads to the word Islam is a terrorist. Why there is such a pejorative image of Islam is why we need to ask ourselves.

In the discussion of contemporary religious issues, the discourse of religious pluralism is one of the most hotly debated themes today, it gets considerable and dominant attention. It was born amidst the diversity of truth-claims⁹ between different religions. This claim then gave birth to a belief commonly called the "doctrine of salvation", that salvation or enlightenment or heaven is the right of followers of certain religions only, while others will be wretched and go to hell. Each religion claims the absolute and exclusive right to liberation, salvation or enlightenment, thus creating an attitude of mutual exclusion among each other. This kind of belief almost applies and develops in all religions -Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and others including faiths-,¹⁰ and not only applies to adherents of different religions, but also applies to adherents of the same religion.¹¹ This reality has led the issue of religious pluralism to an increasingly broad and very complex discourse.

With truth-claims in every religion, it often creates a climate of tension or conflict between religions. Hatred of other religions will give birth to an attitude of fanaticism that easily ignites the flames of hostility that lead to violence against oneself and others. As happened between Islam and Judaism in the Middle East, Islam and Hinduism in Kashmir, Protestantism and Catholicism in Northern Ireland, Christianity and Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina, South Philippines and South Sudan.¹² In Indonesia itself, inter-

⁸ Mark Jeergenmeyer, *Menentang Negara Sekuler: Kebangkitan Global Nasionalis* Terj. Nurhadi (Bandung: Mizan, 1998). hlm. 185

⁹ Klaim kebenaran (*truth claims*) atas agama adalah anggapan bahwa agamanya yang paling benar, lurus dan yang lain (*al-akha>r, the other, liyan*) adalah salah dan sesat. Lihat Gutomo Priyatmono, *Membisukan yang Lain, Kata Pengantar* dalam buku Imam Subkhan, *Hiruk Pikuk Wacana Pluralisme di Yogya* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2007), hlm. 3.

¹⁰ Anis Malik Thoha, *Tren Pluralisme Agama; Tinjauan Kritis* (Jakarta: Perspektif; Kelompok Gema Insani, 2007), hlm. 1.

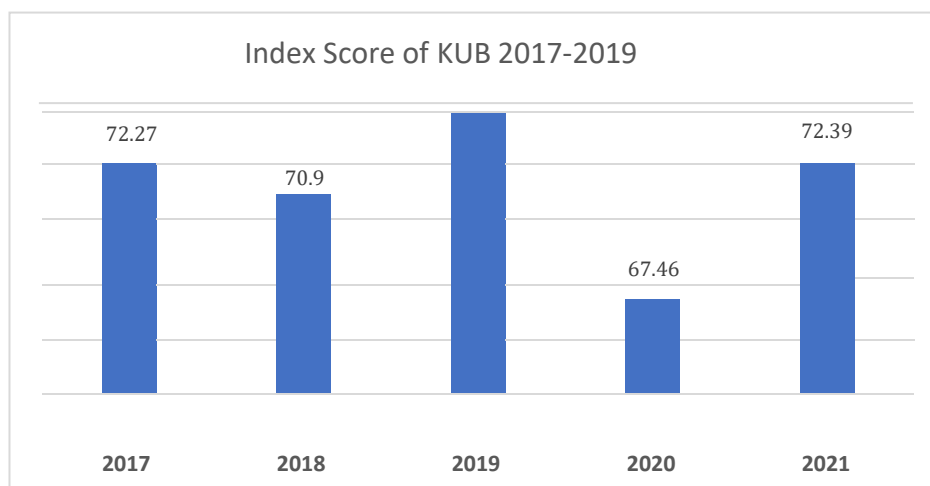
¹¹ Seperti yang terjadi antara Protestan dan Katolik dalam agama Kristen, antara Mahayana dan Hinayana (Theravada) dalam agama Budha, antara Syiwaisme, Wisnuisme (Krisynaisme) dan Syaktisme dalam agama Hindu dan Syi'ah dan Sunni dalam agama Islam. Lihat Syafique Keshavjee, *Debat Agama* terj. Nico Syukur Dister (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2009), hlm. 253-254.

¹² Anis Malik Thoha, *Tren Pluralisme Agama*, hlm. 2.

religious conflicts often occur between Islam and Christianity as happened in Molukkas and Poso, Central Sulawesi, which resulted in approximately 8,000 casualties (over three years from 1999-2002) and hundreds of thousands of residents unable to return to live in their homes due to the uncertain security situation.¹³

The most striking issue from some of the above threats is about religious harmony. Facts such as the prohibition to worship according to beliefs,¹⁴ radikalism,¹⁵ intolerance,¹⁶ or identity politics¹⁷ are spreading in Indonesian society today. These issues then spurred the government through the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia to initiate religious moderation.¹⁸

The results of the KUB (Religious Harmony) index research indeed show encouraging results. The KUB index value in 2021 is in the good category. The value is at the national average of 72.39 or an increase of 4.93 points when compared to the previous year.¹⁹ However, when viewed from the trend of the KUB index results from 2017 to 2021, it actually still shows dynamic and unstable results.



