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Comparative Analysis of Religious Moderation in Islamic and Western Perspectives

Masnun Baiti*[1], Risan Rusli[2], Ismail Sukardi[3] Dian Andesta Bujuri[4] , Sukirman[5,] Septia Fahiroh[6]

[1] Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang; masnunbaiti@radenfatah.ac.id,
[2] Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang; risanrusli_uin@radenfatah.ac.id
[3] Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang; ismailsukardi_uin@radenfatah.ac.id
[4] Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang; diandestabujuri@radenfatah.ac.id
[5] Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang; sukirman_uin@radenfatah.ac.id
[6] Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang; septiapkp@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This article systematically examines the similarities and differences in the concept of religious moderation from Islamic and Western perspectives using a qualitative library research approach based on books, scholarly articles, research reports, and relevant academic journals. The comparative analysis highlights that both traditions reject extremism and violence while emphasizing tolerance and respect for diversity. In Islam, religious moderation is grounded in the principle of wasathiyah, which promotes balance, justice, tolerance, deliberation, and peace as integral values derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. In contrast, Western religious moderation has evolved through long historical processes, including intra-church conflicts, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the development of moderate secularism, and is primarily based on rationality, democratic practices, pluralistic values, and the protection of human rights. Within the Indonesian context, these two perspectives are conceptually integrated through Pancasila, which serves as the philosophical foundation of social and state life, thereby reinforcing religious moderation as a shared framework for maintaining harmony in a pluralistic society

Corresponding Author:
Masnun Baiti
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang; masnunbaiti@radenfatah.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

In a global reality full of religious, cultural, and ideological diversity, the issue of religious moderation is receiving serious attention for examination. Modern societies live in an environment of cross-faith interaction.[1] which often cause friction, whether in the form of differences in thought, religious practices, or political orientation. If this diversity is not managed wisely, it has the potential to give rise to conflict, intolerance, and even violence in the name of religion. Therefore, religious moderation has emerged as an approach that takes a middle ground, steering people away from fanatical extremism and overly liberal and secular views[2].

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[1]Saripudin Saripudin dkk., "Multikultural Di Era Modern: Wujud Komunikasi Lintas Budaya," *Budimas : Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 6, no. 1 (2024), https://jurnal.stie-aas.ac.id/index.php/JAIM/article/view/11480.
[2]Anica Anica, "Moderasi Beragama Islam Dan Barat," *Jurnal Studi Agama* 5, no. 2 (2021): 85–102, https://doi.org/10.19109/jsa.v5i2.10888.

In Islamic tradition, moderation is rooted in the concept of *wasathiyah*[3]. Muslims are regarded as *ummatan wasathan*, a community that is required to be fair, maintain balance, and set an example in society. This principle not only emphasizes open and inclusive religious practices, but also encourages respect for differences, upholds human values, and the Muslim world.

Unlike Islam, religious moderation in the West was born out of a long historical experience. Conflict fosters social harmony. History records that the glory of Islamic civilization was partly supported by a moderate attitude, when science, culture, and tolerance developed rapidly between the church and the state, coupled with the Reformation and Enlightenment movements, giving birth to ideas about secularism and religious freedom. This principle affirms that belief is an individual right that cannot be controlled by certain institutions, with the law serving as the main foundation for state administration. Moderation in the Western perspective is largely reflected in political and social policies that guarantee freedom of religion, diversity, and respect for differences in a democratic system.

Therefore, comparing religious moderation in Islam and the West is important to reveal the similarities and differences between the two. Through comparative studies, a broader understanding can be gained of how moderation can be a solution to contemporary religious challenges.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is qualitative research. Based on the object of study, this research is library research by collecting information and data with the help of various references such as books, research results, articles, notes, and relevant journals. The data collection technique used by the author is documentation by studying various literature in the form of primary and secondary data sources. The secondary data in this study were books related to religious moderation, while the secondary data used by the author were research results, articles, and magazines relevant to the author's research. The data analysis technique used by the author was content analysis in the form of descriptive analysis, which was an in-depth discussion of the issues discussed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
A. The Meaning of Religious Moderation in Islam

In Islamic tradition, the concept of moderation is known as wasathiyah. Etymologically, the word wasath means middle, fair, and balanced. This meaning is not only linguistic, but also reflects the essence of Islamic teachings that emphasize balance in all aspects of life: the relationship between humans and Allah (hablun min Allah), the relationship with fellow humans (*hablun min al-nas*), and the relationship with the surrounding environment. [4] Thus, wasathiyah becomes the moral and epistemological foundation for Muslims in responding to the realities of life, which are full of diversity. The theological basis of wasathiyah is very strong in the Qur'an. As Allah explains in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143:

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنٰكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّسَطًا لِّتَكُوْنُوْا شُهَدَاۤءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيْدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِيْ كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَاۤ اِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَّتَّبِعُ الرَّسُوْلَ مِمَّنْ يَّنْقَلِبُ عَلٰى عَقِبَيْهِ ۗ وَاِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيْرَةً اِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ هَدَى اللّٰهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُضِيْعَ اِيْمَانَكُمْ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ١٤٣

Meaning:

Likewise, We have made you (Muslims) a middle nation40) so that you may be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) may be a witness over you. We did not establish the qiblah (Baitulmaqdis) that you used to face, except to know who follows the Messenger and who turns back. Indeed, (the change of qiblah) is very difficult, except for those whom Allah has guided. Allah will not waste your faith. Indeed, Allah is truly Most Merciful and Most Compassionate to mankind. (QS. Al-Baqarah: 143)

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[3] Andika Putra dkk., "Pemikiran Islam Wasathiyah Azyumardi Azra Sebagai Jalan Moderasi Beragama," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 1, no. 3 (2021): 589–99, https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i3.15224.

