

## **Different Without Demeaning Each Other: A World-Exemplified Portrait of Religious Moderation in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

Various cases of intolerance are of common concern, regardless of the religion and culture inherent in each individual. Wrong education has the potential to lead to radical actions. This study aims to provide an overview of religious life that occurs in Indonesia by carrying out religious moderation as a means of living together in public spaces. Qualitative methods were used in this study, with in-depth interviews as the instrument. The results of research in the field show that most informants find it difficult and need more adjustment time to be able to understand that the public sphere becomes a warm place to accept various differences. All informants argued that internet access, with all its advances, had a profound influence on the way they viewed other religions. This means that the process of religious moderation is very optimal if it is carried out by utilizing gadgets and all forms of development.

**Keywords:** religious moderation, gadget, public area

### **Preliminary**

In the reality of the encounter of various differences (including in terms of religion), religious education becomes a necessity. It requires guidelines that can be accepted together in the point of encounter between one religion and another, not focusing and getting stuck on religious differences and exclusivism. The task carried out by the study of science is very heavy, building communication bridges and meeting points of various views. Pluralism of views is not something that stands alone, but also contributes to social dynamics. Along the way, the emergence of identity politics increasingly complicated the dynamics of moderate religious life (Naim, 2017).

The emergence of various violence in the blanket of religion shows that the potential for violence and intolerance must receive serious attention from all stakeholders (Supriatno, 2019). Various cases of intolerance are a common concern, regardless of the religion and

culture inherent in each individual. It is quite possible that wrong education leads to radical actions. The pattern of education is ideally directed to realize forward-thinking values. At the same time, education also carries the mission of maintaining the unity and unity of the nation, so as to avoid disintegration (Sobri, 2017). The occurrence of many acts of violence in Indonesia should be suspected to be caused by the low understanding of these individuals about the meaning of living together in diversity, especially in religious life. As a preventive and anticipatory measure, an understanding of religious moderation is a must for all Indonesians. This study aims to provide an overview of religious life that occurs in Indonesia by carrying out religious moderation as a means of living together in public spaces.

To overcome the disintegration and division of the nation, the government's socio-cultural development programs and policies that are packaged for all people also play a major role in presenting an increasingly advanced and growing diversity (Naibaho et al., 2022). The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has designated 2019 as the "Year of Religious Moderation." Religious moderation is used as jargon and breath in every program and policy made by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In every activity carried out, this institution seeks to position itself as a moderator institution in the midst of pluralism and the pressure of disruption currents that have an impact on aspects of religious and national life. The purpose of religious moderation programs and policies is to prevent radicalism and liberalism in every religion. Understanding religious beliefs will bring coolness if placed in their respective portions. Practicing religious beliefs and respecting the beliefs of others certainly gives a sense of peace, security and tranquility. Religious moderation is something that must be lived by every religious community, and it will provide coolness in the life of the nation and state.

## **Methods**

The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive. Descriptive method is a method of examining the status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought, or a class of events in the present. With the aim of making a systematic, factual and accurate description, view of the facts, properties and relationships between the phenomena investigated (Sugiyono, 2020).

The steps taken in this description method are

1. Data collection techniques, using Interviews that begin with compiling interview instruments, establishing sources or informants and conducting in-depth interviews when needed.
2. The next stage will be to reduce the data with stages: grouping interview results, processing data, credibility tests and source triangulation.
3. Data presentation. Group interview results from various sources and then narrated
4. Draw conclusions

## **Result and Discussion**

As many as 4 out of 5 informants confirmed that they find it difficult and need more adjustment time to be able to understand that the public sphere becomes a warm place to accept differences. All informants argued that internet access, with all its advances, had a profound influence on the way they viewed other religions. This means that the process of religious moderation is very optimal when done by utilizing gadgets.