¹³ Ulil Abshar Abdalla, dkk. *Memahami Hubungan antar Agama*, hlm. 11.

¹⁴ Tri Purna Jaya, "Ketua RT di Lampung Mengamuk Bubarkan Ibadah Gereja, Forum Kerukunan: Hanya Miskomunikasi," KOMPAS.com, 20 Februari 2023, <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2023/02/20/154019178/ketua-rt-di-lampung-mengamuk-bubarkan-ibadah-gereja-forum-kerukunan-hanya>.

¹⁵ Amirullah, "BNPT Ungkap 80 Persen Eks Napi Terorisme Masih Berkukuh Pada Ideologinya," Tempo, 13 Februari 2023, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1690935/bnpt-ungkap-80-persen-eks-napi-terorisme-masih-berkukuh-pada-ideologinya>.

¹⁶ Eko Ari Wibowo, "Setara Institute Catat Kenaikan Kasus Intoleransi Jelang Tahun Politik," Tempo, 24 Maret 2023, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1706562/setara-institute-catat-kenaikan-kasus-intoleransi-jelang-tahun-politik>.

¹⁷ CNN, "Kapolda Minta Pejabat Setop Politik Identitas di Pilpres 2024," CNN Indonesia, diakses 4 April 2023, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20221001182015-32-855110/kapolri-minta-pejabat-setop-politik-identitas-di-pilpres-2024>.

¹⁸ Kamaruddin Amin, "Mengapa Moderasi Beragama?," Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2023, <https://kemenag.go.id/kolom/mengapa-moderasi-beragama-02MbN>.

¹⁹ Dewi Indah Ayu, "Indeks Kerukunan Umat Beragama Tahun 2021 Masuk Kategori Baik," Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2021, <https://kemenag.go.id/nasional/indeks-kerukunan-umat-beragama-tahun-2021-masuk-kategori-baik-latuic>.

With regard to the results of this index, Expert Minister of Religion Mahmud Syaltout emphasized that the important thing from the index results is problem mapping, problem prediction, and problem detection.²⁰ If you look at the dynamic index data above, the logical thing that needs to be done is an effort to increase the values of tolerance and harmony itself.

This service research tries to make efforts to increase the values of religious moderation in Kadokan Village, Grogol District, Sukoharjo Regency. The results of initial observations show that there are community groups in this village who launch a rejection movement against the government or village leaders²¹ The background of this rejection movement is the difference in beliefs between the majority community and the village head himself (non-Muslim). The rejection movement often widened and resulted in disharmonious inter-religious relations, especially in this village where the identity politics movement dominated by the extreme right group began to flourish. As evidence of the existence of this extreme right group is that there is a group in this village that is exposed to radicalism that was forcibly picked up by Densus 88..²²

This is the background of this service research to strengthen the values of religious moderation in counteracting the potential for identity politics in the community of Kadoan Village, Sukoharjo Regency. In addition, this service research is expected to be an anticipatory step to welcome the 2024 elections which are clean from the practices of identity politics, especially at the regional level.

Method

In moderation-based community service with the theme "Digital Academic as Strengthening Religious Moderation Values in Counteracting the Potential of Identity Politics in the Kadokan Village Community, Sukoharjo Regency" uses the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology as a strategy to achieve the objectives of the service. Approaching the community using the PAR approach is an approach whose goal is to observe and study in overcoming problems and meeting the practical needs of the community.

Community service using this approach is one of the transformative steps. This is because research activities have a goal and orientation towards strengthening and change. This community service is focused on the community of Kadokan Village, Sukoharjo Regency. The implementation of this service involved several stakeholders, namely the Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) of Sukoharjo Regency, the Justify Study Circle, the Kadokan Village Government, Imparsial and Mafindo. Each of the stakeholders

²⁰ Ayu

²¹ Hasil Obserbasi

²² Sumarno, "Rumah Urwah di Sukoharjo Sepi: Okezone News," Okezone, 17 September 2009, <https://news.okezone.com/read/2009/09/17/1/258507/rumah-urwah-di-sukoharjo-sepi>.

involved in this service will be involved in several programs, such as FGDs, Digital Academics, and Campaigns and dissemination of service results. The steps that will be used in this service consist of several things, namely; first, semi-structured interviews whose topics are predetermined and led by expert moderators and followed by discussions. Second, group-based learning accompanied by a final project in teams. Third, training, and fourth is the campaign, and fifth is the dissemination of service results.

