Repositioning of Religious Moderation in Indonesia: a Conceptual Analysis Review with Phenomenology Approach

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Abstract

Religious diversity in Indonesia is confronted with two significant challenges. The first is the challenge posed by those who espouse radical or liberalist views, while the second is the refraction of religious pluralism by those who equate its main objectives. Consequently, the presence of religious moderation represents a viable approach to fostering tolerance and harmony between religious communities. The objective of this research is to examine the values of religious moderation in the context of *al-Wasathiyyah al-Islamiyyah*, with a view to identifying potential solutions. This type of research is a literature review (LR) that analyses and synthesises the strengthening of religious moderation according to *al-Wasathiyyah al-Islamiyyah*. Accordingly, to buttress this line

of inquiry, the researcher has adopted a descriptive-analytical approach, complemented by a religious phenomenology methodology. The findings of this study indicate that *al-Wasathiyyah al-Islamiyyah* is characterised by a set of prioritised indicators, namely the maintenance of *al-Maqashid asy-Syari'ah* on religious freedom, unity on the purpose of life, unity on life guidelines, and unity on human diversity. In order to maintain the unity of multicultural Indonesian society, it is necessary to create an atmosphere of justice, peace, harmony and tolerance. This will enrich the inclusive and progressive Islamic discourse in the contemporary era.

A. Introduction

Religious moderation is a central concept discussed in the era of globalization and the industrial revolution.[1] Because religious moderation it idea is considered a solution to creating harmony and tolerance among religious communities. The Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin,[2] said that religious moderation is currently used as a driving force for tolerance, which has implications for harmonious intra-religious and inter-religious community relations.[3] Agus Ahmadi explained that moderation promotes tolerance of differences and openness to accept diversity (inclusivism).[4] Meanwhile, Mahmud Arif called moderation a current movement to advance Muslims.[5] However, this idea needs attention because moderation is a term and concept

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[1]Agus Akhmadi, "Moderasi Beragama dalam Keragaman Indonesia," *Inovasi: Jurnal Diklat Kegamaan* 13, No. 2 (2019): 45–55. https://doi.org/https://bdksurabaya.e-journal.id/bdksurabaya/article/view/82.

[2]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementrian Agama RI, 2019), 18.

[3]Pipit Aidul Fitriyana, *Dinamika Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Litbangdiklat Press, 2020), 19.

[4]Agus Akhmadi, "Moderasi Beragama dalam Keragaman Indonesia," *Inovasi: Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan* 13, No. 2 (2019): 45–55. https://bdksurabaya.e-journal.id/bdksurabaya/article/view/82.

[5]Mahmud Arif, *Moderasi Islam dan Kebebasan Beragama* (Yogyakarta: DeePublish, 2020), 9.

that emerged in the West, and Western perspectives and culture influenced the Western.[6]

Moderation in the Western view does interpret as an attitude of openness and acceptance of Western cultural perspectives.[7] Angel Rabasa explained that this position supports secular democracy, gender equality, human rights, freedom of religion, respect for differences, accepts sources of law other than religion, and needs to return to customary law. In addition, opposition to attitudes of violence and intolerance towards interfaith and interfaith are fundamental things for moderation.[8] In another explanation, Yamin Zakaria refers to him as a Neo-Modernist with a liberal, modern, and free-thinking attitude.[9] In line with the description above, religious moderation is full of Western ideological influences, such as the idea of religious pluralism, which states that all religions are equal and all religions are relative to the same truth.[10] So, from that, it is necessary to deepen the term meaning moderation, which does prioritize by the ministry of religion; this will be a form of special attention from the community in guarding the conception of religious moderation in Indonesia.

Recently, Islam has received two significant challenges originating from within Islam. *First*, the challenge comes from some members of the community who are extreme, strict, and strict in understanding religious verses.[11] In addition, the bias of religious pluralism creates a perspective that states that all religions have the

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[6]Ilyas Ba Yunus and Farid Ahmad, *Sosiologi Islam dan Masyarakat Modern* (Bandung: Mizan, 1991), 54.

[7]John L. Esposito, *Moderat atau Radikal* (Jakarta: Referensi, 2012), 6.

[8]Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, *Misykat: Refleksi Tentang Westernisasi, Liberalisme, dan Islam* (Jakarta: INSIST, 2012), 183.

[9]John L. Esposito, *Moderat atau Radikal*, 6.