[4] Edi Junaedi, "Inilah Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Kemenag," *Harmoni* 18, no. 2 (2019): 182–86, https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v18i2.414.

This verse affirms the identity of Muslims as ummatan wasathan, or a community that is moderate, just, and does not take sides with extremism that can lead to injustice and deviation. In other words, moderation in Islam is not merely a social strategy or cultural approach, but a theological identity inherent in every Muslim. This identity serves as a guideline so that Muslims do not fall into the trap of ifrath (excess or transgression) or tafrith (neglecting religious principles or underestimating obligations).

The concept of wasathiyah has broad implications in religious and social life [5]. In terms of faith, wasathiyah teaches a balance between belief in a transcendent God and the use of rational thinking in understanding the signs of His power. In terms of worship, wasathiyah encourages Muslims to perform acts of worship in accordance with the teachings of the Sharia without going to extremes that burden themselves, but also without neglecting their established obligations. Meanwhile, in the field of muamalah, wasathiyah guides every social, economic, and political interaction to be carried out with the principles of justice, benefit, and respect for the rights of others.

Furthermore, wasathiyah is also the key to building an inclusive, tolerant, and harmonious Islamic civilization[6]. This shows that wasathiyah does not mean compromise that erases religious values, but rather a selective, fair, and wise attitude in integrating universal truths. In the current context, wasathiyah is very relevant in facing global challenges, especially the rise of extremism on the one hand and excessive liberalism on the other. Extremism often arises from a rigid and exclusive understanding of religion, while excessive liberalism arises from a disregard for religious authority. Both are contrary to the principle of wasathiyah. Therefore, Islamic moderation presents itself as a middle ground that emphasizes that religion must be understood comprehensively, contextually, and in accordance with the principle of rahmatan lil 'alamin[7].

In Indonesia, the application of wasathiyah is also an important foundation in maintaining harmony among religious communities and national unity. This country is built on the reality of diversity, so the spirit of ummatan wasathan must be reflected in an attitude of tolerance, respect for differences, and a commitment to realizing social justice for all people. By making wasathiyah a guideline, Muslims in Indonesia can play a strategic role as witnesses (syuhada 'ala al-nas), namely as role models in living a peaceful, just, and balanced religious life[8]. Therefore, it can be emphasized that wasathiyah is not only a normative concept, but also a practice that must be internalized in everyday life. It demands balance in thinking, attitude, and action, so that Muslims always remain on the straight path (shirath al-mustaqim), avoiding both extremism and negligence. Wasathiyah is the identity, guideline, and mission of Muslims in building a just and merciful civilization for the universe.

B. The Core Values of Moderation in Islam

1. *Tawassuth (Jalan Tengah)*

Tawassuth is one of the main values in religious moderation that emphasizes the importance of balance in understanding and practicing Islamic teachings[9]. In practice, tawassuth rejects extremism, both on the right, such as rigid and closed fundamentalism and radicalism, and on the left, such as excessive liberalism that ignores sharia law[10]. Islam itself teaches its followers to live a balanced life between worldly and spiritual interests, as reflected in the prayer:

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[5] Masykuri Masykuri Dkk., "Pendidikan Islam Multikultural Berwawasan Wasathiyah: Penguatan Karakter Wasathiyah Santri Patriot Panji Pelopor," *Jurnal Islam Nusantara* 4, No. 2 (2020): 246, Https://Doi.Org/10.33852/Jurnalin.V4i2.234.

[6] Abdullah Affandi Dan M. Mu'tashim Billah, "Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama Dalam Hadis Nabi Saw.," *Samawat: Journal Of Hadith And Qur'anic Studies* , No. 1 (2024): 1–17, tps://Ejournal.Badrussholeh.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Samawat/Article/View/429.

[7] Dudung Abdul Rohman, *Moderasi Beragama Dalam Bingkai Keislaman Di Indonesia* (Lekkas, 2021).

[8] Rifqan Hidayat Dkk., "Pendidikan Islam (Paradigma Islam Wasaathiyah, Ummatan Wasathan, Toleransi Dan Moderasi Beragama)," *Inovasi Pendidikan Nusantara* 6, No. 3 (2025), tps://Ejurnals.Com/Ojs/Index.Php/Ipn/Article/View/2624.