In its writing systematics, the PAR method is similar to qualitative approach research in general. Where this research uses data collection methods with techniques in the form of interviews, observation, and documentation. The following is the description:²³

Observation

The observation technique here is a direct observation technique of the subject or object of research in order to obtain valid and systematic information/data. This information / data can be used to provide conclusions on research results. According to Sugiono, in terms of the process of implementing data collection, observation can be divided into two, namely participatory observation and unstructured observation.²⁴

This research is included in the type of participatory observation, where the researcher directly participates in observation activities as an observer, the goal is that the researcher can directly find out what happened during the research process. Using research instruments in the form of observation guidelines related to seriousness, and enthusiasm during the activity and its application by the object of research in the community.

Documentation

Documents are records of events that have passed. Documents can take the form of writings, images, or monumental works of a person. This document study is a complement to the use of observational and interview methods in qualitative research.²⁵

This documentation technique is a technique used in order to find data about things in the form of notes, transcripts, agendas, and so on that support the data from interviews and observations. This documentation is used by researchers to obtain data on activity documentation in the form of video recordings, photographs, attendance lists of participants, and archives related to the activities that researchers formulate in community service programs, namely academic digital.

²³ Wazin, Buku Saku Metodologi PAR dan Gerakan Moderasi Beragama, (Serang: PPM LP2M UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, 2020), 3.

²⁴ Sugiono, Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2011), 310.

²⁵ Sugiono, Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2011), 329.

Result

Based on PKM activities on Digital Academic as Strengthening Religious Moderation Values in Counteracting Potential Identity Policies in the Kadokan Village Community, Sukoharjo Regency, it can be concluded that digital academic training as an effort to strengthen religious moderation is quite effective as an effort to increase interfaith harmony. This conclusion refers to the conditions before and after the practice of training on religious moderation with a digital academic program that shows the openness of insight and perspective on pluralism that is quite good, resulting in a moderate attitude in the community. This needs to be monitored continuously to maintain consistency.

Overall, the achievement targets of the service activities are divided into several targets, namely: (1) Scientific Publications, (2) Social Engineering, (3) Improvement of science and technology in society, (4) Improvement of community values and (5) Information Media.

The conception of religious moderation is basically inherent in the midst of community life. However, the embodiment in the theoretical aspect is often a misunderstanding that takes place in daily activities. This is natural, not all can be understood theoretically. However, practically it is no less important that it is recognized.

Domestic matters are often discussed in the public sphere, which triggers horizontal conflicts to emerge in the community, and has an impact on the practices of identity politics. For example, the results found by researchers during an interactive dialogue, there was one resident who said that during the village head election campaign, it was often politicized by one party. That way, conflicts between communities continue, even though the five-year event has been completed.

The unhealthiness of the politicization of religious values in the public sphere, often results in misunderstandings about it. The alternative solution taken in the end is an open dialog between the conflicting communities. This kind of awareness makes the values of moderation continue to grow in each community over its conflicts

One example of another case that we found is when there are immigrant communities who then try to monopolize religion as their power to gain time. In this case, it ultimately has an impact on conflicts that arise in the community or certain groups. So, people who do not participate in the conflict inevitably have to feel the impact.

Table 1 : PKM Activity Results

No	Type of Output	Indicator of Achievement
1	Scientific Publication	-Compilation of draft publication articles -Submission of Articles in Community Service Journals and Research Journals
2	Social Engineering	The Digital Academic Training program as a Strengthening of Religious Moderation Values produces a moderate perspective and attitude in a plural society, resulting in ummah harmony.
3	Increased knowledge and insight of the community	Partners gain knowledge and insights about religious moderation, the reality of plurality and pluralism, and insights about digital media.
4	Improvement of community values	-Increased understanding of the concept of religious moderation -Increased understanding of practices and ways of behaving in the midst of differences in religion, traditions and perspectives -Improved understanding and policies in using digital media -Knowing and being able to anticipate any movement that leads to identity politics
5	Information Media	Publication of the implementation of activities to external parties can be applied and become an inspiration for other activities

Evaluation of Action

From the actions obtained by researchers, there are several things that are deemed necessary to be used as a formulation in evaluating the results of the service obtained, including;

First, Plurality is something that cannot be avoided, especially in a globalized world where geographical and cultural boundaries are becoming faint, human life has turned into a community that demands full awareness of plurality, especially religious plurality. Therefore, religious plurality is a phenomenon of social reality that cannot be avoided in this life. The existence of plurality or pluralism on the one hand is a blessing that should be grateful for, but on the other hand it can be a challenge for religious people themselves. Because plurality will always be loaded with interests or conflicts of interest. Moreover, many parties have signaled that plurality or diversity and pluralism are prone to be a source of conflict and strife.