[10]John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religon: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (London: MacMillan, 1989), 36.

[11]Anggoro Sugeng, M. Luqmanul Hakim Habibie, Muhammad Syakir al-Kausar, and Nor Rochmatul Wachidah, "Moderasi Beragama dalam Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia," *Moderatio: Jurnal Moderasi Beragama* 1, No. 1 (2021): 121–41. https://e-journal.metrouniv. ac.id/index.php/moderatio/article/view/3529.

same goal. *Second,* the challenge for some Muslims is to be biased towards the meaning of tolerance by interpreting it as accepting the diversity and diversity of religions that are adhered to and lived by certain beliefs or groups.[12]

In Islam, the term often referred to as the idea of moderation is the concept of *Washatiyah*. Hasan Habannakah describes *Washatiyah* as the midpoint of a pyramid building, where the position is the meeting point between two oblique lines that originate and lead to the opposite path.[13] Elaborating on this, M. Quraish Shihab explained that *Washatiyah* was not interpreting as unclear or not firm about something. However, *Washatiyah* was an enthusiastic attitude that was fair in the sense of being able to put everything in its place.[14] It then needs to be put forward and used as a viewing lens to oversee religious moderation in Indonesia.

Previous researchers have conducted studies on the topics of Religious Moderation and *al-Wasathiyah al-Islamiyyah* from various perspectives. The following studies are pertinent to the theme of this research: "Moderasi Beragama dalam Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia" by Devi Indah Sari, which presents findings on material that upholds the principle of equality and mutual respect for the principle of difference based on Al-Qur'an and Hadith, which is able to deal with diversity in Indonesia through Islamic education.[15] The study, titled "Integritas Terbuka Sebagai Pendekatan Baru Dialog Antariman dalam Pengkatan Moderasi Beragama", authored by Madiyono, has revealed that open integrity can be effectively implemented as a theory, paradigm, and approach in interfaith dialogue, offering a more comprehensive framework than the

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[12] Muchlis M. Hanafi, *Moderasi Islam* (Jakarta: Ikatan Alumni al-Azhar dan Pusat Studi Al-Qur'an, 2013), 1–2.

[13] Abdurrahman Hasan Habannakah al-Maidani, *al-Wasathiyyah fi al-Islam* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Rayyan, 1996), 13.

[14] M. Quraish Shihab, *Wasathiyah: Wawasan Islam Tentang Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2020), xi.

[15] Devi Indah Sari, et al., "Moderasi Beragama dalam Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia," *Journal on Education* 5, No. 2 (2023): 2202–21. https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i2.873.

existing approaches of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism.[16] "Manifestasi Moderasi Perspektif Buku *al-Wasathiyyah Khasisah al-Ummah al-Islamiyyah*: Analisis Teori dan Implementasi" by Muhamad Ridwan with the findings that Muhammad Abu al-Fath al-Bayanuni provides a concept with the terms *al-I'tidal* and *Tawazun* in which there are aspects of *aqidah, ubudiyah*, morals, *mu'amalah* and *fiqh* as well as manifestations of moderation implemented in the development of character education.[17] "*Tawasuth* dan Dinamika Sosial Antarumat Beragama: Menyelami Nilai-nilai *Wasathiyyah Islamiyyah*" by Muhammad Miftah with the findings that it is important to understand the concept of tawasuth and apply it in social interactions. This is because humans are social creatures who depend on and interact with each other.[18] Previous studies have indicated that the application of *al-Wasathiyyah al-Islamiyyah* is still classified as a text and has not yet explored the function of *al-Wasathiyyah al-Islamiyyah* in greater depth, with a focus on its concrete manifestations and alignment with Islamic teachings.

From the above understanding, it is evident that the issue of religious moderation is not merely about tolerance. Rather, it also raises questions about the very existence of humanity and faith. This is because religious moderation represents a sublimation between the awareness of divinity, or belief in God, and humanity, or having duties covering all aspects of life.[19] In this context, the author attempts to contextualise or redefine the understanding

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[16]Madiyono and Mochamad Ziaul Haq, "Integritas Terbuka Sebagai Pendekatan Baru Dialog Antariman dalam Penguatan Moderasi Beragama," *Integritas Terbuka: Peace and Interfaith Studies* 2, No. 1 (2023): 1–16. https://doi.org/10.59029/int.v2i1.11.