[9] Moch Zainal Arifin Hasan Dan Muhammad Rizal Ansori, "Implikasi Pembelajaran Ahlusunnah Wal Jama'ah Terhadap Penguatan Moderasi Beragama," *Journal Of Contemporary Islamic Education* 4, No. 1 (2024): 86–102, Https://Doi.Org/10.25217/Jcie.V4i1.4363.

[10] Kalijunjung Hasibuan, "Moderasi Beragama Berbasis Keluarga," *Sentri: Jurnal Riset Ilmiah* 2, No. 11 (2023): 4655–66, Https://Doi.Org/10.55681/Sentri.V2i11.1777.

. . . . . . رَبَّنَآ اٰتِنَا فِى الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَّفِى الْاٰخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَّقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

Meaning:...

"*Our Lord, grant us goodness in this world and goodness in the Hereafter, and protect us from the torment of the Fire.*" (Qs. Al-Baqarah: 201)

The value of tawassuth also teaches balance between the use of reason and divine guidance, as well as between individual rights and the interests of society at large. By practicing this attitude, a Muslim is expected to be wise, respect differences, and present a peaceful and tolerant face of Islam, becoming a blessing for all of creation..

2. Tasamuh (Tolerance)

Islam as a religion of mercy for all creation strongly emphasizes the importance of tolerance in social and community life. Tolerance or tasamuh in Islam means an attitude of appreciation, respect, and acceptance of differences, whether differences in religion, culture, or outlook on life, as long as they do not conflict with the basic principles of Sharia law[11]. This attitude is not merely a theoretical teaching, but has a strong theological basis in the Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. One of the foundations of tolerance in Islam can be found in the words of Allah SWT: "*Lakum diinukum waliyadiin,*" which means: "To you your religion, and to me my religion." (QS. Al-Kafirun: 6).

This verse emphasizes that everyone has freedom of belief, and Muslims are not allowed to force their religion on others. The principle of freedom of religion is also emphasized in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 256: "*Laa ikraaha fid-diin*" (There is no compulsion in religion). This verse shows that faith must come from a sincere heart, not because of pressure or coercion.

The teaching of tolerance is further exemplified in the example of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. He lived alongside people of different faiths, such as Jews and Christians in Medina. The Medina Charter, drafted by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, is concrete evidence that Islam upholds justice, equal rights, and freedom of religion[12]. Muslims are encouraged to establish good social relations with followers of other religions, to respect one another, to cooperate in doing good, and to maintain peace together.

Tolerance is not limited to matters of faith, but extends to social and cultural aspects as well[13]. Islam teaches its followers to respect local traditions and wisdom as long as they do not conflict with the principle of monotheism[14][15]. In everyday life, tolerance can be manifested through mutual respect among neighbors, interfaith cooperation, and maintaining harmony in a pluralistic society.

By practicing tolerance, Muslims are able to show the peaceful, humanistic, and compassionate face of Islam. Tolerance does not mean weakening faith, but rather strengthening Islam's position as a religion that respects human dignity. Ultimately, tolerance means that differences are not a source of conflict, but rather a blessing and a source of richness that enriches human civilization.

3. 'Adalah (Justice)

The principle of justice is the main foundation of Islamic teachings and the core of religious moderation[16]. Islam places justice not only as a legal norm, but also as a universal

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[11] Shilmi Kaaffah dkk., "Menumbuhkan Sikap Toleransi Antar Agama Di Lingkungan Multikultural Kepada Anak Sesuai Ajaran Agama Islam," *JPG: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru* 3, no. 4 (2022): 289, https://doi.org/10.32832/jpg.v3i4.7395.

[12] Muhammad Adrika Wahyu dan Edi Yusrianto, "Piagam Madinah Dan Isu-Isu Penegakan HAM," *Jurnal Inovasi Hukum* 6, no. 2 (2025), https://ejurnals.com/ojs/index.php/jih/article/view/1688.

[13] Yunus Yunus dan Mukhlisin, "Sosial-Budaya: Harmonisasi Agama dan Budaya Dalam Pendidikan Toleransi," *Kalam: Jurnal Agama dan Sosial Humaniora* 8, no. 2 (2020): 1–26, https://doi.org/10.47574/kalam.v8i2.78.

[14] Muhaemin Muhaemin dan Yunus Yunus, "Pengamalan Nilai Moderasi Beragama Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Di Lingkungan Pesantren," *Jurnal Konsepsi* 12, no. 2 (2023): 13–27, https://p3i.my.id/index.php/konsepsi/article/view/274.

[15] Nur Afif, "Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Dan Implementasinya Terhadap Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 03 (2022): 1041–62, https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v11i03.3177.

[16] Yesi Arikarani dkk., "Konsep Pendidikan Islam Dalam Penguatan Moderasi Beragama," *Edification Journal : Pendidikan Agama Islam* 7, no. 1 (2024): 71–88, https://doi.org/10.37092/ej.v7i1.840.

value that must inspire every aspect of human life, whether in personal, social, or interfaith relationships. Justice in Islam means putting things in their proper place, giving rights to those who are entitled to them, and treating all parties fairly and proportionally[17] [18]. Without justice, human life will be filled with injustice, discrimination, and conflict that destroy social harmony.