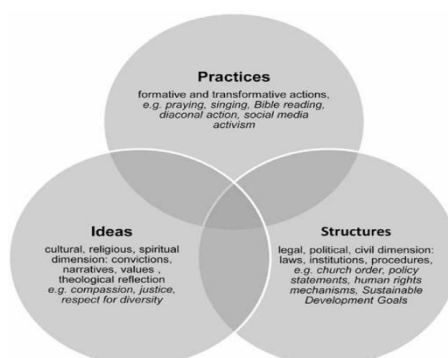
The term religious moderation became an important theme for the government, as an effort to overcome violence by wearing religious "robes". Through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which is specifically used as a driver of national harmonization, the government seeks to strengthen the spirit of nationhood for the sake of national unity and unity. To achieve this goal, the Ministry of Religious Affairs issued a guidebook for "Religious Moderation" (Putri & Wijaya, 2022).

All preparations and debriefing efforts have been initiated by the government, but even so the success rate is largely determined by the participation of all Indonesian people. This spirit of nationality and togetherness can only touch the grassroots if the theme carried is indeed rooted in the theological traditions of our respective religions. On the contrary, all such efforts will be futile and wasteful if they only become foreign concepts grafted into our religious teaching. This is what drives us together to claim its inherent presence in our own traditions, so that we can constructively embrace this idea.

This concept of religious moderation was deeply rooted in Greek philosophy, and Aristotle was the first to initiate the doctrine of the mean. This idea was later passed on in the theological understanding of Thomas Aquinas, although the meaning he carried was not exactly the same as moderation. In the doctrine of the mean, the concept of moderation is a balance between two opposing positions, while Thomas Aquinas argues that there is no excess or deficiency associated with what is inherently wrong and therefore no moderation should be sought (Ariawan, 2022). The middle way only acts as an attempt to mediate excess and deficiency. Aquinas also understood the importance of rationality as a determinant of the middle way. Moderation can be a virtue if it is based on a rational middle way (medium rationis).

Religious moderation is an interesting social theme and can be a solution to the danger of national disintegration because at this point each religion lives together in the same public space. With this understanding, each religion is challenged to theologially interpret the common space and the encounters that occur there. Quraish Shihab explained that in religious moderation, which in the context of Islam the word wasathiyah is used, there are important pillars, namely: the pillar of justice, the pillar of balance, and the pillar of tolerance. This is what makes the concept of "wasathiyah" tend to be more tolerant but not tenuous in interpreting religious creeds (Naibaho et al., 2022).

From a Christian point of view, the church itself sees itself as a public sphere. One opinion was conveyed by William Placher, that its existence as a public space because the church meets 3 elements, namely rationally discursive, spatially collective, and contemporary responsive. These three elements are able to relate precisely and intertwined with the 3 dimensions initiated by The Lutheran World Federation, namely: ideas, practices, and structures (Witness, 2016).



**Figure 1.** *The 3 dimensions*

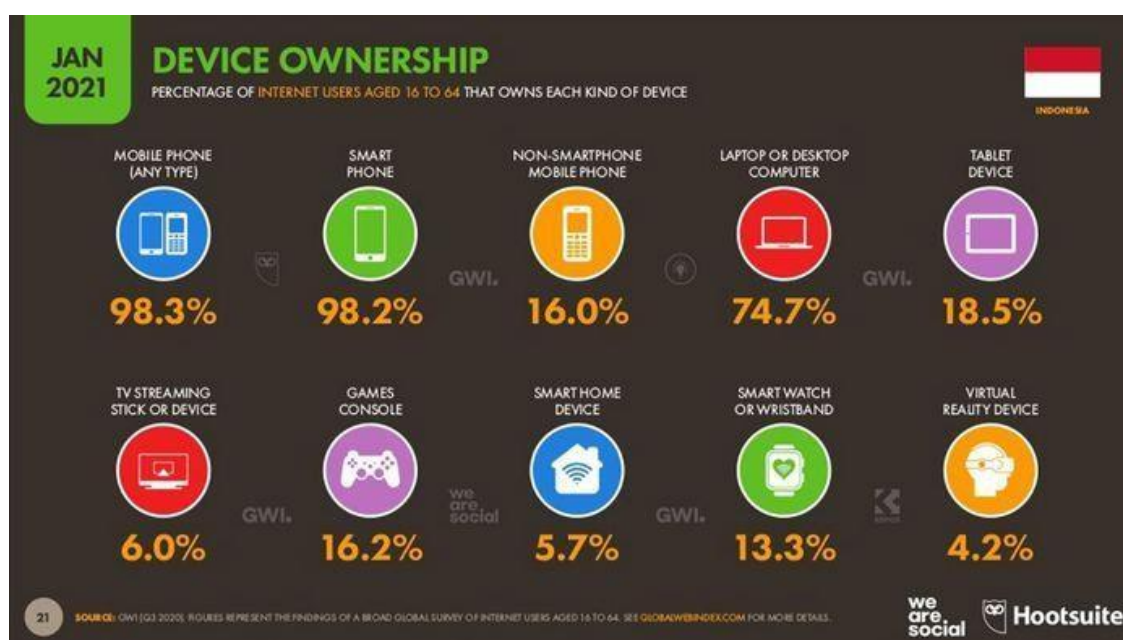
In the realm of ideas, every religion needs translation into a more general "language," if the primary goal is benefit in a broader scope. For example, how the religious idea of rahmatan lil 'alamin in Islamic understanding can be manifested and understood also by followers of other religions, or the idea of "Kingdom of God" in Christian understanding can also be understood by the wider public. For these things, interfaith discussion forums wrapped in a discursive atmosphere and democratic nuances are needed (Vorster, 2015).