[17]Muhamad Ridwan, Nur Hidayat, and Niko Septa Arnanda, "Manifestasi Moderasi Perspektif Buku *al-Wasathiyah Khasisah al-Ummah al-Islamiyyah*: Analisis Teori dan Implementasi," *Tafáqquh: Jurnal Penelitian dan Kajian Keislaman* 11, No. 2 (2023): 179–91. https://doi.org/10.52431/tafaqquh.v11i2.1579.

[18]Muhammad Miftah and Mukh. Nursikin, "*Tawasuth* dan Dinamika Sosial Antarumat Beragama: Menyelami Nilai-nilai *Wasathiyah Islamiyyah*," *Afeksi: Jurnal Penelitian dan Evaluasi Pendidikan* 5, No. 1 (2024): 52–59. https://doi.org/10.35672/afeksi.v5i1.215.

[19]Achmad Muhibbin Zuhri, *Teologi Kebhinekaan: Membangun Harmoni Antar Umat Beragama dengan Pendekatan Teologi Islam* (Surabaya: LPPD Jawa Timur and Bildung, 2023), 5–7.

of *al-Wasathiyah al-Islamiyyah* through a descriptive-analytical approach, employing the method of religious phenomenology.[20] This is a significant concept in theology, namely the understanding of *Tawhid*, which is the existence of an authority that is authorised by Allah. This has implications for humans in the construction of *al-Wasathiyah al-Islamiyyah*.

This research will examine the theoretical and conceptual framework of *al-Wasathiyyah al-Islamiyyah*, which is in accordance with Islamic law (*Syariat/Shari'a*) and can be implemented among the surrounding humanity. The objective of this discussion is to clarify the concept of *al-Wasathiyyah al-Islamiyyah* and its implementation based on Islamic law (*Syariat/Shari'a*). This is necessary to prevent any misunderstanding of its purpose and scope. Furthermore, the authors found three problems contained therein. *First*, religious moderation is full of the ideology of religious pluralism. *Second*, the problem of bias in the meaning of religious tolerance. *Third*, the problem of relative truth. However, there has been a lot of research and discussion related to the theme and research object of religious moderation. The author has yet to find specific research and discussion that suggests a map of the concept of religious moderation and points out the problems that arise in it.

B. Discussion

1. Definition and Limitation of Moderation

Etymologically, moderation comes from the English language "moderation", which means a moderate attitude, an attitude of not exaggerating.[21] While in Arabic, the term moderation is known as *wasathiyyah*. As found in *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lugah*, Ibnu Faris conveys that what *wasathiyyah* means justice and middle ground.[22] Language expert ar-Raghib al-Isfahani said that *wasathiyyah* comes

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[20]Michael Jibrael Rorong, *Fenomenologi* (Yogyakarta: DeePublish, 2020), 123–25.
[21]John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily, *Kamus Inggris-Indonesia: an English-Indonesian Dictionary* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009), 384.
[22]Ahmad Ibnu Faris, *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1979), 108.

from the word *wasath*, which means something between two extremities, while that which comes from *awsath* means the middle point.[23]

The word moderation comes from the Latin "*moderâtio*", which means moderation (not excess or decrease). Religious moderation is fair and balanced in viewing, responding to, and practising all paired concepts.[24] In *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, the word reasonable means that the first is impartial or impartial, the second is in favour of the truth, and the third is proper or not arbitrary. In English, the term "moderation" is often employed in the context of average, core, standard, or non-aligned.[25] In general, the term "moderate" is used to describe a stance that promotes balance in terms of beliefs, morals and character. This can be observed in both the way individuals are treated and the way institutions of the state are approached.[26]

The educational, scientific and cultural organization of the United Nations or United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines moderation as an attitude of mutual respect, mutual acceptance, mutual respect amidst cultural diversity, freedom of expression, and human character.[27] Meanwhile, Bhanu Viktorahadi emphasized that understanding the meaning of moderation must be supported by a broad horizon of knowledge, an open attitude, dialogue, freedom of thought and religion. In another sense, moderation is equivalent to a positive attitude and respect for others to use fundamental freedoms as human beings.[28]

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[23]Ar-Raghib al-Isfahani, *Mu'jam Mufradat Alfazh Al-Qur'an* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), 879.

[24]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, *Moderasi Beragama*, 30.