The Qur'an emphasizes the obligation to be fair, even to those who are disliked. Allah SWT says: "And let not your hatred of a people incite you to act unjustly. Be just, for justice is closer to piety" (QS. Al-Maidah: 8). This verse emphasizes that even hatred should not be a reason to be unjust. A Muslim is required to make justice a guideline, because a fair attitude is a tangible manifestation of piety to Allah SWT. Thus, justice in Islam is objective; it must not be influenced by desires, group interests, or personal emotions.

The justice taught by Islam is inclusive and universal. It applies not only to fellow Muslims, but also to all of humanity regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or social status.[19] Throughout history, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has set a clear example in upholding justice. He treated Muslims, Jews, Christians, and even polytheists fairly, as long as they did not commit treason. The Constitution of Medina, drafted by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), is clear evidence of how justice was upheld for all citizens without discrimination.

This principle of justice also encompasses various dimensions of life. In the field of law, justice demands the enforcement of rules without favoritism, whether towards the rich or the poor, officials or ordinary people. In the economic sphere, Islam rejects the practices of usury, exploitation, and oppression, and emphasizes the fair distribution of wealth through zakat, infaq, and sadaqah. In the social sphere, justice means providing equal opportunities for all people to obtain education, employment, and protection of their rights.[20]

Furthermore, justice in Islam also encompasses the relationship between humans and nature. Islam teaches that humans should not destroy the environment, be wasteful, and maintain the balance of the ecosystem.[21] This shows that justice is not only horizontal between fellow human beings, but also vertical towards Allah SWT as the creator of the universe. Therefore, the principle of justice is the main pillar that keeps religious moderation from falling into extremism. Through justice, Muslims are taught to live in balance, avoid oppression, and treat all parties proportionally. Justice makes Islam appear as a religion that brings peace, harmony, and mercy to the entire universe. Without justice, moderation will lose its meaning, but with justice, Islam can truly be realized as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

4. *Syura* **(Musyawarah)**

Islamic moderation is not only reflected in the attitudes of tawassuth, tawazun, i'tidal, and tasamuh, but is also clearly evident in the principle of deliberation (syura). Deliberation is a decision-making mechanism that involves dialogue, exchange of ideas, and seeking mutual agreement.[22][23] This principle shows that Islam teaches the importance of involving all parties in determining policy, so that the resulting decisions are more fair, wise, and widely acceptable.

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[17] Zulkifli Zulkifli, "Tuntutan Keadilan Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Juris (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 17, no. 1 (2018): 137, https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v17i1.1005.

[18] Diva Kurnia Dwi Salsabila dkk., "Prinsip Keadilan Dalam Syariat Islam: Antara Kewajiban Berlaku Adil Dan Larangan Dzalim," *Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Sosial Keagamaan* 2, no. 4 (2025): 680–85, https://jurnal.ittc.web.id/index.php/jkis/article/view/2574.

[19] Febriyanti Badalu, "Peran Hukum Dalam Mewujudkan Keadilan Sosial Di Masyarakat," *Ganec Swara* 19, no. 1 (2025): 140–46, https://doi.org/10.59896/gara.v19i1.193.

[20] Badalu, "Peran Hukum Dalam Mewujudkan Keadilan Sosial Di Masyarakat."

[21] Hesty Widiastuty dan Khairil Anwar, "Ekoteologi Islam Ekoteologi Islam: Prinsip Konservasi Lingkungan Dalam Al-Qur'an Dan Hadits Serta Implikasi Kebijakannya," *Risâlah Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam* 11, no. 1 (2025): 465–80, https://doi.org/10.31943/jurnal_risalah.v11i1.2149.

[22] Avif Alfiyah, "Musyawarah Berdaya Komunikasi: Telaah Surat al-Baqarah 233, Surat Ali Imran 159, dan Surat al-Syura 38," *Alamtara: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam* 7, no. 2 (2023): 122–38, https://doi.org/10.58518/alamtara.v7i2.2273.

[23] Kuswiyanto dan Achmad Abu Bakar, "Musyawarah Dalam Islam: Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Ilahiyah Di Kehidupan Modern," *Jurnal Al-Mubarak: Jurnal Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 10, no. 1 (2025): 28–48, https://doi.org/10.47435/al-mubarak.v10i1.3329.

The Qur'an emphasizes the value of deliberation in the lives of believers as stated in the words of Allah SWT: "And (for) those who respond to their Lord and establish prayer, and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation among themselves, and who spend part of what We have provided them with" (QS. Asy-Syura: 38). This verse shows that one of the main characteristics of believers is to make deliberation the basis for managing common affairs. Thus, deliberation is not merely a culture or tradition, but has a strong theological basis in Islamic teachings.

The principle of deliberation has a profound meaning in the context of religious moderation.[24] Deliberation prevents domination by one party, because each individual is given the opportunity to express their opinion. When there are differences of opinion, deliberation serves as a space for dialogue so that these differences do not become a source of conflict, but are managed to enrich solutions. Thus, deliberation makes differences a collective strength, not a divisive weakness.