Its "multicultural" society makes Indonesia an invaluable socio-cultural treasure, but on the other hand, Indonesia also has the potential to fall into anarchy if it fails to find an adequate pluralist federation formula. This is the biggest challenge for a "plural society" that shows the urgent need to reconstruct the "Indonesian Religious and National Culture" which can become an integrating force that binds all religious, ethnic and

cultural diversity.

Through this PKM activity, it can be a way and an effort to strengthen unity in the midst of diversity. We can see clearly in the field how the reality of plurality is and its various phenomena. From this, we can understand the importance of "religious moderation". Religious Moderation is a perspective and attitude in the midst of plurality that maintains balance and respects every difference.

Second, every day our lives are always colored by various kinds of information. This is indeed a part of the technology industry society that is so powerful and difficult to avoid. Digital media provides a picture of objective reality as well as constructive reality. Digital media is the most strategic place for the dissemination of information, and its influence is undeniable, whether it is print or electronic. It can even be said that it is a property that has a great influence on the mind.

Unstoppable, every moment it comes to the public with an uncountable amount of information, bursting in and penetrating people's minds. Based on its position, the media can actually function as a forum for public learning about anything and with that function, of course the media is expected to be able to make a positive contribution to the community of readers and viewers, instead of making a positive contribution, now the media has actually become one of the contributors to the growth of violence, crime, division in the midst of society rather than as an enlightening learning media. In fact, in the perspective of religious harmony, the media is often used as a place to provoke divisions between religious communities.

Through the implementation of PKM on digital academics as a strengthening of religious moderation values, it feels important, as a wadak eduka effort for people who need openness of insight and a wise perspective in receiving any information from the digital world, especially those related to religious issues.

Discussion

Community service is a form of academic contribution to society by applying academic knowledge and skills. In the context of identity politics and digital academia, community service can have a positive impact and provide solutions to the challenges faced by society. The current conditions of democracy and politics in Indonesia are quite dynamic. In the political infrastructure, issues of identity politics are often used to attract sympathizers in a homogeneous society. This requires an answer to the phenomenon.

Based on the mapping and data findings obtained by the service team, there are several things that become the focus of researchers, including several incidents related to identity politics from certain groups that are seasoned with hate speech to quite extreme actions, namely bringing domestic matters into the public domain. This was responded to through the program that we launched, namely digital academics. With the

hope that the public dialogue with the surrounding community, and several discussions related to the program, can be a significant provision to anticipate the existing identity politics.

In addition, religious moderation is also a fundamental foundation for the people of Kadokan Village. Religious moderation is a bulwark for every community to understand the dynamics in a multicultural society. Religious moderation is also useful for strengthening community values, namely 1) an increased understanding of the concept of religious moderation, 2) Increased understanding of practices and ways of behaving in the midst of different religions, traditions and perspectives, 3) Increased understanding and policies in using digital media, 4) Knowing and being able to anticipate any movements that lead to identity politics.

Social engineering is also an achievement in this PKM. Because, the Digital Academic Training activity program as a Strengthening of Religious Moderation Values produces a moderate perspective and attitude in a plural society, resulting in ummah harmony. Departing from this, the perspective and attitude of the community in responding to various dynamics that exist in the community is more moderate. This kind of awareness is very important for every community. Without awareness to build social engineering, it will be able to worsen the conditions in every dynamic.

The digital academic program was made one of the flagship programs by the PKM Team. This program is in collaboration with Mafindo. Mafindo is one of the stakeholders engaged in advocacy and community assistance related to the prevention of hoaxes and SARA-based hatred. In the view of the speaker, it was conveyed that the level of vulnerability between generation z, millennials, and baby boomers is quite high in the context of identity politics. Identity politics is an inherent issue across generations and is an issue that exists enough to continue to be considered. Therefore, digital academics as a strengthening of religious moderation values is important in counteracting identity politics in Indonesia, especially the people of Kadokan Sukoharjo Village.

Conclusion

The results of UIN Raden Mas Said's Community Service (PKM) regarding "Digital Academics as Strengthening the Values of Religious Moderation in Countering the Potential for Identity Politics in the Kadokan Village Community, Sukoharjo Regency" in terms of activities have run smoothly, on target, and in accordance with PKM planning. This activity also provides a positive and real influence by indicating openness in the way the community views the meaning of difference and plurality. The next step is an evaluation to see whether the level of tolerance in the PKM location area is increasing and whether moderate attitudes are also growing.

The important recommendation from this activity is that this kind of activity should be promoted more intensively as an effort to see the reality of pluralism, which requires education to open up people's insight into plurality. This is very important to maintain unity. We really hope for support and participation from all parties for the smooth running of this activity. Hopefully, the follow-up to this activity can make a contribution to the agency.

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