[25]John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily, *Kamus Inggris-Indonesia: an English-Indonesian Dictionary* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2009), 230.

[26]Ridwan and Hanafi Pelu, *Kreativitas Pembelajaran pada Masa Covid-19 di Madrasah Sidoarjo* (Surabaya: Nizamia Learning Center, 2021), 20–25.

[27]Walzer, *On Toleration* (Yale: University Press, 1997), 132.

[28]R.F. Bhanu Viktorahadi, Pr. Rifki Rosyad, M. Taufiq Rahman, Paelani Setia, and Mochamad Ziaul Haq, *Toleransi dan Perdamaian di Masyarakat Multikultural* (Bandung: UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2022), 70.

Then religious moderation according to the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia through a book called *Moderasi Beragama*. It is interpreted as self-confidence in the substance (essence) of the religious teachings one adheres to while continuing to share the truth regarding spiritual interpretation. They purport that religious moderation shows acceptance, openness, and togetherness from different religious groups. The word moderation, whose Latin form is *moderâtio* means moderation, also means self-mastery. In English, it is called moderation, often used in the sense of average, core, standard, or non-aligned. In general, moderate means prioritizing balance regarding beliefs, morals, and behaviour (character).[29]

Several Indonesian commentators, including HAMKA, M. Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy, and M. Quraish Shihab also expressed opinions about the definition of moderation. The meaning agreed upon by the three is *wasathiyyah*. M. Quraish Shihab defines etymologically that the word *wasathiyyah* means in the middle, good, choice, fair, balanced, and commendable. Meanwhile, in terms of terminology, M. Quraish Shihab interprets it as an impartial religious attitude to the left and right. This impartiality makes humans act pretty to be role models for all parties. He describes moderation as the position of Ka'bah, which is in the middle of the earth.[30] However, then M. Quraish Shihab emphasized his opinion that *wasathiyyah* was not interpreted as unclear or not firm about something. However, *wasathiyyah* was an enthusiastic attitude, namely being fair in the sense of being able to put everything in its place.[31]

The definition put forward by M. Quraish Shihab is similar to HAMKA's statement. By interpreting moderation in the middle, we are not fixated on the world alone or solely concerned with the

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[29]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, *Moderasi Beragama*, 31–32.

[30]M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, n.d.), 415.

[31]Shihab, 416.

spiritual. He emphasized that religious moderation is a balanced position between the two.[32] M. Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy also has the same opinion as HAMKA. According to him, moderation is a balanced attitude, not exaggerating religion (extreme) and not including people who are too lacking in fulfilling religious obligations.[33]

It can be concluded that religious moderation in Indonesia is interpreted as a perspective, attitude, and behaviour that always takes a middle position acts pretty and is not extreme in religion.[34] In this case, religious moderation must be understood as a balanced attitude between exclusive religious practice and inclusive respect for other religious practices. In this way, religious moderation will be a solution in mediating the extreme right and the extreme left, which then threatens diversity.[35]

2. The Foundation of Moderation in the Traditions of Various Religions at Indonesia: Challenges to Religious Moderation

The idea of religious moderation in Indonesia is a significant program of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. It can be seen from the commitment to fight for religion in propagating this concept throughout Indonesia, which will be the key to creating tolerance and harmony between religious communities.[36] This idea has a picture capable of being formulated in appreciating the diversity and diversity of Indonesia. Lukman Hakim Saefuddin, former Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2014-2019 period, put forward four concepts in the idea of religious moderation of the Ministry of Religious

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[32]Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (HAMKA), *Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2015), 274.
[33]M. Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Majid An-Nur* (Semarang: Pustaka Rizki Putra, 2016), 129.
[34]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, *Moderasi Beragama*, 33–34.
[35]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, 34.
[36]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, 35.

Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. *First*, humility indicates the moderation of one's perspective and attitude. *Second*, tolerance is an attitude or trait of respecting and allowing an assessment of beliefs and other views that are different from one's mood.[37] *Third*, anti-violence or anti-radicalism. *Fourth*, accommodative (flexible) to local culture.[38] It is clear that this idea is a big concept prepared for the adjustment of religious behavior in Indonesia, creating harmony between religions.