The Prophet Muhammad SAW was the prime example of practicing deliberation. He often deliberated with his companions on various matters, whether social, political, or military strategy. For example, in the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet Muhammad SAW accepted the majority opinion of his companions who wanted to go out and face the enemy outside the city, even though his personal opinion differed. This attitude shows that deliberation is respected, and that joint decisions have greater value than individual opinions, even if those opinions come from a prophet.

In the context of social and national life, deliberation is one of the foundations that maintains harmony and unity.[25] In Indonesia, this principle is reflected in the fourth principle of Pancasila: "Democracy guided by the wisdom of deliberation/representation." This is in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of deliberation as a means of reaching decisions that are fair and acceptable to all parties.

By practicing deliberation, Muslims are taught to respect the opinions of others, prioritize dialogue, and avoid authoritarian attitudes. Deliberation strengthens the spirit of togetherness, reduces the potential for division, and reinforces the value of religious moderation. Ultimately, the principle of deliberation makes Islam appear as an inclusive, participatory religion that upholds unity for the sake of a harmonious and blessed life.

5. *Islah* **(Peace)**

Islam is a religion that upholds the values of peace and harmony in social life.[26] The word "Islam" itself comes from the root word salaam, which means peace, safety, and prosperity. This confirms that the main mission of Islam is not conflict, but rather to create a peaceful life for all of humanity. Peace in Islam is not just a slogan, but a fundamental principle that must be realized in relationships between individuals, groups, and nations.

One of the important principles taught in the Qur'an is ishlah or reconciliation. Allah SWT says: "And if two groups of believers fight, then reconcile between them" (QS. Al-Hujurat: 9). This verse emphasizes the obligation of Muslims to reconcile disputing parties, not to exacerbate or prolong conflicts. Even if one party is reluctant to reconcile, Muslims are commanded to uphold justice and continue to seek reconciliation until peace is achieved. Thus, islah is an important mechanism in maintaining unity among the people and preventing division in society.

The principle of reconciliation is in line with Islam's mission as rahmatan lil 'alamin (a blessing for the universe). Peace applies not only among fellow Muslims, but also in relations

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[24] Hilmin Hilmin, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama dalam Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Muaddib: Islamic Education Journal* 7, no. 1 (2024): 37–45, https://doi.org/10.19109/muaddib.v7i1.24478.

[25] Nashrul Wahyu Suryawan dan Endang Danial, "Implementasi Semangat Persatuan Pada Masyarakat Multikultural Melalui Agenda Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (Fkub) Kabupaten Malang," *Humanika* 23, no. 1 (2016): 46–60, https://doi.org/10.14710/humanika.23.1.46-60.

[26] Ibad Khoirul, "Misi Perdamaian Dan Harmoni Semua Agama (Analisis Histori Agama-Agama Samawi Dalam Al-Quran)," *Mutiara: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (2023): 9–18, https://doi.org/10.61404/jimi.v1i1.1.

with other religious communities. The Prophet Muhammad SAW set a clear example through the Constitution of Medina, which regulated the coexistence of Muslims, Jews, and Christians in an atmosphere of peace, mutual protection, and cooperation in building society. This shows that Islam teaches the importance of creating social harmony across religions, ethnicities, and cultures.

In the context of modern society, the principle of reconciliation is very relevant for building a peaceful and inclusive society.[27] Conflicts that arise, whether due to religious, political, or economic differences, often have the potential to disrupt the fabric of society. By prioritizing peace, dialogue, and reconciliation, conflicts can be managed so that they do not cause wider divisions. Muslims, as the majority in Indonesia, have a great responsibility to foster the spirit of reconciliation in the life of the nation and state.

Furthermore, the principle of reconciliation also encompasses peace within the family and small communities. Islam encourages the resolution of domestic issues through dialogue and peace. [28], As explained in QS. An-Nisa: 35 about the importance of bringing in peacemakers from both sides when disputes arise. This shows that peace is a universal value that applies at every level of life.

Thus, reconciliation is not merely a theoretical concept, but a practical teaching that should guide Muslims in their daily lives. Through reconciliation, differences do not become a source of conflict, but are managed as a force to strengthen brotherhood. The peace taught by Islam is an active peace, namely peace that is realized through justice, respect for human rights, and cooperation for the common good. By practicing this principle, Muslims can act as agents of peace who bring tranquility, harmony, and blessings to all of humanity.

C. Examples of Moderation in Islamic History

During the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the Charter of Medina became one of the historical proofs of religious moderation.[29] This document is an agreement between Muslims, Jews, and other tribes in Medina to live together peacefully, uphold the rights of each group, and build social solidarity despite their different religions. On the other hand, during the golden age of Islam (8th–13th centuries AD), Muslims showed openness to knowledge from various traditions, including Greek, Persian, and Indian. Scholars such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rusyd played an important role in developing philosophy, medicine, and science, which later had a major influence on Western civilization. This shows that Islam is not closed-minded, but rather integrates outside values as long as they do not conflict with the principle of monotheism.