In the realm of practice, each religion can become a public sphere when it enters the prophetic aspect, becoming a religion that dares to go further to bring out virtues that can be felt not only by its adherents, but also interfaith. Its prophetic nature makes religion present to challenge injustice, which at the same time makes it sensitive to contemporary issues in society. It is understood that each religion upholds its own creed, and of course in this realm it cannot be negotiated or mixed, but the form of practical action displayed in combating common problems needs to be realized so that its presence can be felt (Glas, 2015).

In the realm of structure, each religion needs to animate the call to live together and lead to the creation of a new, more human structure. The vocation to live together is inevitable because we may be able to choose where we live, but we cannot choose who we live the earth with. In the Islamic perspective, pluralism is a necessity, which is a sunnatullah that can be seen in nature, so its existence cannot be denied. Furthermore, we not only live with those we have never chosen, but are also obliged to maintain the structure of life and the plurality they co-shape. At this point, religious moderation brings all religious believers into a space of friendship to celebrate life together in a relationship of mutual respect and support.

***The Potential of Gadgets as a Means of Moderation***

The world in general, and Indonesia in particular, is entering a new order called the era of disruption. An era where information is presented quickly and can be accessed at the same time in all parts of the world. Problems arise when the actors in it differ in terms of maturity. A survey conducted in Indonesia showed very astonishing results. Of all respondents (aged 16-64 years), 98.3% were gadget users (Ariawan et al., 2021).



**Figure 2. Results of Device Ownership Survey in Indonesia**

With the fact that almost all Indonesian people aged 16-64 years are users of mobile devices, it can be assumed that all information (regardless of whether the information is true or actually a hoax) is absorbed quickly by its users.



**Figure 3.** *Changes in Social Order*

The world community order that entered the stage of Society 5.0 or known as the digital society era caused revolutionary changes in behavior and activities. Facing this, it takes the ability to find, identify, and read digital information, then process and use it wisely, or known as digital literacy.



**Figure 4.** *Aspects of Digital Literacy*

From the explanation above, in facing the era of society 5.0, it is necessary to strengthen religious moderation in digital literacy which includes: collaboration, ability to find information, effective communication, decision making, functional skills, creativity, critical thinking, and cultural understanding. The challenges of the era of society 5.0 do not dampen the enthusiasm to continue to move forward, in line with the spirit of tathawwur wa ibtikar (dynamic and innovative) in wasathiyah, which is always open to make changes for the better.

## Conclusion

To overcome the disintegration and division of the nation, the government's socio-cultural development programs and policies packaged in religious moderation for all people also play a major role in presenting increasingly advanced and growing diversity. Research in *Res Militaris*, vol.12, n<sup>o</sup>4, Summer-Autumn 2022

the field proved that as many as 4 out of 5 informants confirmed that they found it difficult and needed more adjustment time to be able to understand that the public sphere became a warm place to accept differences. All informants argued that internet access, with all its advances, had a profound influence on the way they viewed other religions. This means that the process of religious moderation is very optimal if it is carried out by utilizing gadgets and all forms of development.

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