First, national commitment is an indicator to see one's perspective, attitudes, and religious practices.[39] This commitment is applied as a lens to see one's attitudes and behavior in practicing religious teachings to be in harmony with Pancasila as the state ideology. In addition, national commitment is a measure of one's loyalty to the country by showing an attitude of acceptance and not rejecting the ideology of Pancasila and nationalism. Within the scope of national commitment to practicing religious teachings is the same as carrying out obligations as citizens.[40] In the commitment to nationality, all citizens are required to create awareness of caring for Indonesian values. These values are in the form of religion, customs, and culture, which are the characteristics and uniqueness of Indonesia with its diversity of traditional religions and cultures.[41]

It is a National commitment to Pancasila and the attitude of nationalism.[42] As stated in Undang-undang Dasar 1945, it prioritizes the values of diversity and unity among ethnic and religious communities. This commitment wants to create harmony between multicultural communities under the auspices of the state, meaning that the position of nationalism must be prioritized in

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[37] W.J.S. Poerwadarminta, *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1986), 184.

[38] Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, *Moderasi Beragama*, 33.

[39] Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, 34.

[40] Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, 35.

[41] Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, 36.

[42] Pipit Aidul Fitriyana, *Dinamika Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia*, 28.

religion. The national commitment also wants justice and balance; this is intended as the basis for people's attitudes in practicing various concepts such as justice and balance between reason and revelation, physical and spiritual, rights and obligations, individual and communal interests, between necessity and willingness, and between religious texts. And the *ijtihad* of religious leaders, between ideals and reality, and between the past and the future.[43] In this way, national commitment is the basis of religious moderation, which then creates a new trend in religion, a trend that aims to maintain harmony, and the national aspect becomes the mainstay of the basis of religious behavior in society.

Second, tolerance is an attitude of giving space and not interfering with other people's rights to have beliefs, express their beliefs, and convey opinions even though they are different from what they believe.[44] In terms of tolerance comes from the Latin *tolerare*, which means to be patient to allow something and to hold back.[45] This word is then absorbed into English in the form of tolerance, which is interpreted as a willingness to accept or as letting someone do something you do not agree with or do not like.[46] This meaning is then used as the basis of tolerance in Indonesia's religious moderation concept. The term tolerance then becomes biased because it is often used to accommodate deviant behavior in religious matters by prioritizing the pluralism dimension of it.

The dimension of the meaning of tolerance is translated as the term pluralism.[47] The concept of pluralism is defined as an attitude of tolerance that resides within the individual and is manifested in their actions. This attitude cannot be acquired through the mere

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[43]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, *Moderasi Beragama*, 36.
[44]Pipit Aidul Fitriyana, *Dinamika Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia*, 29.
[45]Amran Suadi, *Filsafat Agama, Budi Pekerti, dan Toleransi: Nilai-nilai Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2021), 128.
[46]Amran Suadi, 129.
[47]Aditia Muhammad Noor Khalid Rahman, *Moderasi Beragama di Tengah Pergumulan Ideologi Ekstremisme* (Malang: UB Press, 2020), 16.

study of theory; rather, it must be fostered through engagement with society.[48] Tolerance in this concept makes the blending aspect an indicator of tolerance. If someone cannot mingle in any way, he can be categorized as intolerant. There should be limits put forward in tolerance so that the meanings that develop in society are not confused and cause controversy and polemic.

Tolerance within the scope of religious moderation in Indonesia has two directions of affirmation. *First*, the emphasis is on intra-religious (internal) relations, and second, on inter-religious relations both in the social and political spheres.[49] Intra-religious relations, such as relations between religious organizations and minority sects, deviate from the mainstream of religion. Meanwhile, interreligious relations can be seen in the willingness to engage in interfaith dialogue, cooperation, the establishment of places of worship, and muamalah with adherents of other religions.[50] That way, tolerance in religious moderation focuses on the social and political realms that develop in society.

In line with the description above, tolerance is also used as the foundation of democracy.[51] In religious moderation, tolerance is used as the driving force of democracy. It is because democracy will not be able to work if society cannot practice tolerance towards other people's opinions. Tolerance then becomes an indicator of the maturity of a nation's democracy; the more tolerant a nation is, the more democratic that nation will be.[52]

Third, the concept of anti-violence and radicalism. Religious moderation is an idea and understanding aimed at changing social and political systems that legitimize violence in the name of

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[48]Umi Hanik, "Pluralisme Agama di Indonesia," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 25, No. 1 (2014): 47.

[49]Pipit Aidul Fitriyana, *Dinamika Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia*, 32.