In Indonesia, the concept of Islamic moderation was embodied in the Wali Songo's preaching, which spread Islam through a cultural, tolerant, and peaceful approach. The Wali Songo were able to spread Islamic teachings in a multicultural society without triggering social or religious conflict. [30]. They accommodate local cultures such as art, puppetry, and gamelan music to introduce Islamic teachings without violence. This model of preaching is clear evidence of a practice of moderation that remains relevant to this day.

D. Religious Moderation in the West

From a Western perspective, religious moderation is basically understood as belief in absolute religious doctrine, while still allowing space for other religions believed by other people. In other words, religious moderation in the West is the attitude of adhering fully to one's own religious beliefs, while still respecting the existence and rights of others to believe in their respective religions. The history of religious tolerance in England emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries. At that time, conflicts between Catholics and Protestants created a need to find a middle ground so that society

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[27] Irmawati Irmawati dan Dina Mardiana, "Pendidikan Multikultural Paradigma Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Imam Al-Ghazali," *Hikmah* 21, no. 1 (2024): 35–47, https://doi.org/10.53802/hikmah.v21i1.366.

[28] Ghina Nadiah dan Nasrulloh, "Telaah Hadist Nabi Tentang Mediasi Rumah Tangga Dalam Hukum Islam Kontemporer," *Al-Fatih : Journal Tafsir al-Qura'an Dah Hadis* 1, no. 1 (2025): 15–27, https://journal.salahuddinal-ayyubi.com/index.php/ALJT/article/view/336.

[29] Dedi Ardiansyah dan Basuki Basuki, "Pencegahan Radikalisme melalui Implementasi Moderasi Beragama dalam Perspektif Piagam Madinah," *Fahima* 2, no. 2 (2023): 117–28, https://doi.org/10.54622/fahima.v2i2.103.

[30] Laura Aprilia Sondakh dan Maskur Rosyid, "Representasi Islam Moderat Dalam Dakwah Walisongo: Telaah Historis Dan Kultural," *Interdisciplinary Explorations in Research Journal* 3, no. 2 (2025): 486–505, https://doi.org/10.62976/ierj.v3i2.1179.

would not be divided. This gave rise to the idea of tolerance, which then influenced political and social thinking in Europe more broadly. This shows that religious moderation or tolerance in the West was originally born out of the bitter experience of religious conflict. Religious freedom in the West, especially in Western Europe and Australia, is not a simple or universal concept, but rather an idea that is constantly negotiated in social, political, and legal spaces according to the context of the local community. The concept of religious moderation in the West was born out of a long and conflict-ridden history, particularly religious wars, conflicts between church and state, and the struggle for individual freedom.

E. History of religious moderation in the West

The first was the Religious Wars in Europe (16th–17th centuries). Since the Protestant Reformation initiated by Martin Luther in 1517, Europe has undergone major changes in its religious and political history. This movement arose as a reaction to the practices of the Catholic Church, particularly the sale of indulgences and papal domination, which were considered deviant. Luther asserted his protest by posting 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg church, an act that shook the stability of the church's authority, which had been entrenched for centuries. From this event, the Reformation grew rapidly, giving birth to various Protestant denominations, such as Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism, which then spread to various parts of Europe. However, this monumental change not only brought a spirit of renewal in religion, but also gave rise to a sharp division between Catholics and Protestants.

The conflict was not limited to theological doctrine, but also extended to the social, political, and cultural spheres. Many European rulers viewed the Reformation not merely as a spiritual movement, but as an opportunity to break free from the control of the Roman Catholic Church and strengthen their own political power. This situation gave rise to polarization between kingdoms and states that sided with either Catholicism or Protestantism. The escalating tensions eventually led to a major conflict known as the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). The conflict first arose in the Holy Roman Empire, particularly in Bohemia, when Protestants rejected the Catholic domination imposed by local rulers. The incident known as the "Defenestration of Prague" in 1618 is often considered the starting point of the war. Over time, the war was no longer purely based on religious issues, but became an arena for political power struggles between major European powers, such as Spain, France, Sweden, and Austria.

Thus, the Thirty Years' War was a complex combination of religious, political, and economic conflicts. A series of battles that lasted for three decades brought massive destruction to most of Europe, especially Germany. Cities were devastated, villages were abandoned, and farmlands were neglected. Millions of lives were lost, not only due to warfare, but also as a result of famine and rampant disease amid the chaos. It is no wonder that this war is remembered as one of the deadliest conflicts in European history before the outbreak of World War I.

The end of this long period of suffering was marked by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. This peace agreement not only closed the chapter on war, but also marked the birth of a new political order in Europe. Through this treaty, the principle of modern state sovereignty was recognized, namely the right of every state to determine its own religious affairs without intervention from foreign powers. In addition, Westphalia became the foundation for the concept of non-intervention and more balanced relations between countries. Thus, although the Thirty Years' War left deep wounds for the nations of Europe, from that tragedy was born a modern political system that would later have a major influence on the development of the world order to this day.[31]

The second equally important historical event was the conflict between the Church and the State. Since the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church had wielded considerable authority in European politics. The Pope and bishops not only played a role in religious matters, but also determined the direction of government policy. Kings and rulers often depended on the legitimacy of the church, and their power was often considered valid only after receiving approval from the Pope. This

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[31] Peter H. Wilson, "The Causes of the Thirty Years War 1618-48," *English Historical Review* CXXIII, no. 502 (2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/cen160.

condition made religion and politics almost inseparable, because the church became the dominant institution that regulated social, cultural, legal, and governmental life.