[50]Pipit Aidul Fitriyana, 33.

[51]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, *Moderasi Beragama*, 45.

[52]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, 47.

religion in the form of verbal, physical, and mental violence.[53] More specifically, the violence referred to is radicalism and extremism, in the form of the attitudes and actions of a person or a certain group that uses violent methods to bring about the desired change.[54] In this case, religious moderation is used as a bulwark against the ideological threats of radicalism and extremism. This idea puts forward a fair and balanced attitude in addressing issues.

Radicalism and extremism are of particular concern to the idea of religious moderation. It is because radicalism is often associated with religion, giving rise to the term terrorism, which threatens diversity.[55] Even so, religious moderation acknowledges that fundamentally radicalism is not only related to religion but can be attached to the movement of any group. In the moderation conception of religion, radicalism can arise due to perceptions of injustice and threats experienced by a person or group.[56] In this way, the idea of moderation seeks to suppress perceptions of injustice and threats in society to eliminate the seeds of radicalism and extremism. It is attempted by emphasizing the practice of middle-way religion in the form of strengthening religious and spiritual-moral values, as well as creating a non-violent religious life.

Fourth, the accommodative principle of local culture. This principle is intended to see the extent of the willingness to accept a religious practice that accommodates local culture and traditions.[57] Although this attitude is not used to measure one's moderation in practice, it is still considered an aspect that describes a person's moderate value. Because moderate people tend to be more friendly towards local cultures and traditions in their religious behavior as long as they do not conflict with

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[53]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, 40.
[54]Pipit Aidul Fitriyana, *Dinamika Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia*, 34.
[55]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, *Moderasi Beragama*, 43.
[56]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, 40.
[57]Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, 33.

the main teachings of their religion.[58] Emphasizing the attitude of accommodation (flexibility) towards local culture in the conception of religious moderation aims for assimilation between culture and religion, which then leads to the concept of integration of religion and culture in social life.[59]

An accommodative (flexible) attitude towards local culture in the frame of religious moderation tends to be biased towards multiculturalism. In this case, multiculturalism is interpreted as the concept of managing a pluralistic social society that provides recognition, both culturally and politically, to the cultural plurality of society, no matter how small the plurality may be.[60] This principle then gave rise to two terms that became the basis of debate in the moderation frame: Indigenous Society and Migrant Society.[61] The emergence of these two terms is also closely related to the interests that play in the public sphere. The interests in question are economic and political. Nowadays, religion is used to achieve interest, referred to as "identity politics".

The explanation of the four concepts of religious moderation above clarifies the direction and background of this idea. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia, there are at least three main reasons why the concept of religious moderation is needed.[62] *First*, it aims to maintain human dignity as a noble creature created by God, including taking care not to take away his life. *Second*, the diversity that has existed for a long time and the increase in the number of people in various countries. and regions. *Third*, as a cultural strategy in caring for diversity and Indonesianness.[63]

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[58]Pipit Aidul Fitriyana, *Dinamika Moderasi Beragama di Indonesia*, 35.

[59]Pipit Aidul Fitriyana, 36.

[60]Khalid Rahman, *Moderasi Beragama di Tengah Pergumulan Ideologi Ekstremisme*, 54.

[61]Khalid Rahman, 36.

[62]Tim Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2021), 45.

[63]Tim Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 40.

3. Prospect for the Future Religious Moderation Indicators: Problems in the Traditions of Various Religions in Indonesia

The problem of the concept of moderation in religion in Indonesia, in this case, can be put forward into three issues. *First*, religious moderation is the new face of religious pluralism. *Second*, the problem of bias in the meaning of religious tolerance. *Third*, the problem of relative truth.

The first problem in the moderation concept is the bias of religious pluralism. Religious moderation ultimately accommodates the idea of religious pluralism, which states that all religions are the same and that pluralism is the aim of all religions.[64] Hick views pluralism as a view which states that changes in human life from self-centeredness to one-centeredness on the single Reality (namely God) occur in all religions in various forms and ways.[65] Religious pluralism removes an exclusive attitude towards every religion, where this attitude will cause many conflicts in religious life. Nurcholish Madjid stated that an exclusive attitude toward seeing other religions is wrong and misleading for his followers.[66] Then he stated that an inclusive attitude towards other religions is an implicit form of religion. This statement leads the people to acknowledge the existence of pluralism as a discourse that presents religious harmony by acknowledging and even justifying all religions, which means that anyone from all groups can obtain heaven.