F. The similarity of religious moderation in Islam and the West

The similarities between religious moderation in Islam and the West are the rejection of extremism and violence, an emphasis on tolerance and respect for differences, and the creation of a peaceful and just social life.

1. *Reject extremism and violence.*

Both in the Islamic and Western perspectives, religious moderation rejects all forms of extremism. Extremism is considered dangerous because it imposes a narrow and rigid interpretation of religion, even resorting to violence. In Islam, extremism contradicts the spirit of ummatan wasathan (the middle community) taught in the Qur'an. From a Western perspective, extremism is considered a threat to democracy, human rights, and social order. Therefore, both agree that extremism and violence must be rejected in order to maintain social stability.

2. *Emphasizing tolerance and respect for differences.*

Religious moderation in Islam emphasizes the importance of tasamuh (tolerance), ukhuwah (brotherhood), and syura (consultation). This principle affirms that every human being has the right to be respected regardless of differences in religion, ethnicity, or culture. From a Western perspective, tolerance is also a fundamental value in democratic and multicultural systems. Individual freedom and the rights of others to believe are fully guaranteed by law and the constitution. Thus, both Islam and the West agree that diversity must be maintained in a spirit of mutual respect.

3. *Creating a peaceful and just social life.*

The ultimate goal of religious moderation, both in Islam and in the West, is to build a harmonious social order. In Islam, the concept of *rahmatan lil-'alamin* emphasizes that the presence of Islam must bring mercy, peace, and justice to all creatures. Meanwhile, in the West, the principles of social justice and peace are realized through democracy, law enforcement, and the protection of human rights. Both strive for a society that lives without discrimination, full of justice, and peaceful in diversity.

G. Differences in religious moderation in Islam and the West

The following are the differences between religious moderation in Islam and the West:

Tabel. 1
Differences in religious moderation
from an Islamic perspective and a Western perspective

No	Aspek	Islam	Barat
1	Foundation	Revelation (the Qur'an and Sunnah)	Rationality, democracy, human rights
2	Objective	Mercy for all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*)	Guaranteeing individual freedom and multiculturalism
3	The relationship between religion and the state	Can be integral, symbiotic, or moderately secular	Generally secular, religion is separated from the state
4	Approach	Brotherhood, justice, consultation	Pluralism, positive law, human rights

The table above explains the differences between religious moderation in the Islamic perspective and the Western perspective from several aspects. First, in terms of foundation. The foundation of religious moderation in Islam comes from Allah's revelation, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet. This principle of moderation stems from religious teachings that emphasize balance, justice, and mercy for humanity. Meanwhile, the foundation of religious moderation in the West is based on rationality, democracy, and human rights. Moderation is understood as the result of socio-political agreements based on reason and positive law, not divine revelation.

Second, the aspect of purpose. In Islam, the main objective of religious moderation is to bring mercy to all of creation (rahmatan lil-'alamin), so that the existence of Islam brings peace, justice, and prosperity to all creatures. Meanwhile, in the West, the objective is to guarantee individual freedom and support multiculturalism. The state strives to ensure that everyone is free to choose to have a religion or not, without coercion. Third, the aspect of the relationship between religion and the state. In Islam, the relationship between religion and the state can be integral (religion is integrated with the state), symbiotic (complementary), or moderately secular (religion is recognized but does not dominate). It all depends on the socio-political context of a Muslim country. Meanwhile, the West is generally secular, meaning that religion is separated from the state. Religion is placed in the private sphere, while the state manages the public sphere based on positive law and democracy.

Fourth, the aspect of approach. In Islam, the approach emphasizes ukhuwah (brotherhood), justice, and syura (consultation). The values of moderation are implemented through togetherness, deliberation, and the principle of justice in social life. Meanwhile, in the West, the approach to religious moderation is based on pluralism, positive law, and human rights. The state ensures that all citizens are treated equally before the law and upholds freedom of expression and religion.

H. The Relevance of Religious Moderation in Islamic and Western Perspectives in Indonesia

Indonesia is a pluralistic country, with a society consisting of diverse religions, ethnicities, cultures, languages, and traditions. However, Islam remains the majority religion, embraced by more than 80% of the population. In this context, religious moderation is an urgent necessity to maintain social harmony, prevent conflict, and strengthen national unity.

The concept of moderation in Indonesia is essentially the result of the integration of Islamic values (wasathiyah) and Western approaches (democracy, human rights, and modern constitution). These two perspectives are then woven together within the framework of the Pancasila ideology, which forms the basis of the state and the philosophy of life of the nation. From the beginning, Islam in Indonesia has been peaceful, tolerant, and accommodating of local cultures. The concept of wasathiyah (moderation, fairness, balance) is highly relevant to the reality of the diverse Indonesian society. Principles such as tasamuh (tolerance), syura (deliberation), islah (peace), and 'adalah (justice) are important guidelines in maintaining harmony among religious communities. A concrete example can be seen in the role of the Wali Songo in spreading Islam in Java through a cultural approach, rather than violence. To this day, Islam in the archipelago is known to be friendly, moderate, and respectful of diversity.

Meanwhile, the West's experience in managing plurality through democracy, human rights, and the constitution is also relevant to Indonesia as a modern country. The democratic system provides space for political participation for all citizens, regardless of religious or ethnic background. The principle of human rights guarantees freedom of religion as a basic right of every citizen, in line with the mandate of the 1945 Constitution, Article 28E, paragraph 1: "Every person shall be free to embrace a religion and to worship according to his/her beliefs." This is also reaffirmed in Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution, which reads: "The state guarantees the freedom of each citizen to embrace their respective religions and to worship according to their religion and beliefs."

Pancasila is the meeting point between the concepts of Islamic moderation and Western moderation. The five principles contained in Pancasila represent a synthesis of the two:

1. Belief in One God affirms religious values, in line with Islamic theology and recognition of the importance of religion in public life.

2. Just and Civilized Humanity emphasizes respect for human dignity, in line with universal human rights principles.
3. Indonesian Unity binds diversity into a single national identity.
4. Democracy Led by the Wisdom of Deliberation/Representation reflects the Islamic value of shura (deliberation) as well as the principles of modern democracy.
5. Social Justice for All Indonesian People emphasizes the distribution of justice, which is also at the core of Islamic moderation and social ideals in Western thought. [32]

Thus, Pancasila is not only the foundation of the state, but also a paradigm of religious moderation that accommodates religious and democratic values in a balanced manner. In addition, the Indonesian government recognizes the importance of religious moderation as a national strategy. Therefore, the Ministry of Religious Affairs launched the Religious Moderation Program as a systematic effort to strengthen tolerant, inclusive, and peaceful religious understanding. This program has four main indicators:

1. National Commitment, namely loyalty to Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity).
2. Tolerance, namely an attitude of respecting differences in religion, ethnicity, and culture.
3. Anti-Violence, namely rejection of radicalism and extremism
4. Accommodation of Local Culture, which is the integration of religious values with local wisdom as a social glue.

CONCLUSION

Religious moderation in Islam is understood as the balanced practice of Islamic teachings, without extremism, and the ability to coexist in diversity, while in the Western perspective, religious moderation emphasizes consistency in personal beliefs accompanied by respect for the rights of others in order to create social harmony. The results of the study show that Islam and the West share similarities in rejecting extremism and upholding tolerance and social justice, but differ in their foundations, goals, the relationship between religion and the state, and the approaches used — Islam bases moderation on divine revelation with the aim of bringing mercy to all of creation, while the West relies on rationality, democracy, and human rights to guarantee individual freedom and multiculturalism. In the Indonesian context, these two perspectives are synthesized within the values of Pancasila, which demonstrates that religious moderation and democratic governance are mutually reinforcing. This study contributes a comparative framework that bridges Islamic and Western traditions of moderation, strengthens the scholarly foundation of Indonesia's Religious Moderation Program, and repositions Pancasila as a meaningful contribution to global comparative ethics. These findings are significant for policymakers, educators, and religious communities in sustaining pluralism and preventing extremism. For future researchers, it is recommended to conduct empirical field studies on how moderation is practiced at the community level, extend comparisons to other Muslim-majority countries, apply postcolonial perspectives to critically examine dominant moderation frameworks, assess the effectiveness of moderation-based curricula in formal education, and explore how religious moderation is negotiated in digital spaces, using interdisciplinary approaches that integrate Islamic studies, political science, sociology, and communication studies.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations worth acknowledging. As a library-based qualitative study, it relies solely on secondary sources, which limits its ability to capture how religious moderation is lived and practiced at the community level. The Western perspective examined is largely drawn from European and Anglo-American traditions, while the Islamic perspective does not fully represent the diversity of interpretations across all Muslim-majority regions, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. The discussion of the Indonesian context also remains conceptual,

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[32] Abdullah Munir, *Literasi moderasi beragama di Indonesia*, Cetakan pertama, ed. oleh Sirajuddin (CV. Zigie Utama, 2020).

without empirical evidence to measure the actual effectiveness of religious moderation policies and programs. Additionally, this study does not address digital and social media dynamics, which have become increasingly important spaces where moderation is both promoted and challenged, particularly among younger generations. Future research is encouraged to adopt mixed methods combining textual and empirical approaches, broaden the comparative scope to other regions, and investigate how religious moderation is negotiated in digital spaces.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

MB conceptualized the study, developed the theoretical framework, and served as the corresponding author responsible for overall manuscript coordination. RR contributed to the literature review on Islamic perspectives of religious moderation and assisted in the comparative analysis. IS was responsible for reviewing and analyzing the historical development of religious moderation in the Western tradition. DB contributed to the discussion of the Indonesian context, particularly the integration of Islamic and Western moderation values within the Pancasila framework. SK conducted data collection, documentation, and content analysis of primary and secondary sources. SF assisted in manuscript editing, formatting, and finalization for submission. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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