In its development, religious pluralism can be grouped according to the pattern of thought of its adherents. *First*, the sceptics, positivists, and naturalists. This group said that the

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[64]Khalid Rahman, *Moderasi Beragama di Tengah Pergumulan Ideologi Ekstremisme*, 45.

[65]John Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 34.
[66]Harda Armayanto, "Problem Pluralisme Agama," *Tsaqafah* 10, No. 2 (2014): 328. https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v10i2.191.

existence of various religions with different doctrines shows that no one religion is valid and worthy of belief. *Second*, relativists argue that all religions are equally valid and that the truth is not the monopoly of any particular religion. *Three*, essentialists, their views say that all religions are essentially the same and say that all religions only differ in format, but the substance is the same. *Four*, syncretists are ambitious with the agenda of bringing together all religions, taking the good elements of one religion and throwing away the wrong things to do. These groups ultimately conclude that all major religious traditions are the same, all offer salvation, and all are not final.[67]

The idea of religious moderation has a trend in the same direction as the concept of religious pluralism. The issues of tolerance, accommodation (flexibility) towards local culture and anti-radicalism attitudes are terms that are biased in meaning and indirectly describe the idea of religious pluralism. Thus, special attention is needed to the concept of religious moderation put forward by the current ministry of religion, because if in the end this moderation concept leads to the conception of religious pluralism, then this must be rejected because this ideology is not in accordance with the conception of Undang-undang Dasar 1945. This rejection is not only carried out by the Muslim community, but among Christians, Christian clerics, both Catholics and Protestants, think that religious pluralism is an insult and a distortion of the teachings of Christ. Christ is considered not the only determinant of human salvation. Whereas faith in Christ is the core of Christian teachings.[68] Dr. Frank Gaetano Morales, a Hindu scholar, also strongly criticized Hindus who equate their religion with other

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[67]Syamsuddin Arif, *Islam dan Diabolisme Intelektual INSISTS* (Jakarta: INSISTS, 2018), 84–88.

[68]Julita Lestari, "Pluralisme Agama di Indonesia: Tantangan dan Peluang bagi Keutuhan Bangsa," *al-Adyan: Jurnal Studi Lintas Agama* 1, No. 1 (2020): 28–38. https://doi.org/10.15548/al-adyan.v1i1.1714.

religions. According to him, the statement that all religions are the same is a doctrine completely unknown to traditional Hinduism.[69]

The second problem is the bias in the meaning of religious tolerance. Religious tolerance is interpreted as an attitude of being willing to accept the diversity and variety of religions that are adhered to and internalized by other parties or groups of beliefs. This acknowledgement is not limited to equality in the state and social order but also before the almighty God based on just and civilized humanity.[70] This meaning brings tolerance not only in the social sphere of the state and society but also then carried more profoundly into the direction of theology, which recognizes and accommodates the beliefs of other people equal to their beliefs before God.

Tolerance is interpreted as pluralism. In this case, pluralism is considered an attitude of tolerance that lies in the heart and is manifested in behaviour. This attitude appears in individual behaviour when mingling with society.[71] The blending aspect is the critical word in this term; religious pluralism is considered an attitude, not a deviant ideology. This mistake was triggered by a failure to understand the meaning of pluralism itself. The word mingle is also a broad term with no boundaries, while in religion, especially Islam, some restrictions cannot be mixed with and mixed with other religions.

Furthermore, tolerance is an attitude that accommodates that all religions are the same because they teach kindness to their followers. Tolerance must be carried out as a form of harmony because tolerance believes in religious similarities regarding the

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[69]Joesoef Sou'yb, *Agama-agama Besar di Dunia* (Jakarta: Pustaka al-Husna Zikra, 1996), 55.

[70]Tim Pengembangan Pariwisata, "Ensiklopedia Nasional Indonesia Jilid 2," *Universitas Indonesia* (Jakarta: Cipta Adi Pustaka, 1990), 384.

[71]M. Adib Fuadi Nuriz, Achmad Reza Hutama al-Faruqi, and Martin Putra Perdana, "Problem Pluralisme Agama di Indonesia," *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama dan Pemikiran Islam* 19, No. 1 (2021): 65–80. https://doi.org/10.21111/klm.v19i1.6366.

teachings of goodness. The bias in the meaning of tolerance tends to the concept of pluralism by declaring that all religions are the same, only different in outward appearance. However, in essence, they lead to the same entity. So it can be concluded that this concept is the fruit of western liberalism, where the core of its teachings is to relativize truth to every religion in the world as a form of tolerance. Pluralists hope there will be no more religions that claim to be the most authentic religion because the truth of religions is relative.[72]

The third is the problem of truth in religious moderation. Truth in the conception of religious moderation becomes relative, especially religious truth or religious interpretation. Religious activists provide honest criticism and caution presented by the conception of religious moderation within the framework of pluralism. Pdt. Stevri Indra Lumintang stated that "pluralism is a challenge as well as a very serious danger to Christianity".[73] Then Anis Malik Thoha explained that "religious pluralism is a new religion, therefore this concept is very dangerous".

The problem of truth in the conception of religious moderation can be seen in the book *Religious Moderation Amidst the Struggle of Extremist Ideology*. In this book, it is written:

> The tenets of all religions essentially espouse pluralism as a means of fostering harmony and peace. Furthermore, they all advocate mutual respect, love, and the avoidance of violence as fundamental tenets. The fundamental tenet of religious pluralism is the notion that all religions are engaged in a common struggle to advance the values of humanity. Consequently, the true essence of any given belief system can be gauged by its capacity to enhance the quality of human life.

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[72]Adnin Armas, "Gagasan Frithjof Schuon: Telaah Utama," *Islamia* 3, No. 1 (2004): 15.

[73]Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Teologi Abu-abu: Pluralisme Iman* (Malang: YPPII, 2002), 15.

This book clearly states that pluralism is a teaching taught by all religions. It is done as a form of harmony and peace. Then the truth in this concept fades by stating that the truth lies in the extent to which it gives goodness to human civilization. In this conception, truth is no longer objective and absolute because the usefulness of human civilization measures courage.[74] With such apparent similarities in the idea of religious moderation with religious pluralism, as stated by John Hick, "other religions are equally valid ways to the same truth".[75]

The Indonesian term *al-Wasathiyyah al-Islamiyyah* maybe considered a synonym for *al-Wasathiyyah Theology* due to its alignment with the following foundational principles: the theological perspective of *Tawhid*, which decrees the Unity of Godhead for humanity, namely *Ummatan Wahidah* (Unity of Minkind), encompassing the unity of religious purpose and meaning, racial and ethnic unity, and other aspects. Consequently, the spirituality of *Tawhid* is highly tolerant of the various differences inherent in the culture of mankind. From this perspective, humans are expected to engage in *ta'aruf*, or the exchange of cultural values, knowledge, and wisdom with one another. Consequently, the Islamic vision of diversity is to educate its adherents to treat other religious groups equally (egalitarianism), to act in a morally upright manner, to allow them the freedom to embrace the religion of their choice, to worship according to their religious beliefs, to maintain good relations and cooperation, and to foster mutual understanding.[76]

C. Conclusion

Religious moderation in Indonesia has four central concepts is: *First*, a national commitment which indicates the moderation

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[74]Umi Sumbulah and Nur Jannah, *Pluralisme Agama: Makna dan Lokalitas Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama* (Malang: UIN Maliki Press, 2013), 187.

[75]John Hick, *Problems of Religious Pluralism*, 39.

[76]Achmad Muhibbin Zuhri, *Teologi Kebhinekaan: Membangun Harmoni Antar Umat Beragama dengan Pendekatan Teologi Islam*, 69–70.

of one's perspective and attitude. *Second*, tolerance is an attitude/ characteristic of respecting and allowing a position of opinion, views, beliefs or others that differ from one's position. *Third*, anti-violence or anti-radicalism. *Fourth*, accommodative (flexible) to local culture.

The four concepts are motivated by three main reasons. *First*, it aims to maintain human dignity as a noble creature created by God, including taking care not to take away his life. *Second*, the diversity that has existed for a long time and the increase in the number of people in various countries and regions. *Third*, as a cultural strategy in caring for diversity and Indonesianness. However, several problems were found in practice and theory, which ultimately led to the principle of religious pluralism.

The problem of the concept of moderation in religion in Indonesia, in this case, can be put forward into three issues. *First*, religious moderation is the new face of religious pluralism. *Second*, the problem of bias in the meaning of religious tolerance. *Third*, the problem of relative truth.

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